

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

CONDOLENCES

MR SPEAKER

We move to Condolences Members.

MR BUFFETT

Mr Speaker it is with regret that this House records the death of Air Vice Marshal Raymond Edward Trebilco aged 72 years, Administrator of this Island from January 1982 until April of 1985. Raymond Edward Trebilco was an Australian born at Box Hill Victoria. He was educated at Box Hill and at the Canberra College of Advanced Education. He enlisted in the Royal Australian Airforce in 1945 and pursued a distinguished career Mr Speaker in that service. He amongst many postings was a pilot in 77 Squadron in the Korean conflict. He was Officer Commanding airbase Butterworth, he attended the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom. He was Air Officer Commanding Support Command, he was Air Attache at many Australian Embassy's throughout the world, he was Chief of Airforce Personnel when he concluded his service. He reached the lofty rank of Air Vice Marshal in the Royal Australian Airforce. He was awarded the distinguished flying cross during the Korean conflict and made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1982. In 1953 Ray Trebilco married Jan Wellard who was a noted golfer and they have two sons and one daughter. Ray Trebilco came to Norfolk Island as Administrator upon his retirement from the Royal Australian Airforce. He was Administrator in the earlier days of our journey to self government. He was Administrator when this House enacted for example important legislation which established Community Services Orders, established the Retail Price Index, made tourist accommodation legislation and amongst many other things made important amendments to immigration legislation. Ray and Jan Trebilco made their way comfortably in our community Mr Speaker. They represented both the Norfolk Island and Australian Governments in their respective roles and they particularly were well known in the sporting activities of the Island. Whilst here Ray Trebilco was a fit man. He beat me at the 50m dash at a school sports day I remember Mr Speaker barefooted equally if I remember correctly, but we do record his passing with sadness. He was accorded a full military funeral in Canberra on Monday last and I record on Members behalf our sympathy and condolences to Mrs Trebilco and to her family.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Buffett. Honourable members as a mark of respect in the memory of the deceased I ask that Members stand in silence.

Thank you Honourable Members. If you feel more comfortable with your jackets off your most welcome to do that.

PETITIONS

Are there any Petitions? No

NOTICES

Are there any Notices this morning? No

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MR BUFFETT I wanted to ask one but maybe I should pause for a moment. Mr Brown is not here yet.

MR SPEAKER Do you want to come back to that David? Any further Questions Without Notice.

MR NOBBS I've got a few questions here for Mr Robinson. I asked at the last meeting what plans are in place to reduce the combustible material and provision of fire control measures in Forestry's Eucalypt forest before our next summer.

MR ION-ROBINSON Thank you Mr Speaker. I put this one on the top for a change so I don't have to go digging for it. The risk of bush fire in the Eucalypt forest in the summer months is not as great as Australian forests due to our relatively low summer temperatures, high humidity and low winds. There is however a moderate risk, especially in the extended dry period due largely to build up of fuel, that's dead bark, sticks and limbs on the forest floor over the past 30 to 40 years. The Eucalypt forest is surrounded and divided by fire breaks which are maintained so as to minimise the risk of a fire in a Eucalypt forest spreading to the National Park. These breaks will be inspected by the Conservator and Acting Forester prior to the summer to ensure that they are in good condition. Fuel build up has reduced most Australian forests by burning. This option is risky on Norfolk Island due to the proximity of fire sensitive native forest in the National Park. The chemical removal of fuel in the Eucalypt forest is therefore the only safe option. The Norfolk Island Parks and Forestry Service does not have machinery which is suitable for removing the fuel which has built up between the rows of Eucalypts and the plantation. It is therefore proposed to purchase suitable equipment as soon as possible. That equipment will also be used for normal forest and reserve management and hopefully will be purchased in time to undertake fuel reduction work in the Eucalypt forest before next summer. Realistically I can't see it happening in the immediate future.

MR NOBBS Thanks Mr Robinson. Just another one there. Have you a definitive list of what is precisely required before control of land is transferred to Norfolk Island.

MR ION-ROBINSON I haven't got it with me but there is a list which was taken from the report of the Land Review Working Group. It's down in my office, I'm sorry Ron. I didn't think it would be coming so I didn't bring it with me.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Ion-Robinson.

MR NOBBS Just another one for Mr Robinson. The proposed growing of Hemp seed on Norfolk Island Ric. The seed to be utilised is imported and being not certified, its disease state is questionable. What quarantine procedures have been implemented to ensure that there are no new diseases, or in fact insects introduced to Norfolk Island.

MR ION-ROBINSON I would have to run that by our Quarantine Officer and get that to you Ron. That's a very good point.

MR BUFFETT This is a question to Mr Brown in the area of healthcare responsibilities. A letter has been written by a group of people to the Chief Minister but circulated to all of the Members including myself and it really is asking about or pointing out the difficulty with financial hardship for people who need to travel away from the Island and the costs involved with airfares and other costs and those costs are not necessarily met by the Healthcare Scheme. I've provided a letter to Mr Brown but I'm sure he will have received it as I have received it in the post and I really want to ask him is it correct that our Healthcare Scheme offers little assistance to people in the situations described in this letter.

