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NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Fourth Assembly  
First Session

**Parliamentary Record**

Tuesday 16 October 1984

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Part II—Questions  
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## **NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

### **Fourth Assembly First Session**

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Opposition Leader	Bob Collins
Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Health, Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs	Nicholas Manuel Dondas
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Minister for Education	Tom Harris
Minister for Housing and Conservation	Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich
Minister for Community Development	Daryl William Manzie

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Mr Leo  
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**PART I**

**DEBATES**

## DEBATES

Tuesday 16 October 1984

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

### PETITION School Bus Service

Mr MANZIE (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 30 residents from Anula and Wulagi relating to the Anula to Holy Spirit School bus service. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms to the requirements of Standing Orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to; petition received and read:

*To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia, the humble petition of 30 citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully sheweth that there is a compelling demographic, social and educational justification for the continuation of the Anula-Holy Spirit School bus service in 1985. Over 40 children currently use the service. Continuation of the service would be consistent with government policy as expressed in section 18 of Northern Territory Schools Direction for the Eighties. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Anula-Holy Spirit School bus service be continued in 1985 and subsequently if warranted by demand and demographic factors, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.*

### TABLED PAPER Auditor-General's Annual Report 1983-84

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table the Auditor-General's report for the year ending 30 June 1984.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

### MOTION Auditor-General's Annual Report 1983-84

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the report and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly at its rising adjourn to a time and date to be set by Mr Speaker in writing pursuant to Sessional Order.

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware that, at the time of the 1980 federal elections, there were no sittings of this Assembly at all. They would be aware also that all state parliaments will be vacating their parliamentary diaries for November. Like us, they believe that their parliaments are for the

purposes of discussing territory or state matters that are important to them and should not be used during a federal election for the purposes of campaigning for another place. That is the reason for the motion. Of course, Mr Speaker, we would have advised you to suspend the sittings during the course of the federal election campaign were it not for the fact that we have the budget before us and obviously we have to pass that.

Motion agreed to.

#### STATEMENT

Release of Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly  
Committee Evidence

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I advise that, pursuant to the resolution of the Legislative Assembly of 22 August 1974, I have approved the release of copies of the oral evidence given to the 1964 Northern Territory Legislative Council Select Committee on Social Welfare Legislation to Mr A. Markidis, 50 Arthur Street, Surry Hills, New South Wales, to assist him to compile material for a script on the life of Albert Namatjira.

#### TABLED PAPER

Report of New Parliament House Committee

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table the report of the New Parliament House Committee dated October 1984.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

#### MOTION

Report of New Parliament House Committee

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the report be adopted.

By way of explanation, I understand that the debate will be adjourned on this question. As you would be aware, the report came into the hands of the committee of this Assembly only yesterday and certainly members on this side have not had time to consider it. I am not sure about the opposition members. The reason for seeking an adjournment is so that members can seriously consider this important matter. As we would all be aware, the new parliament house for the Northern Territory is likely to be a building that will stand for many years.

Debate adjourned.

#### MOTION

Terms of Reference of New Parliament House Committee

Mr PERRON (Treasurer)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the terms of reference for the New Parliament House Committee, appointed on Tuesday 28 February 1984, be varied as follows:

*Omit paragraphs (2) and (3) and insert in their stead the following:*

*(2) the committee be appointed to act for and represent the Legislative Assembly, as the client for the new parliament house, in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of the new parliament house and all matters incidental thereto;*

(3) the committee consider and, as necessary, amend the parliament house competition brief which, when revised, shall be used as the basis for the design and construction of the new parliament house unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly or unless the committee resolves to reconsider the section of the revised brief;

(3A) the committee also consider and report on any matter relating to the planning, design and construction of the new parliament house and matters incidental thereto as may be referred to it by:  
(a) the Minister for Transport and Works or (b) resolution of the Legislative Assembly;

(3B) the committee be empowered, with the approval of the Speaker, to employ necessary staff and be provided with such facilities and resources as it may from time to time require and, in particular, that the committee be empowered to employ, on a contract basis, or second for the duration of the planning and construction of the new parliament house, a senior architect or other suitably-qualified person to act in all technical matters on its behalf and to liaise between the committee, the Department of Transport and Works and the architect.

Mr Speaker, by way of explanation, I am moving this motion at this stage so that honourable members will have time to consider it carefully for a future sittings.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I hope it is not for a future sittings. I understood that it was to be considered at this sittings. I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

#### MOTION

##### Design and Construction of New Parliament House

Mr PERRON (Treasurer)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that:

(1) the following be declared stages in the design and construction of the new parliament house:

- (a) design development;
- (b) contract documentation;
- (c) construction; and
- (d) interior design, including:

- (i) approval of proposals;
- (ii) approval of documentation and estimates;
- (iii) approval to call tenders; and
- (iv) coordination of fit-out and finishes;

(2) work shall not be commenced or carried out on a declared stage in the design or construction of parliament house unless the Legislative Assembly or, if the Legislative Assembly be not sitting at the time, the New Parliament House Committee, has passed a resolution authorising the commencement of work on that stage; and

(3) if the New Parliament House Committee authorises work on a stage pursuant to paragraph (2), it shall report the same to the Legislative Assembly when the Assembly next meets.



Debate adjourned.

TABLED PAPER  
Pularumpi Community Government Scheme

Mr MANZIE (Community Development)(by leave): Mr Speaker, in pursuance of part XX of the Local Government Act, I table the Pularumpi Community Government Scheme.

The Pularumpi Community Government Council was established on 3 October 1984 when notice of the approval of the scheme was published in the Northern Territory Gazette. The council is made up of 11 elected community residents with Mr Cyril Rioli as president. The Pularumpi Community Government Council will be the fourth such council to be established in the Northern Territory. Other community government councils established under part XX of the act include Lajamanu, Angurugu and Milikapiti.

The tabling of the scheme marks the conclusion of the formal steps necessary to establish the Pularumpi council as a statutory body. It also establishes the form and functions of the new council and opens the way for the community to initiate and accept greater responsibility in its development through self-management. Council development is a long-term process which will depend on the growth of skills in the community. It is also a process which will require patience, assistance and guidance from my department and many others, especially in the initial phase. It is anticipated that the council will provide an interface between the community and the wider Territory society and a forum for the residents of Pularumpi to raise issues of importance.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Northern Territory government, I congratulate the Pularumpi residents on the initiative they have taken in the establishment of community government. I look forward to the continuing commitment of the community to the success of this scheme.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
Alice Springs to Darwin Railway

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I table 3 reports relating to the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. The first is a review of the economic viability of the railway prepared by Canadian Pacific Consulting Services, an arm of the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company. The second is a review of the defence implications of the railway prepared by the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre of the Australian National University. The third is an environmental assessment report prepared by the federal Department of Home Affairs and the Environment.

