Cost of Alice Springs to Darwin Railway
Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer to his claim on Territory Extra this morning that $600m was an exaggerated figure for the construction of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway, and to the CIBC further preliminary figures which assumed, in 1985 dollars, a figure of $661m for construction of the railway. Can he now claim that a figure of $600m for that construction is exaggerated?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, clearly a question on financial details of the construction of the railway could be answered better by the Treasurer. However, I pointed out in that interview that no firm costs could be established in relation to what the final figure would be because many variations related to it, including the type of material used in the construction, the specifications used, the construction time, the rates of interest prevailing at the time, inflation rates and so on. There are so many possible variations that I would not be game to put any figure on it. Financial matters such as that are the province of the Treasurer.

Page 356