MR BROWN Mr Speaker in terms of airfares it is the case that the Healthcare Fund contributes only to the extent of \$200 per year, or recognises only \$200 per year towards a person \$2,500 excess. Patients who are receiving the benefit of HMA do in many instances receive airfare benefits. It is an issue that needs to be revisited at this stage because there are a number of people who do need to go away from time to time for ongoing specialist attention. The letter, quite correctly points out that significant money is spent on education for 318 pupils referred to in the letter whereas the amount spent, not only on health but also on social welfare is minute in comparison when you take account of the proportions in which those expenditures normally occur in other jurisdictions. I don't know what the answer is because the Healthcare Scheme is something which can provide as much or as little as we wish it to provide. If we wish to cover absolutely every form of expenditure we then must decide how to tackle over servicing, if that began to occur, how to tackle unnecessary things, whether we continue to exclude elective surgery and elective issues from coverage, but if we significantly expand the extent of coverage of the Healthcare Fund we've got to significantly expand its revenue. If we choose to do that do we take a view that the public purse should simply contribute by way of subsidy. If that's the case how do you probably look after those people who choose to meet the cost of private health insurance and who quite rightly would be somewhat indignant that they meet the cost of their private health insurance and are then expected through subsidy to contribute to the fund. Alternatively do we endeavour to increase the coverage of the fund by perhaps trying to fill the role of Southern Cross as well as the present healthcare role but if that occurs how high does the levy have to be. There is no simple answer. The question deserves to be addressed. There are some things which are currently happening in order to try to minimise the size of the problem, for example only yesterday arrangements were confirmed with Breast Screen in Queensland whereby mammograms for which a number of people have been referred off the Island in recent times will be provided free of charge. That will represent a significant saving to local residents and a saving in areas where many people don't get up to their \$2,500 so have to pay a \$ in the \$ of whatever the expense is. So that's a bit of progress. The Hospital is presently finalising consideration of the purchase of a new ultra-sound machine. That too will do something towards minimising the number of patients who have to be referred away and I am about to commence discussions with all 3 of the airlines servicing the Island with a view to trying to arrange a special health fare which hopefully will go a little further towards overcoming these problems but I'll be happy to try to provide a report at our next meeting as to the progress that's been made in these areas.

MR SPEAKER Mr Buffett do you have any more questions, because if not we might exchange places.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Questions Without Notice further Honourable Members.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My first question is to John as Minister for Health and Immigration. Minister is it a fact that a proposal has come forward to remove members of the newly formed Bounty Dirt Bike Club from the Healthcare Scheme.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker no there is no such current proposal. From time to time I review the risks which the Scheme faces and from time to time I give thought to whether the Members of the Assembly should be asked to form a view as to whether particular things should be excluded. There have been a number of areas over the years which perhaps should have been excluded but in so far as I'm aware no exclusion has yet been made. If we were to look at the coverage by other Healthcare Schemes we may find that some forms of sporting activity are not covered for example I think most Schemes exclude sky diving, I think many of them exclude football, I think many of them exclude motor-cross and motor racing, but there is not present proposal to bring in any exclusion in Norfolk Island.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My next question is to Gary Robertson as Minister for Sport. Minister what progress has been made in providing an area of public land for the conducting of activities by the Bounty Dirt Bike Club.

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I understand that the Dirt Bike Club have made a request of land, to use some of the Crown land and that request has gone onto Mr Ion-Robinson who has responsibility in that area. Other than that there has been no specific request made to me as such but it has been made to Crown lands.

MR ION-ROBINSON If I could just add to that Mr Speaker. They did put in a request for the forestry zone out at the National Park and that is being progressed at this stage. We, the Executives met with several members or several of the parents of the Bike Club the other day and they indicated that they will be coming forward with a list but as yet I have not received that list or application.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My next question is for Mr Robinson with his Agriculture hat on. Minister in regard to the issuing of licences that would enable individuals to grow industrial Hemp on Norfolk Island is it a fact that such a licence has been issued to an organisation which I understand is registered locally and is I'm informed comprised only of people who are not residents of Norfolk Island.

MR ION-ROBINSON As I understand it that's correct.

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My next question is for John with his Immigration portfolio. John in regard to the last question and given that scenario that that question raised how does this situation sit with Immigration Acts terms as it relates to a new business activity.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker my understanding is that the growers will be exclusively Norfolk Island growers and I would need to take the question on notice in order to provide Robert with a more detailed answer.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Further Questions Without Notice.

MR BATES Thanks Mr Deputy Speaker. Question for the Chief Minister. For the benefit of the listeners can the Minister explain why the ABC news has been changed from 7.30am to 8.30am on the local radio.

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I can answer that for Mr Bates. The reason there has been a change in the broadcast in the news on the local radio is the ABC news was being broadcast at 7.30 and the radio New Zealand news was being broadcast at 8.30 but because of the reception of the radio New Zealand news in recent times the Radio Station has swapped the news slots around so the New Zealand news is not on at 7.30 and the ABC on at 8.30. I might like to point out that Australian news is available on the other stations that are broadcast by the Radio 2NI and they are available at the same times as, right throughout the day. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker.

MR BATES Another question for the Chief Minister. Could the Minister advise whether he has approved the budgets of the various Government Business Enterprises.

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and thanks Mr Bates for that question. At this point in time I haven't. I've got something to say about that during the budget discussion and that's due to a couple of factors, one which I think Mr Nobbs is going to make a little bit of a Statement in the electricity area and also with the Airport, there is some good reasons why I can't actually finalise that budget at this point in time. I hope to have them finalised before the end of the financial year and be able to table the budgets in the next meeting.

MR NOBBS Now just a question for Mr Brown. I asked this question at the last meeting but it was only partly answered. Have staff at the Norfolk Island Hospital been instructed to utilise one particular Airline for travel to and from Australia.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the staff at the Hospital use the most appropriate airline at the time insofar as I am aware. I think I said on the last occasion that if Mr Nobbs were to look at the occasions on which the Hospital has arranged transport they would find that there have been no particular favouritism to any airline be it Air New Zealand, Flight West or Norfolk Jet Express. One of the important factors to remember here is that most people travelling from Norfolk Island have their travel arranged personally rather than by the hospital. In terms of stretcher travel, one of the airlines as I understand it, maintains a stretcher in Norfolk Island. It may well be for that reason that airline picks up more business than others but...