Mr Speaker, I have spoken in this Assembly on several occasions about the Alice Springs to Darwin railway and I think it is fitting that my last major statement in this place should be on this subject. Of course, this will certainly not be the last statement that I will make about the railway. All Territorians can be sure that I will be saying a lot about the railway in other places in the weeks and months to come. The railway project remains critical to the future of the Northern Territory. This Assembly is familiar with the story of the railway so far - a saga of broken promises and unfulfilled commitments, a shameful chronicle of Commonwealth prevarication and lack of vision that stretches back 70 years.

All Territorians celebrated in September 1980 when, after years of federal hesitancy and after considerable effort by the Territory government, the then

Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Fraser, confirmed that the railway would be completed. Malcolm Fraser subsequently announced the railway as a bicentennial project for completion in 1988. Territorians were assured that this commitment was bipartisan and we had every reason to believe that the railway was to be a reality. In March 1983, Mr Hawke made it a solemn promise. The federal Minister for Transport, Mr Morris, confirmed that promise and Mr Reeves gave his word that a federal Labor government would build the railway.

Mr Speaker, we all know what a charade that turned out to be. In a pathetic effort to diffuse and confuse the issue, we were told the railway could not be built because the federal budget deficit was too large. If that was so, the proper approach would have been to confirm that the railway would go ahead but perhaps over a longer construction period. Instead, 130 000 Territorians were asked to pay 40% of the cost - approximately \$220m - for a project which has wide implications for national development and defence and which the Commonwealth has a legislative obligation to meet. The cost to the Territory taxpayer and the cost in services and facilities which all Territorians would have had to forgo made that deal totally unacceptable. Perhaps the sorriest chapter of all in the saga was the so-called independent economic inquiry. This inquiry, conceived and imposed on us by the federal government, was nothing more than a pretext against which to retract finally the promise that the railway would be built.

We accepted the inquiry only under great duress. Our views on the terms of reference were ignored. Our views on the structure and membership of the inquiry were ignored. Our views on its timing and conduct were ignored. But even given minimal time to prepare our case, we produced nonetheless a comprehensive 3-volume submission which was then and remains now the most comprehensive assessment of the financial and economic viability of the railway that has been produced. That submission concluded that, in economic terms, the rail link is viable and its construction would provide economic benefits to the nation. Our submission had the full support of the Northern Territory Labor Party. So it was with considerable anger but not much surprise that we received the news that the inquiry had concluded that the railway would not be economically viable and should not be built. This so-called independent inquiry was totally cavalier and utterly irresponsible in its treatment of the very careful analysis of freight forecasts put forward by the Northern Territory. It produced its own illustrative projections of freight without any justification or supporting argument. The federal government could not wait to seize on this report to announce that the railway would not be built. The federal Minister for Transport had announced that even before I had received a copy of the report.

Mr Speaker, needless to say, the Territory examined the inquiry's report very carefully and produced a detailed critique of it which raised a number of criticisms relating not only to the treatment of freight forecasts but also to a number of serious methodological questions. We endeavoured to resolve all of these issues by approaching the federal government to obtain further information on the approach taken by the inquiry. But these approaches were denied. Many months ago, we made a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act for access to the relevant papers and documents. The response after these months has been 350 pages of so-called documents which are in fact nothing more than press clippings and parliamentary questions and answers, information that we and the public were already aware of. Our real request has not been met, and it appears that it will not be met. I can only conclude that the request strikes too close to home.

The Commonwealth does have a lot to hide in the conduct of this exercise. It is significant that, although the Canadian Pacific consulting group offered

to meet Mr Hill at a place of his choosing and discuss aspects of his report with him, Mr Hill turned down that request. The shallowness of the independent economic inquiry served only to strengthen our conviction that the railway was not only a viable project but one which was essential for the Territory and for Australia.

However, given the total intractability of the Commonwealth, we were forced to move forward on our own and it was in these circumstances that we commissioned the 2 reports which I have tabled this morning. Canadian Pacific Consulting Services is the consulting arm of the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company. This organisation is a world-renowned railway operator and the consultants have world-wide and impeccable credentials. It runs a very successful railway system over a country which bears considerable similarities to Australia. We requested Canadian Pacific to review the conclusions of the Hill Report and the Northern Territory submission and to provide us with an independent view as to the financial viability of the railway. In particular, we asked Canadian Pacific to test the essential conclusion in the Hill Report that the railway would impose a substantial economic cost to the Commonwealth.

The consultant reviewed all the material and had discussions with relevant people in the Northern Territory and in South Australia. At the urging of the Territory government, the consultant sought to meet with Mr David Hill who conducted the earlier inquiry to clarify a number of important issues arising out of the report. Mr Hill refused to meet with him on the grounds that all the relevant information was in the report and suggested that the consultant direct all questions to the federal Minister for Transport instead.

The Canadian Pacific report is available for honourable members to study. Therefore, I will not deal with its findings in great detail. But I do want to emphasise the conclusion: 'The railway is essentially an economic break-even proposition likely neither to impose a major economic cost on the Commonwealth nor provide a significant return'.

Mr Speaker, that conclusion is a total repudiation of the Hill Inquiry's findings. The report contains an assessment of railway costs and the impact on costs and revenues of various potential freight volumes. It looks at the financial implications of a railway in terms of cost savings in areas such as road costs and road maintenance and, in a very important contribution, examines the appropriate methodology in assessing the costs and benefits of the project at this time. In that regard, honourable members may recall that, in March of this year, I said this about the Hill Report:

*A major criticism of the report which should be made is of its methodological defects. As an exercise in the appraisal of the costs and benefits of the rail link, it fails to adopt universally-accepted procedures. As a result, its conclusions are wrong. The Alice to Darwin railway is not a freestanding proposal under which trains will simply run backwards and forwards between Alice Springs and Darwin, bringing benefits to no one other than those in that corridor. The line would be an integral part of the national rail system. Indeed, it is the only major missing link in such a national system. It follows from this that the completion of the link would generate additional rail traffic on other sections of the national rail system outside of the Northern Territory. Indeed, the report acknowledges that rail has advantages in the area of long-haul transport. The cost benefits of this additional traffic throughout the national rail system must be attributed to the Alice Springs to Darwin railway for the simple reason that, without that rail link, they will not occur.*

*That concept is quite fundamental in any project assessment of this type yet the inquiry chose to ignore it. More than that, it specifically rejected it.*

Canadian Pacific has supported that view about methodology and has even pointed out that the Northern Territory submission erred in not extending this principle far enough in some important areas. During the conduct of this most recent assessment, Canadian Pacific has suggested that a further review of the engineering and design standards to apply to the railway could be warranted and that significant savings in capital costs might be possible by applying different standards. This is an area in which Canadian Pacific, as railway builders and operators, has considerable experience. We are therefore proceeding to a second phase study and we have asked Canadian Pacific to undertake this task.