MR NOBBS Point of Order. I asked this question on staff. We went through the patients and that at the last meeting. I just asked about staff

MR BROWN We are talking of staff travel? I'm not aware of any particular instruction Mr Deputy Speaker. In the event that I issue a direction under the Act that direction must be in writing and it must be tabled in the Assembly

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker, just a question on that particular issue. You are required as you just said to table directions in the House. Have you given a direction to the Hospital Board since we came in in May 1997?

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker there are two directions that need to be tabled. I had intended to bring them today and have not brought them. They will be tabled at the next meeting

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker just another one on the Hospital for Mr Brown. Is it true that the Hospital Board at the present time is not functional due to the number of members who I believe, whose term has expired?

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker indeed a number of the members have reached the end of their terms. I am awaiting confirmation from one person as to whether he is happy to be appointed to the Board and at that stage the reappointment will be made for two of the members and appointments will be made for additional members

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker just a couple for Mr Robertson. What are the current problems in the Burnt Pine upgrade Gary? Have we run out of money or what's the holdup

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. There are no current problems. They are about to commence the second side through the town, within the budget, and you may recall that the budget figures were given to all Members a few weeks ago. The Committee met last Friday to look at procedures, where we are going from now and I understand that as of next week, they will be commencing the operation to start the second side of the road. They have finished the first as you may notice, through the middle of town and they are currently doing other bits and pieces that are required to be done with other roads around the Island and they will be finished this week and work will carry on in Burnt Pine as per the schedule

MR NOBBS So it has nothing to do with the contractors being unable to facilitate the job because they're working elsewhere

MR ROBERTSON Not at all. Not at all

MR NOBBS Gary, I'm just talking on the budget. Are you prepared to make that budget public as yet

MR ROBERTSON The meeting we had on Friday morning was to review all of this situation so that we can come back with a more up to date one. Unfortunately there were only three members of the seven man Committee available, and we will now be calling another one later this week where we will be looking into a number of factors and once that is through, yes I will table, and yes it can go to the public

MR NOBBS If we had a pop show I suppose we would have a top of the pops, but I guess the top of the questions at the moment is this one around town, are all the airlines meeting the accepted deadlines for the payment of landing fees at Norfolk Island

MR ROBERTSON I would take that on Notice Mr Nobbs. I would have to check that. I will be making a Statement a little bit further down the line on the airlines and it may be covered I that area

MR NOBBS Last one Gary. Will there be any official representative of Norfolk Island other than our athletes and officials, at the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. At this point no. The numbers that are going to the Games, as I understand it, is around twenty-eight, of which three are the executive on the Amateur Sports Association but as far as governmental representation, that has not yet been decided

DEPUTY SPEAKER Further Questions Without Notice? Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS For Mr Smith in relation to the TV setup. When will the Government be purchasing the required equipment to receive TV signals from the new satellite?

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and thanks for the question too Ron. To be honest I can't give you an update at this point in time. The last that I remember, that I said in the last meeting I think, was that we were waiting for the report that was done by the ABC/SBS Optus, in Norfolk Island. That report has been received, but I'm just not too sure where we are up to in that Ron but I will check it out and let you know by the next meeting for sure

MR NOBBS Just on FIL George. Has there been any investigation in the past twelve months into the FIL to ascertain what percentage of business and private financial activities on the Island is (a) legitimately excluded from paying the FIL (b) the FIL currently being collected and (c) avoiding collection by such actions as shipping funds offshore?

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Not really. There are a lot of assumptions that we do. It's really hard, there are two or three parts to your question there, to assess how much money that is sent offshore to avoid FIL. I really wouldn't know and I don't know that we could find that out. There is really no way I could answer that question Ron. The only things that I've been doing, I think a part of your question is how much is legally exempted and I can find that out. The only thing I've really been thinking about with FIL and I said it in the budget last year, if we had sufficient funds this year I would have hoped to be able to start reducing FIL and I think at the time I said that I would like to reduce it to 10% per year. 10% of the 1% that we pay now and it's not working out that way

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Further Questions Without Notice this morning? Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I had some here. This is one for Mr Brown. What percentage of Healthcare expenditure in the term of this Government would be covered by claims under a third party insurance scheme if it existed?

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the only answer that I can give to that is "some". I don't have the statistics and I am disappointed at the slow pace with which this whole third party question is moving. There has been very little apparent progress during the life of this Assembly, notwithstanding that we have asked for the work to be carried out in the Public Service with a view to introducing compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance as soon as possible

MR NOBBS Mr Robinson, just one. What has been done in the past month in relation to the army worm problem?

MR ION ROBINSON The investigations into the rufacus wasp are still going on Ron and that's all I can tell you at this stage but I will get some back up information for you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Further Questions Without Notice? Then we have concluded Questions Without Notice

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker just a couple in closing. A question to Mr Robinson with his Forestry hat on. Are the finances allocated to management of the reserves realistic given the extra burden and obligations laid in that area by the movement of the land transfer package and also, is the Forestry budget itself realistic given its increased demands and particularly against the programmes that are called for in the Bensen Report?

MR ION ROBINSON To get a full and comprehensive answer I would have to go to my Conservator and review it all. I wouldn't like to have a go off the top of my head

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, another question for Mr Robinson. Is the Minister better able to inform comprehensively this House as to the present situation regarding the rat management programme in the National Park

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. As I said at the last meeting, it is still going on. I can't give you all the fine details except that I know they have nearly doubled their order of rat bait and there was the new rat bait that they are bringing in and I brought the name with me last meeting but I haven't got it this meeting

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Supplementary to that. Is it a fact Minister that there are in fact no stocks of rat bait currently available to continue that rat management programme

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. There is no Racuman which is the name of the bait that is coming, so as far as I am aware there is no Racuman there

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker the final question is to the Chief Minister. Minister on the 20th May in response to a question from I believe Brian on Strategic Planning and its related funding, you stated that the issue of Strategic Planning and funding will be a matter of focus at the forthcoming budget session and given that this is the final budget session today, is it your intention at this final session to indeed focus on Strategic Planning funding

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. With the budget and the connection to the Strategic Plan and also the Strategic Review the reason I hadn't included any funds in the budget for either of those things was because we hadn't actually dealt with the Strategic matters. I think Members will know that since that time and since I made that statement, the way we are going to deal with those Strategic issues will depend on what funding is required. It won't be included in the budget. There is little change to the budget as was tabled by Gary at the last meeting but certainly if we are needing extra funds that are suggested in the plan we can simply do another Supply Bill for that

DEPUTY SPEAKER We have concluded Questions Without Notice Honourable Members. There are no Questions on Notice this morning

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Are there any Papers to present this morning

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker on an earlier occasion Mr Nobbs asked me if I could provide a list of all residents of the Island and I table a list which has been prepared for me by the Immigration Officer and I would like to thank him for his endeavours in this regard and that is a list of all residents within the meaning of the Immigration Ordinance 1968; the Immigration Amendment Act 1981 and the Immigration Act 1980. The Immigration Officer has informed me that he believes that is an accurate list. Of course if there are people who have not come to the attention of the Immigration system over recent years then those people might not be on the list but it is believed on the basis of present information, to be accurate

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Are there any further Papers to present this morning. No

STATEMENTS

Are there any Statements to make this morning? Chief Minister

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I table the Public Sector Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 6 of 1997 together with a letter of clarification from the Tribunal dated 15 June 1998. Members around the table have been copied with this documentation which originated out of the meeting of Members on the 13th November last year in relation to travel allowance payable for travel outside Australia and New Zealand. I table that Mr Deputy Speaker

MR ROBERTSON Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. First, in reply to a Question I took on Notice on behalf of the Chief Minister in relation to the question asked by

Mr Gardner which he said, "...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 regards to the use out of hours of Administration plant by employees of the Public Service and who is responsible for refuelling and damages to plant associated with use out of hours?". Mr Deputy Speaker I have been given the following response to make. There is an Administration Policy and Guideline in relation to the hire of Administration Plant and Equipment. The policy is applicable to private individuals, firms and to Administration employees. The terms and conditions of hire are contained in the application form and the responsibility for refuelling and damages to the equipment is with the hirer. For information I table the Administration Policy and the application form. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

I have another Statement thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Norfolk Jet Express. Over the past few weeks there have been many rumours circulating regarding Norfolk Jet Express Airline. There is no denying that Norfolk Jet Express have experienced difficulties and measures have been taken to ensure that the air service and their support for Norfolk will continue. Meetings have been held with Norfolk Jet Express; National Jet and the Government on numerous occasions during this time and we are now of the opinion that, provided the measures sought by Government are adhered to, the result will be beneficial to all parties. Norfolk Jet were the first to fly following the withdrawal of Ansett and it is hoped that with the right support will continue to fly well into the future. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I have two statements to make on behalf of the Chief Minister. You will recall as part of our progressing the use of alternate energy in the generation of Electricity it was decided to first ascertain if we could save on our current usage, without interrupting present supply and to possibly use such savings to progress use of alternate energy. In May I reported that the Norfolk Island Government had accepted a proposal by a NSW Company, EnergyFirst, to ascertain what savings were possible in the supply and usage by the government the view being that whatever savings were possible, could possibly be used as an up front funding for a move into alternates. Such savings would be without diminishing the actual service as is currently experienced on the Island. This point is important. It is easy to save power if you switch it off, but before you think that the past couple of days was a start, this is not what is proposed. The service will not change, just be more efficient in supply. Last week two men from EnergyFirst were on the Island to assess power usage with a view to coming up with proposed savings. The two gentlemen completed their task on Norfolk and will be providing us with a report in the next two weeks. The report will state where savings can be made and if the proposals are followed they guarantee the savings. The proposed action to be taken will be funded from savings. Initial indications are that there is a potential for significant savings. We are not talking of peanuts. Whilst no firm figures are available indications are six figure savings. The proposal to be put by EnergyFirst is that they will install the required equipment which the Norfolk Island Government will pay for out of savings. Incidentally all work done to date by EnergyFirst has been at no cost to Norfolk Island. Mr Deputy Speaker, we should have a full and comprehensive report for the next meeting on July 15th stating guaranteed savings and the precise payback period for funds required in their proposals. Mr Deputy Speaker we are very conscious of private individuals wishing to save energy. This is fine but we have consciously taken the view that the government must take the lead. There are plans to extend the energy saving into the wider community, however, you will no doubt agree that it is better to say "We are doing this and these are the savings", and "Won't you join us", than saying "we believe you should do such and such". Whilst we as a Government

sit and procrastinate on the fence. The really interesting segments which are proposed would extend to suggested improvements in our individual homes if savings are required but also suggestions which could be incorporated into new constructions or even renovations. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