Establishing the financial and economic viability of the railway is extremely important but there are other issues as well. There is the future of northern development. There is the consolidation of the investment which Australia is making in the future of the Northern Territory. There are the more than 2000 jobs which are at stake. Also at stake are important questions of national defence.

The issue of defence was excluded unilaterally from the terms of reference of the Hill Inquiry by the federal government. That was just one of the many decisions taken by the Commonwealth which the Territory opposed strenuously. The Commonwealth sought a defence assessment from the defence establishment and, after considerable prodding, an expurgated copy of that was eventually made available to myself and the Premier of South Australia. I read that assessment with interest. It seemed to me to be a fairly unequivocal statement of support for the railway and it emphasised the extreme significance of the railway in contingent circumstances. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence blithely concluded that these major defence issues in no way detracted from the so-called economic findings of the Hill Inquiry and that was the end of the matter. It is interesting that only last week a committee of the House of Representatives - I think the Defence Committee - reported through the persona of its chairman, Manfred Cross MHR, the member for Brisbane, that Australia is poorly equipped to meet even a medium or small operation against us.

Once again, it fell to us to try to produce in a positive and constructive way some further insights into the defence issues. To do this, we engaged the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. The team was led by the head of the centre, Dr Ball, supported by 2 former senior military officers, one of whom had been chief of army logistics. This study shows once again the totally cavalier approach by the federal government to important national issues. The report concludes that 'in most defence contingencies, even at medium levels of threat, the availability of a rail link through Alice Springs to Darwin would be essential to the deployment and support of a defence force'.

The report provides a very detailed assessment of strategic considerations including likely threats, warning times and priorities. The centre calculated the quantities of fuel and other supplies, personnel and equipment moved at various levels of threat and concluded that road infrastructure lacked the required capacity. It also makes the very important point that infrastructure development in the defence of Australia must be indivisible when it comes to national planning. The study observes that a reliance on road transport to maintain any defence capability in the north and north-west of Australia is totally unacceptable. The report states:

*The strain on the road transport capability is likely to prove intolerable and the necessary support for the deployment of an operational force could not be guaranteed. The availability of a rail link between Alice Springs and Darwin is essential to the timely deployment and subsequent guaranteed logistic support of a force.*

One of the key warnings in the report is that against waiting until there is some indication of an impending threat to Australia before developing infrastructures such as the railway. The report notes that the very existence of the railway would be an important deterrent. It also notes the considerable time which would be required to build a railway and the possibility of a major threat developing well within this time scale.

Mr Speaker, I commend this report to the careful study of honourable members. What emerges from these recent reports is a much clearer picture about the railway than we have ever had before. The railway is economically viable, it is essential to national defence and it is totally justified by the wider social audit and community issues. The project must proceed and we must continue to confront the federal government with the facts. The evidence is clear and the interests of the Northern Territory require the strongest possible bipartisan support for the project. I have said before that I will not rest on this issue until the railway is built. Mr Speaker, I renew that pledge and hope that all honourable members will join me in it.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, under normal circumstances, I would have preferred to have delayed my response to this matter until I had sufficient opportunity to debate the conclusions that have been reached in this most important report. Indeed, I point out to the Chief Minister and his government that reports that are tabled in this Assembly on the question of the Northern Territory railway are not simply brought before this Assembly for the personal political convenience and campaigning of the Chief Minister. They are for the benefit of the Northern Territory. With no prior notice to the opposition after it had been advised originally that these sittings would be of one week's duration and considering the fact that this is a 7-week campaign - the longest in federal history - it is a disgrace that we now find that the special adjournment moved this morning was to prorogue or end this sittings today rather than on Thursday. This sittings is to be terminated 2 days early for the personal convenience of the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. It is a matter of gross discourtesy, totally unlike the courtesies that the Leader of the House normally extends to the proper operation of this Assembly. The reason it is happening has more to do with the presence of the Chief Minister's film crew in the public gallery this morning than it has to do with any nonsense about federal politicking being kept out of this Assembly.

I assumed the November sittings would be cancelled. We all did. That would be appropriate and proper. However, considering the lack of sitting days in our small parliament, the fact that there are 21 items on this notice paper and the fact that I would like to have heard the Canadian Pacific report debated with some degree of authority and interest because it concerns Northern Territory development - and is not simply a campaign plank for the Chief Minister to run on - I would have liked to have had more time to study the report and respond to it perhaps the day after next. I assumed we would be sitting on Wednesday and Thursday. We were certainly not told there would be any other arrangements made. Of course, it makes sense to cancel the November sittings. If it was a 3-week campaign, I would have anticipated a phone call

from the Leader of the House, as I normally receive, to let me know. I might add that that arrangement has worked extremely well in the past. If we do receive prior notice, on almost every occasion, if it is a reasonable case, we agree that it should be done. But it is not a 4-week campaign or a 3-week campaign; it will continue for 7 long weeks.

It is quite relevant in terms of the items of business that should be discussed that the Assembly should sit for the lousy 2 extra days allowed for this sittings. What reason do we have to believe that it should? It is no less an authority than the Chief Minister himself because, when he was interviewed last week as to why he was not resigning immediately as Chief Minister, he said: 'The reason is that there is important unfinished business before the Legislative Assembly. It would be quite improper for me to resign before that is completed. I intend to sit as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory during the sittings next week'. Under those circumstances, one could be expected to believe him.

Whilst the Canadian Pacific report provides very useful additional debating material for the push to get this railway, it casts as much doubt and validity on the Northern Territory government's own submission as it does on the Hill Inquiry or anything else. I agree with the Chief Minister that it is probably the best and most authoritative report that I have seen on the whole question of the railway, but it points up the deficiencies and inadequacies of the Northern Territory government's own original submission.

Such inadequacies were highlighted also in the absolutely ridiculous submission it put to the federal government in respect of the establishment of a Northern Territory university. That submission was so gross in its inaccuracies and so ridiculous in its contemplation that a university with 15 degree and sub-degree courses with an academic staff of 60 would be established in 6 months that it was laughed out of court. As I have pointed out before - and it is the case with the railway submission - by trying to sell people the town hall plot, as Northern Territory ministers tend to do, the Northern Territory's case is in fact prejudiced and not assisted. The Canadian Pacific report points up as much as anything else the inequities and the deficiencies in the government's own original submission to the Commonwealth government.