I wish to make a second statement, this time on the proposed Retirement Village. I wish to report that investigation relative to the proposal to establish a Retirement Village on Norfolk Island, is being progressed. The investigation is progressing those issues as identified in this Assembly's resolution passed in April last. A small Committee comprising Wayne Richard's; Debbie Gilmore; John Hughes and myself are progressing issues such as location, layout, management arrangements, legislation, immigration etc. I wish to report that the Architectural students at the University of Tasmania, 3rd year students, will be working in their next semester on production of a concept plan for the area. Each of the students will be working on their own proposal so in effect we will have some thirty proposals to select from. It is proposed to provide a prize for the selected concept. Relevant material would be provided to the University and my thanks go to assistance provided by the Admin's Registry Section, thanks Midge, and also to Cameralines for their offer to provide a video to assist the students, thanks to Ken and Ray. The Committee is also investigating legislative requirements and the assistance of the Parliamentary Draftsman James Williamson in this area is greatly appreciated. Investigations also continue on the implications of immigration. Preliminary discussions were held with the consultant hired to investigate Immigration issues, Ms Paddick. These discussions were extremely positive. One key area is actually financing the project. The question may be asked, how do we propose to do it? Whilst nothing is firm there are ways and means of doing this at no real up front cost to the Island. Whilst the Island will still retain full control of the project and there is a tidy profit at the time of initial sale of units. Enough, for instance, to build a new wing at the Hospital for the old people. This would be followed by on going income to the Norfolk Island government which could be utilised for aged care. As stated, there is no firm decision as yet on financing the project or any other of the issues mentioned, but Mr Deputy Speaker, investigations continue and it would be hoped in the not too distant future to have some firm proposals on which the Assembly can then decide as to whether the project proceeds or not. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR SMITH
Statements be noted

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. May I move that those

DEPUTY SPEAKER

The question is that those Statements be noted

MR SMITH
Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I would just like to say thank you Ron for the work that he has put into the EnergyFirst matter. Ron has put alot of time into looking at the alternative energies and one of the things that he has come up with is this proposal from the EnergyFirst and any way that we can make savings on fuel and environmentally in our quest for more electricity supply is commendable and thank you Ron for what you've done in this area

DEPUTY SPEAKER
Statements be noted

Further contributions? The question is that those

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you. Are there any further Statements to be made this morning. We have concluded Statements.

MESSAGE NO 130 FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Honourable Members, the Speaker has received the following Message from the Office of the Administrator, **Message No. 130** which reads that on 16 June 1998 pursuant to section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I declared my assent to the Cascade Cliff Loan Act 1998, which is Act No 9 of 1998, the Telecommunications Amendment Act 1998, which is Act No 10 of 1998 and the Lotteries and Fundraising Amendment Act 1998 which is Act No 11 of 1998. I reserved for the pleasure of the Governor-General the Roads Amendment Bill 1998. That Message is dated the 16th June 1998, signed A J Messner, Administrator

ORDERS OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL 1998 - MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Speaker has received an additional Message from the Office of the Administrator, **Message No. 131**. Appropriation Bill 1998. In accordance with the requirements of section 25 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I recommend to the Legislative Assembly that the proposed law entitled "An Act to authorise expenditure from the Public Account for the year ending on 30 June 1999" be amended in accordance with the detail stage amendment to be moved by the Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning dated 17 June 1998 and attached as Annexure A. That Message is dated the 19th June 1998, signed A J Messner, Administrator

And in the context of that message I call Order of the Day No 1

APPROPRIATION BILL 1998

We resume debate 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. I tabled the Bill originally at our last meeting in place of the Speaker and Minister for Finance who was currently off the Island. As he is now with us I will pass this over to him to ask him to continue.

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I'm not going to add much I don't think unless Members want me to add except that there is a detail stage amendment and if you give me the signal at the appropriate time to move that detail stage amendment to allow for some changes to be made to the budget. As you've pointed out in the message from the Office of the Administrator. I've taken note of the comments that Members made at the last meeting when the budget was tabled and I take those points on board. There were some good points made at that time but I don't really intend to say much more at this point that you Mr Deputy Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. The question before us is that the Bill be agreed to in principle. Is there any further debate? No. I put the question to you Honourable Members

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The ayes have it.

We now move to the detail stage? Chief Minister you may care to address the amendments of the detail stage

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I think I need to seek leave to table the detail stage amendments to the Appropriation Bill 1998

DEPUTY SPEAKER You just need to address them Chief Minister and the House will decide upon them

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Well the detail stage amendments reads as follows - Schedule, page 3, line 28 (total "Other Recurrent Expenditure" omit 2.884.400 twice occurring and substitute in each case 2.904.400. No 2 Schedule, page 4 line 11 (total "Capital Expenditure" omit 743.900 twice occurring and substitute in each case 763.900 No 3 Schedule, page 4 line 12 (total "Appropriation Grand Total" omit 9.753.600 twice occurring and substitute in each case 9.793.600 and I will table those. These amendments are in relation to a motion that Mr Adams put into the last Sitting to make some changes to the budget. Those were to include a new line item in first priority which was Meat Production review, an increase of \$20,000. An increase by \$20,000 in first priority, the Quarantine Screenhouse, include a new line item in second priority of the Offshore Finance Centre project of \$60,000 and delete line item Rawson Hall Improvements which was a second priority matter of \$60,000. So that amendment takes account of the moves that Mr Adams had made in the last meeting which I support anyway, thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR BATES Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I think it is fairly sad that Mr Adams had to take the extraordinary measures that he took in order to have included in the budget, items that had been approved by this House previously. I think the whole strategy behind the formation of this budget was really very poorly handled and poorly done and I really in support of the Supply Bill I think I should divorce myself from the actual budget itself. It's not a budget, it's an apology for a budget and we are looking at about \$1.2m in second priority, we are looking at a reduction in capital expenditure of \$300,000 from the previous year, we are looking at a plan over the top of us which has such way out things in it as the construction of a harbour with no money to do it and who are we trying to kid. That's been around for 100 years and nobody has ever been able to finance it. We are looking at the need for infrastructure maintenance and construction. We've got people on the Island still living on unsealed roads, we have people still with houses without power. We need to upgrade our hospital, we certainly need to increase our subsidies for healthcare and we need increase in expenditure to keep pace with more power to internal self government. Previous three Ministers have neglected to look at the revenue streams. They have neglected to even so much as look at the user pays area of fees and services. There's been no real consideration for the Island's economy and we really must change this simplistic approach of reducing expenditure, neglecting community services and commodities to balance the budget