Mr Speaker, I reached that conclusion on a brief reading of the report yesterday. However, after being told by the Chief Minister that we had important business to debate during the sittings, which indeed we do, we expected to be given at least 48 hours to read the report. We expected the debate to be adjourned until Thursday when we could perhaps have some authoritative debate on this matter. The opposition, and indeed the government's own backbench, have been denied that opportunity quite unnecessarily.

Mr Speaker, the cold, hard facts are that, in a federal campaign of this length, there is no need whatsoever to cut off the 2 miserable days that are left this week. We are being put through this exercise purely for the convenience of the Northern Territory's departing Chief Minister. Once again, it indicates only too clearly how he is prepared to use his position and indeed wipe his boots on this Assembly when it suits him for his own campaign. I would be surprised if the Leader of the House would disagree that, at the very least, 5 minutes prior notice by telephone this morning would have been greatly appreciated. We were led to believe, not only by the adjournment moved by the Leader of the House at the last sittings, which is what I normally rely on, but indeed by the statement of the Chief Minister last week that the Assembly had important business to discuss, that we would sit for the full week.

I must say that my initial response to the Canadian Pacific report, from the brief reading I have been able to give it, is that it casts as much

criticism on the Northern Territory government's own original submission as it does on the Hill Report or any other contribution to the railway debate. However, I want to place on record the disgust that I feel about the total discourtesy that has been extended by the government and, in particular, by the Leader of the House to the opposition and to the Assembly as well. I do not want to bore people to death by going through the notice paper and listing some of these 21 items which should be debated in the Northern Territory irrespective of what is happening in Canberra. I have never noticed any particular desire, thank goodness, to pay too much attention to what Canberra dictates, says or does in respect of discussing our own business in here. We have matters that need to be debated for the Territory's sake and not for the sake of the Chief Minister's campaign. The railway is one of them.

Mr Speaker, I say again that I protest at the performance of the government on this occasion. I protest at this Assembly simply being used as a convenience and a doormat by a Chief Minister who told us authoritatively 12 months ago that he would be serving out his full term as Chief Minister. He is now wiping his boots on this Assembly as he departs. It is an absolute disgrace. I must say in all honesty that it is a fairly uninspiring departure after what I consider to be 10 very valuable years of contribution to this legislature. Frankly, I am surprised and disappointed that the Chief Minister himself did not want to leave this Assembly with a little more dignity and a little more credit than he is doing. We have a great deal of unfinished business before us and a commitment was given by the Chief Minister that he has failed to honour.

It is not just a question of the railway debate and the Canadian Pacific report. Honourable members will recall the circumstances to which I am referring. Honourable members will recall the Chief Minister in a relaxed moment of frankness telling the truth to a journalist from the Woman's Day magazine and saying that, after 10 years - and it is 10 years on Friday - he would have had enough and he thought that he might give it up then. However, the Chief Minister then realised how dangerous that was for the last Assembly election campaign so he categorically assured this Assembly that the journalist was wrong. She had to have her editor go on ABC radio to defend her. There were no problems about blaming the journalist instantly. However, the editor had the interview on tape. We had the Chief Minister saying: 'I can assure you that I will be serving out my full term as Chief Minister in this Assembly'. We have more than 3 years still to run.

The Chief Minister - and this is a matter about which I am particularly angry - told us that he would hold a public seminar and advise every member of this Assembly on the details of the phantom development at Myilly Point which appears to be exhibiting all kinds of strange twists and turns that are totally out of kilter with the original announcement that he made to the Assembly. After 10 years of what I have been prepared to acknowledge not once but a dozen times publicly as good stewardship of the Northern Territory and after 7 years of what has been a competent and professional job as Chief Minister and head of the Northern Territory government, one would have expected that the Chief Minister himself would have wanted to have departed this Assembly with a little less haste and a little more dignity than he has demonstrated this morning. I must say that I was more taken aback by that particular aspect of the Leader of the House's announcement this morning than anything else. One would have thought that, after 10 years, he could have served out at least one complete week instead of terminating the sittings in the way it was terminated this morning.

The Chief Minister anticipated accurately that we intended to debate, as we should, the whole fiasco of his negotiations on the casinos and Myilly Point.

I was in fact giving the Chief Minister 24 hours grace, assuming that Thursday would be the last day for him to honour the commitment that he gave to hold a public seminar to explain all of these unanswered questions in detail while he was still Chief Minister. He gave a commitment 12 months ago to the people of the Northern Territory that he would finish his term. There is one piece of grossly outstanding business which he committed himself to complete as Chief Minister, and he has failed to do so: the casinos and the Myilly Point development. We have 50 vital questions which remain unanswered even though we were promised in the last sittings that they would be answered in a public seminar. He will be running out of here with his tail between his legs at 5 o'clock this afternoon, not even seeing fit to finish one complete week of sittings in the Assembly after 10 years of good service.

Mr Speaker, I must say that I am genuinely taken aback that the Chief Minister could finish his career in this Assembly in such a peremptory manner with absolutely no advice to the Assembly. Despite the occasions that I have crossed swords with the government and despite the many disagreements that I have had with the Chief Minister on political issues, I think it is significant that a Northern Territory politician has managed to achieve national significance as he has. I know how insignificant Australia is overseas, let alone the Northern Territory. It is significant that this is his last week in parliament after 7 years as Chief Minister. As a Leader of the Opposition who has worked with him, against him and often for him in the 7 years that I have been here, I would have liked to have been given a little more notice that this would be his last day in the Assembly. I was not the only one under that impression. Every single journalist in Darwin was under that impression because they are all running around outside saying: 'What is going on?' I would like to know. If he wanted to finish his 10 years with a degree of dignity, and considering that his 10 years comes up on Friday, Thursday would have been a most appropriate time on which to finish his tenure as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory government. I cannot believe that, since this is the Chief Minister's last day as Chief Minister in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, this Assembly was given no prior notice whatsoever that that would be the case. I am sincerely disappointed that that kind of discourtesy was shown to this Assembly. I have placed on record outside and inside this Assembly my feelings about the Chief Minister's capabilities in the job, despite the political disagreements we have had.

Quite honestly, I would have liked to have been accorded a bit of courtesy as Leader of the Opposition, and I would have liked to have seen this Assembly accorded a bit of courtesy through the Chief Minister telling us that this would be his last day in this Assembly. That courtesy would not have taken much effort; a telephone call this morning would have been sufficient. I am extremely disappointed that that was not extended to this Assembly. It is bad for the Chief Minister because, instead of leaving the Assembly after 10 years' service - and 7 years as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory government - with a little dignity on Thursday night, this information has been sprung on us this morning. It was not clear to me or indeed to other observers of the proceedings this morning what the import of that motion was otherwise I would have debated it at the appropriate time. Frankly, I do not think the Chief Minister has done himself the slightest bit of service by being so keen to sprint to the tape on 1 December after having given the Assembly a commitment 12 months ago that he would see out the full 4 years. He could not even complete this week.

Mr ROBERTSON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, it is very difficult to work out just what the speech from the Leader of the Opposition had to do with the railway line and the Hill Report.



Mr B. Collins: Nothing.

Mr ROBERTSON: As the honourable member interjects, Mr Speaker, absolutely nothing. Unfortunately, I will now not be able to spend the time debating this very important document which the Chief Minister has circulated. However, I really must pick up a couple of points made by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, clearly the Leader of the Opposition would lead us to believe that it was not an adjournment motion we moved this morning but the prorogation of the Assembly. He tried to give the impression that matters like the Hill Report will now not be able to be debated by honourable members of this Assembly.

Mr B. Collins: That is not what I said.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, he gave the clear impression that these matters would not be debated. Of course they will, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I must take issue with the Leader of the Opposition over the question of lack of notice. This morning, the opposition whip asked me if we would be sitting in November. I said to him: 'No. As a matter of fact, I will be moving a special adjournment motion immediately after question time'. There is only one form of special adjournment motion which I have used in this place and that is to notify honourable members that the next sitting day will be that which is notified by Mr Speaker in writing pursuant to sessional order. The opposition whip has been here for 7 years, the same time as the Leader of the Opposition. He must know the substance of a special adjournment motion. Not only did I move the special adjournment motion but, unlike my normal practice, I actually spoke to it and invited debate from the opposition. They know what a special adjournment is but there was not a peep out of them. Indeed, quite the contrary. Every one of them, and I watched them, sat there...

Mr B. Collins: I was outside the Assembly.

Mr ROBERTSON: The rest of his colleagues were here. Each and every one of them said 'aye' to the motion. What on earth is the nonsense about?

Mr B. Collins: I was speaking on my own behalf, James, as you know.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, no doubt, we will hear from the honourable member for MacDonnell. I saw him try to leap to his feet. I personally watched him vote for the motion which is now causing such concern.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out during the Leader of the House's brief attempt at a defence of his actions this morning - it was fairly pathetic - it would have been reasonable to assume, given that there were 4 notices of motion this morning, that those notices would have been proceeded with at this sittings. It was reasonable to assume that this Assembly would sit for 3 days this week. We have never opposed special adjournment motions. I took it in good faith that we would sit for the remainder of this week. For the Leader of the House to try to defend the indefensible is absolutely pathetic. For the rest of this government - for those mindless clowns who sit on the backbench - to agree to this Assembly closing down today is pathetic. It not only reflects on the Chief Minister but on all of his colleagues. They are pathetic clowns.

Mr Robertson: But you agreed to it!

Mr B. Collins: You put the kids behind you, that is for sure. You cannot get out of it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order! Will the honourable member resume his seat. I think the debate has strayed far enough from the railway report. If there is any further irrelevant debate, the matter will be proceeded with in another way.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I have a couple of comments germane both to the report in question and to the announcement made by the Chief Minister and the comments he made in relation to this report. Like the Leader of the Opposition and every member of this Assembly, I have been regaled with the various reports and various questions and the desperate and not-so-desperate attempts of the Chief Minister to gain publicity over this matter. Under normal circumstances, it would have been my chosen course of action to adjourn the motion that this particular statement be noted. However, for this particular statement to remain on the notice paper for any length of time would have been quite pointless. Any subsequent debate would have been quite pointless.

Mr Speaker, you would be aware, as the Chief Minister would be well aware - and I am sorry to see the Leader of the House leaving the Assembly because he too would be well aware - that the purpose of noting a statement and moving that such debate be adjourned is so that all members can have due time to give consideration to the statement. What could be of greater magnitude than the question of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line? That very process of consideration has been aborted. Of course, the Chief Minister can sit with his feet up on the Deputy Chief Minister's desk and with his chin on his hand because he knows that he has been successful. I notice that the Chief Minister's mate from the Northern Territory News has already left the Press Gallery so he knows he will get page 1 or page 2 coverage. But let us be under no illusions, Mr Speaker. I dare say it is of as deep concern to you as it is to me that the Chief Minister has chosen to regard the deliberations of this Assembly as so unimportant, so irrelevant, so trite that he can move a motion that a statement be noted and then have it forgotten altogether. I think that it is not unreasonable for me...

Mr Perron: It goes on the notice paper.

Mr BELL: I hear the Minister for Lands. Maybe he is thinking of taking the Chief Minister's place and that is why he has decided to chip in at this particular stage. He says that it will go on the notice paper. I shall say again, for the benefit of the Minister for Lands that, if it is to go on the notice paper, there is an obligation on the person who moves that statement to be here to answer the debate otherwise the deliberations of this Assembly are as irrelevant as the Chief Minister is determined to regard them by his behaviour this morning.

We have witnessed a nice little parliamentary coup today, Mr Speaker. Let us have a look at the notice of procedure that the Clerk so kindly passed around to us. I believe that, in the context of this debate on this particular statement, that is quite relevant. We have proceeded quite well. We have had notices given by the Chief Minister and a clutch of his colleagues. Then, we had questions without notice, papers and ministerial statements by leave but nowhere does any special adjournment appear on that particular procedure list. Immediately, that raises the quite relevant question - and good luck, I see the Chief Minister is departing now. Obviously, he cannot stand any more. May he go outside and hang his head in shame.

The question then in relation to the procedures of this Assembly is: when did the government make the decision? Did the Chief Minister get out of bed

this morning and decide that he could not take 3 more days of this and that today was the best he could do? It would certainly appear to be that. You will recall, Mr Speaker, that during the last sittings we had a special adjournment motion moved. I sincerely trust that the Leader of the House recalls this because, at that stage, the Deputy Chief Minister moved a special adjournment motion saying that this sittings would not last for 2 weeks, but for 1 week. Yet here we have a further special adjournment motion that prevents the orderly discussion and appropriate debate of the important question of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line because the organisation of this Assembly has been left in shambles. I suggest that this is a harbinger of times to come because the Chief Minister has departed this Assembly this morning for good. Evidently, today is to be our last day but I suggest that this is a harbinger of the chaos that will descend on this government in the coming weeks and months.

I wish to make 2 further points, Mr Speaker, in relation to this statement and to the motion that the Assembly take note of the statement. One is the difficulty that will be created by the imminent departure of the Chief Minister and the prevention of proper debate on a number of motions. Clearly, this is one of them. This particular statement is only one of a number of motions that should be debated during this sittings. I draw your attention to 2 in particular, Mr Speaker. They appear at no 12 and no 13 on the notice paper.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr D.W. COLLINS: The honourable member is not addressing the topic in question.