what we are working towards but I don't think I'll say any more than that thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I would like to treat this as a conscience matter where I should feel free to speak rather than feel bound by any form of cabinet solidarity. I agree with what Brian has said. I've taken note of what George has said. But really this budget isn't the Legislative Assembly budget in my view. Members and executives for that matter, have not been provided with copies of the budget bids. Now I understand that the practice which existed up until about four years ago may have changed during the last four years, but in previous times Members were provided with a copy of the budget bids and they were able to make an informed assessment of what ought to be done. I certainly hope that when we come to do our budget next year we will return to that practice so that Members do have all of the information they need at their fingertips. In this budget we are kidding ourselves. Like Brian, I am going to support it because we certainly need to have supply but let me just turn to the Healthcare Fund as one example. The Healthcare Fund budget bid is for a pretty significant subsidy. From recollection, 417,000. And out of that figure it was proposed to apply \$50,000 to reserve, so the amount that was going to be spent as cash was \$367, 274. We are providing \$100,000 towards that and if the budget estimate is correct, the Healthcare Fund will end the year short by \$267,000. I am going to need some direction from Members as to whether you wish me to look at increasing the Healthcare Levy in order to cover that; whether you wish me to introduce stricter controls on what is covered by the fund in order to cover it; or whether in fact we are saying that notwithstanding the fact that we are not budgeting for it, we are going to provide an extra \$267,000 at some stage through the year. But if we are saying that we are going to provide that extra money, shouldn't we be providing it now. Are we kidding ourselves in thinking that we have a balanced budget just in that one item. We know we are wrong by \$267,000. In terms of the current performance of the Healthcare Fund, the Finance Manager had prepared an estimate for the current year, after providing \$100,000 of subsidy, the fund would end the year short by \$62,000. My own estimate was \$163,000 of shortfall but I acknowledge that that took account of a proposal to apply \$50,000 to reserve, so if you forgot about the money going to reserves, my own estimate of the shortfall for the current year was \$113,000. On the 16th June I received a Financial Management Report about the Healthcare Fund for the eleven months ended May 1998 and the notes to that report said that the column headed "Year to Date Actual" is based on accrual accounting principles but the report does not include provision for depreciation as it is a non cash item and it said that it is a budget indicator only and should not be misconstrued as a complete profit and loss statement but on looking at that, it seemed that the fund was only in the red for \$8000 at the end of May and right up until the end of yesterday I felt some confidence as a result of that that my own estimate of the situation had been incorrect and that the Finance Manager had been far more correct than I had and in fact the year would end better than the Finance Manager had suggested. Yesterday I learned that there is something in the range of \$160,000 of claims expected to be received before the 30th June, or alternatively, in respect of the period up until the 30th June. The figures that had been provided to me on the 16th June included only \$39,000 for that area so we are looking at the Healthcare Fund ending the present year, pretty close to where I had estimated. That is, in the red by \$113,000 and possibly in the red by a little more than that. It's a question the executives are going to have to address over the next few days once more precise numbers are available, but what it indicates to me is, that the figures that had been included in the budget bid look pretty accurate unless we make changes in the levy and changes in what we do and don't cover. I mention that because it is just one

point is this, that we should start planning for that next years budget at that January meeting and that would give us plenty of time. You can carry out your arguments and the like so that when we get to a situation now, it can go in in May and then should go through with some reasonable acceptance by all Members. I'm supporting the budget but I think we need some major changes for the next year

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Further debate? No further debate Honourable Members? Then we will look at the three amendments if you will look at your particular detail stage amendment sheet you will find that they are items 1, 2 and 3. I will ask if you agree each of those three items

Is Amendment No 1 agreed? Amendment No 1 is agreed

Is Amendment No 2 agreed? Amendment No 2 is agreed

Is Amendment No 3 agreed? Amendment No 3 is agreed

Thank you. Amendments Nos 1, 2 and 3 are agreed. I now ask Honourable Members if the Schedule as amended by those is agreed? Is that agreed? That is agreed thank you. I now ask you Honourable Members whether the remainder of the Bill, we've just tackled the schedules, is agreed? The remainder of the Bill is agreed thank you. I now seek a motion that the Bill as amended be agreed to

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, I so move

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thankyou. Is there any final debate? Thank you. There is no final debate I put the question to you

QUESTION PUT

AGREED

It is agreed thank you. That tidies the financial legislation Honourable Members. Mr Gardner I will have to ask you to take the Chair please.

NORFOLK ISLAND PLAN REPORT

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Norfolk Island Strategic Plan Report. We resume on the debate and Mr Buffett you have the call to resume

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I'm going to move on the basis Mr Acting Deputy Speaker that you might be agreeable that we roll those two matters together, that is the Norfolk Island Strategic Plan, Order of the Day No 2 and Order of the Day No 3, Norfolk Island Strategic Review Report. We spoke on these matters at our last Sitting and we did identify some issues to be addressed in both of those matters. In addition to that there is some perception, especially in the community that this matter might be languishing somewhat. And we as Members in a more informal atmosphere talked about that to try and find how we could progress the matter with some impetus and vigour and the proposal will be put forward by the Chief Minister in a moment, but I just wanted to say that I think we need to move with some vigour in this matter and he will be proposing to us a Group who will have a time frame to address both of those areas and to come back to the House with something more concrete that we can get our grips into and get on with this particular job and I am happy therefore, for the Chief Minister to pick up the matter thereafter.

MR SMITH

Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. Mr Buffett is quite correct. In an informal meeting we had the other day, it was really decided that we would have a committee that comprises of a Minister, one of the non Executives and a member of the Public Service and member of the Public Service Association to pick out the bits of the Strategic Review in particular and bring the ones that can be put together and apply to the Strategic Plan to be done as quickly as possible and from that point on I would imagine that it would come back to the House with the recommendations of the Strategic Review for agreement or disagreement on those particular areas. I won't be moving a motion in the House to make that Committee, I would rather do it as just a Committee that we form in an informal sense. I think we should deal with both of these - well let me go back a step. The way I had been handling the Strategic Plan and Strategic Review, is that I put them into the House at the last sitting I was at so that we could come back to the next meeting and address the recommendations one at a time, whether we agreed to them or not and take it from there, but I'm quite happy to not go down that track at this point in time because there was some thought from Members that it was a rather cumbersome way of doing it, going through each 48 recommendations so I am quite happy not to do that at this point in time. I am happy to wait until the Committee brings back in the very near future, whatever recommendations can be handled quickly and there's quite a few of those that can be done. I think the parts that the Members seem to be focussing on with the Strategic Review, I'm going to talk about that at the same time. I know it's the next on the Notice Paper, but if we handle them both at the same time, the parts that the Members seem to be wanting to get into place fairly quickly is the Lines of Business Structure of the Administration and also the Lines of Business for the Ministers that would sit on top of that Management Structure and I think that can be dealt with fairly quickly and easily by the Committee as probably the first things they need to do. In the proposed functional structure in the Strategic Review it lists seven ministries and seven management positions that flow on from underneath those ministries. I have a concern about the seven management positions. I believe there are too many there. I certainly don't think we would be running with seven ministries but the proposal that I might be able to put forward to other Members for acceptance or not is that we may actually reduce that number to five which would be an increase of one executive member over what we currently have. The reason behind my thinking with that is, with the Strategic issues as I think all Members realise, there is a lot of work in actually getting it all together and it may just require that extra executive that can actually bring it all together and spend the time on doing it, without having to worry about the day to day running of the normal executive position. If that were acceptable, that person would focus probably primarily on Strategic Planning. At that point, with that Minister working with that Committee, they can certainly look at the lines of business and make the appropriate recommendations about what sort of management system we have. If we were to do something along those lines, we don't have a Secretary to Government at this present time. If we weren't to replace that position you could probably work with five Ministers and however many management positions there are and eliminate the need for a Secretary to Government position at all. I think it would work quite efficiently if we were to look down that track. I only mention those because as I said before, Members are focussing a bit on the management structure, or the proposed functional structure of the Strategic Review. With the Strategic Plan that document, as is the Strategic Review, are both draft documents. In the Strategic Plan there were things put in there for us to either agree or not agree to the processes. I would hope that all Members would agree with the way that the Strategic structure or the framework for Strategic Planning is set up. There's five parts to that. If we agree to that sort

of framework, we can apply it to just about every major issue that we deal with, because you fix the issue, from that you pick your key initiatives and your specific projects, the time frame for applying the projects and most importantly the cost, which is what I was talking about in the budgetary sense a little while back. Some Members have expressed concern about some of the issues that are listed in here, or the ones that aren't listed in here which is probably more important to some Members, but that's OK. What I would like to see here is for us to adopt, not necessarily today, the framework of the Strategic Plan and for Members to then add whatever they want to add as a Strategic issue or delete something that's already been entered into the Strategic Plan by John Howard and Associates. If we do that, if we adopt that framework, the principles of Strategic Planning, which is those five points, and if we apply whatever we want out of the Strategic Review document by the same process, it will all fall into place and I am happy to see what Members want to do. Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker

MR BUFFETT

Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I'm not really commenting upon what Mr Smith has just said at this moment. I am just concentrating on one particular issue about getting this matter moving forward with some impetus. The Chief Minister has indicated maybe not to conclude the group today, and if he is not in a position to do that at this very minute that is understandable, but today is Wednesday, and I would like to think that by Friday, in fact that that matter had been tidied, so that the matter can have impetus and get on and further that it might be thought that that group might be in a position to provide a progress report to our July sitting with the idea of maybe a substantive report at our August sitting. Now I'm not firm on those dates but I'm trying to put down a time frame that we can actually deliver upon because unless we do that it is going to go out and out and out and it would be much better if we had those sort of considerations in our mind so the sort of things that I'm suggesting at this moment is that the Chief Minister endeavour to tidy the group by Friday of this week. That that group be in a position to give us a progress report at our July sitting and the July sitting is not a long time from where we are now. This is a sitting at the end of this month almost so we haven't got the normal monthly cycle there, but to give a progress report nevertheless with an idea of a substantive report say at the sitting in August. I make that suggestion and it can be talked about