Mr BELL: Obviously, it is my intention to debate, in an orderly and proper fashion, the motion moved by the Chief Minister that his statement be noted. I believe that there are certain procedural considerations involved with the consideration of the motion of the Chief Minister that mean that honourable members should be permitted to debate in as wide a fashion as possible.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I move that the debate be adjourned.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the debate be adjourned. All those of that opinion say 'aye'. I think the ayes have it.

Mr BELL: Mr Speaker, I move dissent from your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member will please resume his seat.

Mr BELL: I am moving dissent from your ruling, Mr Speaker, that the statement be noted because the point of order was not decided. I spoke to the point of order and you failed to make a ruling on that, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the member for MacDonnell is clearly out of order on both counts. At no stage was he speaking to the point of order nor has he moved a motion of dissent because there was no ruling. It is the accepted procedure of this Assembly that, if there is a question before the Chair, the question will be decided. On this occasion, the question has been decided and I now call for business of the day.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL (Serial 235)

Continued from 30 August 1984.

Mr HATTON (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, in opening my address on the budget debate this afternoon, I am pleased to note that at least a couple of the members of the opposition have decided to turn up after the concerns they were expressing this morning as to the extreme importance of today's sittings.

Mr Speaker, I propose to speak in favour of the budget and, in so doing, I would like to address myself to comments made by the member for Millner and, to some extent, the comments that were made by the Leader of the Opposition during their speeches on the budget on 30 August. Mr Speaker, the member for Millner, who claims for himself the title of shadow treasurer, has presented what could only be described as the most inept presentation on a budget that I have ever had the misfortune to listen to. In the course of his speech, which extended beyond its allotted time, the honourable member sought to demonstrate that this budget is uninformative, the economy is in decline, the budget does not address some real needs nor is the information provided by the government sufficient for people to make an analysis of the budget. It must be said that, if the honourable member for Millner has such difficulties, that is an expression of his own lack of ability rather than of the information that is provided.

Mr Speaker, for a number of years, I have been looking at budgets of the Northern Territory government and I must say that I have had little difficulty in coming to grips with the thrusts and the impact of those budgets. The information that is provided by the government by way of the general budget papers and the explanatory notes on the various functional areas of government and the extremely informative documentation in the form of annual reports that are provided regularly to this Assembly make an analysis of the performance of this government quite possible for people who understand what they are reading or, at least, take the effort to read and research.

The honourable member dealt at some length with economic indicators to try to demonstrate that the Northern Territory's economy is not in very good shape. He referred to unemployment and employment statistics, motor vehicle registrations and building approvals as indicators. I think it may be of assistance to the member for Millner to address a few of the economic indicators that are readily and easily obtainable from public information provided to this Assembly or through the Australian Bureau of Statistics which clearly demonstrate in a far more accurate way the actual status of the Northern Territory economy at the moment. I will refer to a few of the industry statistics, Mr Speaker. In respect of primary industry, we know that, in buffalo turn-off in 1984, there was a decline of 4482 beasts, from 37 125 down to 32 643 beasts. However, cattle turn-off increased by 22 882 beasts - from 344 720 to 367 602. The fishing industry catch in kilograms decreased by 50 827 kg - from 4 180 500 kg to 4 129 633 kg. However, the value of the catch increased substantially by \$1 751 665 - from \$18 731 700 to \$20 483 365. When one examines the figures available, one finds that there has been a shift in production. Indeed, the decreases in catch are primarily the result of decreases in the catch of barramundi and threadfin salmon, and the government has addressed that problem ad nauseam in this Assembly and through other public comments.

In respect of grain production, at the last sittings the Minister for Primary Industry presented a ministerial statement that outlined the status of the grain industry. To recap on a few figures, maize increased by 70% and soya beans by 270%. However, sorghum decreased from 3543 t to 2802 t primarily because of the non-ADMA farmers. I refer honourable members to the ministerial statement by the minister at the last sittings.

Mineral production is a major industry. As was noted by the Leader of the Opposition in the last sittings, the total value of mineral production ex-mine

in 1984 was \$54.624m above the previous year giving a figure of \$550.685m. In addition, alumina at the Gove project increased by \$35.694m to \$165.262m. The total value of mineral production and value added from prices in mineral production increased by \$90.318m.

Building approvals, as the honourable member for Millner noted, increased by some \$32m last financial year.

The tourist industry is the second largest industry in the Northern Territory. We can examine figures that are readily available through the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I will deal first with the capacity of the industry. In caravan parks, the number of caravan spaces increased by 1370 spaces to a figure of 2771, an increase of almost 100% in capacity. Hotel rooms increased from 815 to 1036, an increase of 221 hotel rooms. That represents an increase of 512 bed spaces in the industry in the Northern Territory. In motels, rooms increased by 218 to 1472 and that represents an increase of 668 beds in motels in the Northern Territory in the last year. It is important that takings are examined. In caravan parks in the March quarter of 1984, my figures indicate that takings increased by \$84 000 over the previous year. Hotels' takings in that same quarter increased by \$540 000 over the previous year, and motels' takings increased by \$187 000 over the same quarter of the previous year. Mr Speaker, that is hardly an indication of an economy going backwards.

One can then turn to other indicators that are readily available to anybody who wishes to look or knows what he is looking for. Firstly, let us look at the consumer price index. The base years for the figures are 1980-81. Since that time through to the June quarter of 1984, the Darwin CPI increased by 30.9%. That compares to the increase in the 7 capital cities of 32.2%. In other words, our cost of living is increasing at a lower rate than the rest of Australia. I will extrapolate that forward into more recent times. In the 1983-84 year, Darwin's CPI increased by 5.8% compared to a national increase of 6.9%. In the last quarter of 1983-84, Darwin's CPI decreased by 0.1% whereas the CPI for the 7 capital cities increased by 0.2%.

On the subject of motor vehicle registrations, the member for Millner said that there had been a decline of 150 or 3% in new motor vehicle registrations in the last 12 months. Mr Speaker, he has in front of him a copy of the Department of Transport and Works Annual Report. If the honourable member cared to turn to the statistics at the back of that document, he would find that new motor vehicle registrations in 1983-84 were 77 156 compared to the previous year's figure of 72 073. That is an increase - not a decrease - of 5083 registrations. Drivers' licence renewals increased by 1229 over renewals in the previous year, giving a figure of 33 019 renewals of drivers' licences. The new issue of drivers' licences in 1984 was 19 898, an increase of 1059 over the previous year.