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I would just like to make a couple of comments on the set up. I don't know. I thought we could have saved \$100,000 if we are going to have a Committee to look at it, but anyhow. The Review suggests eight separate lines of business or departments or agencies or whatever you like to call it, he just uses lines of business, which is a bit of a mouthful, and each of these lines of business can be headed by an executive. Now with executive costs and conditions which you are looking at there, so you are looking at about \$60,000 for each position. I believe it's one of Howard's Rolls Royce models. There are a few of them in here. In time, in the future it might be appropriate but I don't believe that having eight executives and the like are appropriate at this present time and we really can't afford it. I mean, we have to be realistic. You are looking at a situation now that will cost the Island, if we follow the Howard vote, a minimum of what I have worked out to be, \$320,000 on top of the present wage bill. Now if you look at support for that, if you look at recruitment from outside which Howard is very keen on if you look through his Report; you are getting up to close on half a million dollars. Now that is just the top area. I may be contradicted on some of the figures and you might be able to sneak a few dollars here and there, but these are facts not fiction and they are costs we can't afford. So my belief is, what we should do is go with what we have. I cannot see why

MR SMITH Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I just need to reply to what Gary said there. I would just like to point out that we only got the report at the end of April. I put it into the May meeting and made it an Order of the Day for the next meeting which I wasn't here for. It just seems to be...

MR ROBERTSON

MR SMITH That's alright Gary it's just that I start to hear things like, we are dragging this out, but heck, I missed a meeting. It doesn't mean to say that everything's gone into a panic because we haven't dealt further with it. I do need to point that out. It hasn't been around for months and months this report. We only just got it and I was dealing with it as far as the proper processes were concerned

MR ADAMS Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I certainly agree with Members concern that we should focus on progressing these matters as a matter of urgency. I think it is something that has sat around for a while. We've talked about it for a while. I think there's a motion lying around somewhere and one of the options contained in that motion is not to do the plan and I don't believe in anybody estimation, that that is actually an option. It certainly is a community expectation that something occur. We've undertaken a process of informing the community and created that expectation. In that process we have spent a considerable sum of money. I think we've downloaded somewhere in the order of 90.000 solely in financial resources and also quite a sum in resources from the point of view of people's time. We need to expediently progress this matter. This Eighth Assembly has less than two years to run. We need to focus strongly on the review and the Strategic Plan and we need to be seen to be doing so rather providing rhetoric. A lot of smoke. Not much fire and no progress. We need to regularly be seen to be ticking of progress points as we go down that path. I think George has put up an option as a way forward and I do agree with Gary that it would be good if we don't see, on a continuing basis, this appear on the Notice Paper for further discussion at a further time and the whole show rolls on and more smoke and no progress. Same old story. In the absence of something better, I certainly support the Chief Minister's option as a way to fast track this and it is something that needs to be fast tracked, not to simply grind along on its own merry way and every now and then we give it a shove and a few more words and stumble on down the road a bit further. I think we really need to get on with it in a serious manner rather than simply saying it, thank you

MR BROWN Mr Acting Deputy Speaker if we are to appoint a Committee, then I certainly hope that we are going to appoint a Committee that is going to get along and do what needs to be done without thinking that if they take long enough the whole deal will just be forgotten. If that were to occur my view would be that we should appoint a fifth Minister, and that fifth Minister having responsibility only for the Strategic Plan and I think we ought to give thought to that in any event. The history of Committee's in successive Legislative Assembly's has been one of the occasional report and very little happening and we can't let that occur in this case

MR ION ROBINSON Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. Could I suggest that perhaps we meet after this Sitting to discuss the group or Committee and which way forward to go

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Robinson. Are Members agreed on that? We can do it. Thank you Mr Smith. Mr Smith you did intimate a little while ago the desire to adjourn this. Is that the case still

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I would propose that discussion on this matter be concluded on the basis that the Chief Minister is putting forward and will discuss further with us, a group, and that there will be a time frame attached to the delivery of the product that this group will have a brief to deliver to us. That means that we have set up a programme as to how we handle it. We don't necessarily list it each time which will annoy Mr Robertson, but there will be a time frame attached to this group to deliver to us

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Further debate. Debate is then concluded on Order of the Day No 2 and No 3 Honourable Members. We now move on

BOOKMAKERS BILL 1998

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 Acting Deputy Speaker thank you. I had introduced the Bill on an earlier occasion. Considerable further work has been done by the Legislative Counsel. A detail stage amendment and explanatory note has been circulated. There is nothing further that I wish to add on this occasion but at the appropriate time I will wish to deal with the detail stage amendments

ACTING 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

I'm sorry. Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Acting Deputy Speaker. I just want to make a comment because I was a bit critical of the initial Bookmakers Bill and I am pleased to say that I congratulate John and the drafting staff on doing it but there is one point that I would like to make and I find it very interesting in this actual act and that is the definition of a "close associate". It goes on at length that a close associate is a spouse, parent, brother, sister, child or other etc (b) members of the same household (c) partners or joint venture (d) one is a body corporate etc (e) one is a body corporate and the other is a share holder and on it goes. It is a very interesting concept because it states later in the Act in relation to the activities where a close associate cannot actually operate so I find it really interesting this sort of thing because we have continually had problems on the Island here I think with relationships and what have you in acting on Committees and being able to vote and all this sort of character and this sort of sets out something which could be of interest on a wider sense

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Further debate? No further debate, I put the question that the bill be agreed to in principle Honourable Members

QUESTION PUT

Therefore this House stands adjourned until Wednesday 15th July 1998 10am in the morning.