Telecom estimated that telephone connections this year would increase by 14%. Because of demand, those figures have been reassessed to an increase of 20%. That information is available to the honourable member through his colleagues. That information was provided to the Select Committee on Communications Technology. The Minister for Mines and Energy noted that electricity consumption this year is expected to increase by 8.4%. Water connections increased by some 12%.

Mr Speaker, all of those indicators are of a healthy, growing and vibrant economy, both for industry and for the individual. There is no indication in those figures of a declining economy that needs to be turned around as the honourable member for Millner would have us believe.

The member for Millner also drew on some statistics in relation to unemployment and employment. I must have tripped over the same Bureau of Statistics figures. To his credit, the honourable member noted there are problems in interpreting these figures as a consequence of standard error in a small sampling base for the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the honourable member failed to indicate the extent of that difference. It is provided in the same documentation that the honourable member presumably extracted his figures from as they certainly correlate with the figures I have. At the back of the document, there is reference to standard deviation - standard error. By way of explanation, standard error is a statistical method that measures a range in which there are 2 chances out of 3 that the figure arrived at is correct. That is 2 chances in 3 over a range which is called 'standard deviation'. Mr Speaker, on the tables that are provided and the formulas provided in here, on an estimate of 50 000 in the Northern Territory, the standard deviation - that is, a figure which says, within this range, there are 2 chances out of 3 of being right - is approximately 19.5% in round terms or something like 9750 either way. That makes a difference of 19 500 over the range just to find a figure. In other words, as any person who understands statistical measures will know, a wide range of variation makes it extremely dangerous to use unemployment figures, particularly when every other indicator says that the direction of the economy is the opposite. Under those circumstances, to have so wide a variance, one must be prepared to say that the employment and unemployment figures that we are quoting are very suspect.

If one were, however, to indicate that there may be some trend, and that is very doubtful, one then has a look at the figures that are available and one finds that what has occurred according to these figures is a dramatic shift in the workforce participation rate. That is a proportion of the population - aged 15 and over - that deemed itself to be in the workforce. In 1983, the workforce participation rate for men was quoted as 82.6%. In 1984, it has dropped to 71.8%. That is for the Northern Territory. In respect of females, the fall was from 57.1% participation down to 50.3% participation. This gives a total workforce participation rate in 1984 of 61.6% compared to a figure of 70.5% 12 months earlier. That is quite a dramatic shift in the workforce participation rate. We must remember the wide variance to be within two-thirds of the probability of being correct. Even with those figures, one can note that the Northern Territory's current workforce participation rate of 61.6% is still in excess of the 59.9% participation rate for Australia as a whole. If we are declining, we have a higher workforce participation rate. If these figures are of any value, they show a decline in the percentage of unemployment amongst the workforce.

Mr Ede: Do you know what the labour force is?

Mr HATTON: I most certainly do know what the labour force is. Read the statistics.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, this shows an unemployment rate in August 1984 of 7.6% compared to an unemployment rate of 9% in August 1983. The opposition would have us believe that these figures indicate that a large proportion of the Northern Territory community has suddenly decided to withdraw from the workforce, not to go on unemployment benefits but to declare themselves out of the workforce. That is the effect of those statistics. Given the wide standard deviation and given the 19.5% potential for error in either direction just to have a two-thirds chance of being right, it is too much to expect those figures to have any validity.

Mr Speaker, the question of population was a matter of some interest. Again, by going to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one can find some interesting figures. They show that, in June 1982, the estimated population of the Northern Territory was 129 429. In June 1983, the estimated population was 134 041 and, in December 1983, a count was taken and quoted in the budget statement. This count is taken at that time every year by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments for the purposes of assessing the budget allocations to the Northern Territory; it showed a population of 136 800 - a significantly growing population. All of those figures are supported by those other indicators. There is nothing in the industry indicators to indicate anything except a growing and strong economy. That has been the state of the Northern Territory economy under this government since self-government. It is vibrant and it is diversifying. It has been growing and it will continue to grow.

The shadow treasurer, as he refers to himself, says that we have had 7 budgets of the same nature. Mr Speaker, if we can deliver another 7 budgets that produce the results that we have produced over the last 7 years, we will serve the Northern Territory well. He would have us change that. He would have us go in some obscure direction which I doubt that he is able to explain even to himself in his attempts to try to tear down a good budget and good economic management - in fact, the best economic management of any government in Australia over the last decade. How many other governments can say that, over the last 10 years, they have had consistent, continuing growth, economic diversification, increasing social benefits to the community and all attained with a balanced budget? What other governments can say that they have even been able to operate with balanced budgets over the last decade, whatever the political colour of those governments?

Mr Speaker, it is almost incomprehensible how the member for Millner can draw his conclusions except by assuming that he does not know what he is talking about. One must go a step further and look at some of the other really amazing comments that came out of the honourable member's speech. He refers to the 2% liquor licence 'slug', as he calls it. Certainly, that was added to the liquor licence fees in this budget but he seems to have some difficulty in understanding that that applies to everybody who sells liquor, not just the small hotels and clubs. He said: 'The opposition submits that the government has failed dramatically to strike an appropriate balance between the small Territory business and the large interstate or international concern'. We have not drawn any discrimination; it has been applied equally. Casinos pay the same liquor licence fees as the hotels pay. In fact, through a formula approach, the clubs are getting a preferential treatment in respect of liquor licence fees. That is a point that the honourable member for Millner has failed to grasp.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member said what a terrible job the government is doing in relation to housing. On his calculations, it is producing some 71 fewer Housing Commission houses than in the previous year. In the last Assembly sittings, we spent hours debating the new Home Purchase Assistance Scheme. The thrust of that scheme was to try to drag the private financial institutions into the housing market to provide more money to assist Territorians to afford to buy homes. That was referred to by the Treasurer on page 9 of the budget speech. He said that the task is to encourage the private sector to take over more of this escalating load from the government. That was totally ignored by the member for Millner. The government has to ensure that it can provide finance through whatever avenues are available for Territorians to buy homes here. Through the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement, the federal government required us to change our home loans scheme. That was done and it was debated. One would think that, after all those hours of talking and tabling of papers,

even the member for Millner would understand that the government was saying: 'We are trying to get more financial institutions to participate in the housing market and not simply continue building Housing Commission houses to house the whole of the Northern Territory in our rental accommodation'. That was the thrust of the budget in respect of housing. As a result, the probability is that there will be more housing construction in the Northern Territory in this coming financial year than there was last year and there will be continuing growth in the number of home owners in our population. That will give people security and it will assist in settling down the economy of the Northern Territory.

The member for Millner says that we have no direction and no programs. This budget is full of programs. Look at the developments that are occurring in relation to tourism and the gas pipeline proposal. Many projects are listed: the Mereenie oil developments, the Channel Island Power-station, tourism developments, ferry terminal facilities in Darwin which will assist the fishing and tourist industries, new mines opening - it is there. Ministerial statements have been provided over the years. We must accept that the honourable member has been in the Assembly only since 1981. Maybe it takes a while for him to grasp what this government has been saying since 1978: that we have the task of expanding and diversifying the Northern Territory economy. This budget - and it is supported by the statements and outlines provided in the explanatory notes - is working towards that objective quite clearly.

I do not propose to examine in detail some of the nonsense that was said in respect of the federal budget. The Leader of the Opposition said that the budget is an efficient way of distributing the money given the fact that 86% of the money is coming from Canberra. Certainly it is, Mr Speaker, but he fails to recognise the risks that we are facing at the moment on that very question. Earlier this year, the federal government, by unilateral decision, against the wishes of all the states of Australia and the wishes of the Northern Territory, threw us into an inquiry into the review of state tax-sharing arrangements. The Northern Territory stands outside those arrangements for good and cogent reasons. The available historical data on our economy is insufficient to properly assess, under the formulas used by the Grants Commission, the level of assistance that should be provided were we to come under such a Grants Commission assessment.

Mr Speaker, when this was announced, we were in the middle of discussions with the Grants Commission to try to work out how it should assess the levels of financial assistance that should be available to the Northern Territory. There was a process of discussion and information exchange to try to arrive at fair formulas. That has been blocked effectively until after this review. We run the risk of not having taken into account some very significant factors that the state tax-sharing arrangements do not take into account. Such things include: diseconomies of small scale that the factor assessment method does not properly account for; the effects of dispersion within a particular region; the social composition of the community and its effects on costs and services; and the effects of isolation on Territory costs and the cost of providing services - that is, isolation compared to other parts of Australia. Of course, added to that isolation, one has the dispersion problem. These are very complex problems which are well documented in submissions that we have had to put forward to the Grants Commission. Should anyone wish to read them, they are included in the submissions that are available for members to peruse. They provide a detailed analysis of the problems that we are facing with this.

Why would the federal government, against the wishes of the states and against our wishes, thrust us into this inquiry? We must worry that there could be a threat from the federal government next year because this inquiry finishes



in March of next year, that it may seek to thrust us in with the rest of the states, to our detriment. The federal government has cut and run to an election this year. It will have that out of the way, it hopes, and 3 years to bury the problem. We know from any rational analysis of the federal budget that we will get a mini-budget between March and May next year because the figures in the federal budget do not add up. We know that the monetary supply problems are already creeping up on the federal government. There are reports from the financial reporters in the Age...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, in rising this afternoon to speak to the Appropriation Bill, I would like to compliment the member for Nightcliff on his address on the broad spectrum of the budget. At the same time, I would tell him not to worry about what the opposition members are saying because this is the 7th budget that has been introduced by the Treasurer and, in fact, it is probably one of the very best budgets that the Territory has seen. Opposition members fail to understand the terms and the policies of the CLP government in framing the expenditures and the revenues to suit Territory needs. The members for Nightcliff should not really feel too dejected because all that he has said is true. The budget covers a very broad spectrum and it does have a direction. In fact, all that the opposition can really do is nitpick, and that is all that it has done for the last 7 years.

This budget maintains a very high level of services to the Territory. This afternoon, I will devote my time to the area in which I have some responsibility and, of course, that is the health area. It is a very emotive area, as is education. This government's policy is to provide health services to all Territorians. Even though there are problems from time to time, this government is providing a level of health service to the best of its ability. The Department of Health is to receive some \$115m this year - an increase of over 11% on the allocation in last year's budget - for a population of some 137 000 people. The resource is certainly there.

This morning, I was asked a question in regard to the bed state of the Royal Darwin Hospital. In fact, I said that there are some 350 beds at the Royal Darwin Hospital as at 30 June this year and the average occupancy per bed is 82%. That is consistent with the level of service that is being provided because earlier this year there were problems at the Royal Darwin Hospital with the advent of Medicare. There was pressure placed on the health services not only in Darwin but also in Alice Springs. The government responded to those needs and, in this budget, has provided additional funds for salaried staff by way of nurses.

One thing I did not mention this morning in my answer, because I was only asked about the bed state, concerns casualty and outpatients. For the year ending 30 June 1982, the casualty attendance at the Royal Darwin Hospital was 14 023 people. For the year ending 30 June 1984, some 21 513 people used that particular facility. I believe that the Department of Health and the administration of the Royal Darwin Hospital have reduced the waiting time to a level that is acceptable to the community.

Alice Springs is much the same. In fact, the authorised bed state in Alice Springs was 176 as at 30 June 1984. Since this is the honourable member for Stuart's bailiwick, I hope that he is making some notes. Otherwise, he will say that I did not tell him. The bed state is 176 and, on 30 June 1982, it was only 166. There has not been the same extraordinary demand placed on the system as there has been in Darwin because the average daily bed occupancy for Alice

Springs was 144 in 1982, 140 in 1983 and 145 in 1984. There has been a significant increase in the casualty attendances at the Alice Springs Hospital. At the same time, there has been a slight decline in the number of the specialist outpatient attendances. Those services cost an extraordinary amount of money. Nevertheless, this government has provided the financial resources to the Department of Health to enable a level of service in all Territory regions to be maintained.

One must speak about the Aboriginal health services and the institute that has been set up in Katherine in the last couple of years. The government sees that as a very important initiative to enable Aboriginal health workers to move into those communities where most Europeans would find it very difficult to live and to move around. The Department of Health has also extended its institute training service into the Alice Springs region. It also has a very small training centre at Gove. I believe that the Institute for Aboriginal Health, as far as the health workers are concerned, is certainly playing an important part in trying to provide services to very remote communities. We are still a long way away but, nevertheless, the institute has certainly laid the foundation to provide a service to that particular part of the community.

The psychiatric service in the Northern Territory is undergoing some problems. In fact, we have recently had Dr Spragg from the NSW Institute of Psychiatry evaluating the services in the Northern Territory. It is not for the want of trying to provide those psychiatric services but rather the lack of professional staff. In fact, the Department of Health has advertised extensively not only in Australian newspapers but also in international papers. If 40 psychiatrists were to walk through the Department of Health administration office tomorrow, they would be given a job. We have problems in the Northern Territory recruiting professionals in specialist areas. In fact, we could do with an orthodontist, several more psychiatrists, ophthalmologists and more surgeons. Nevertheless, until such time as we are able to recruit them, the Department of Health is doing its very best with the resources that it has available.

The Disabled Persons Bureau was set up as a result of the International Year of Disabled Persons. That is a shopfront premises in Darwin and, more recently, in Alice Springs. I understand that that particular organisation has blended well with the many volunteer organisations that are operating within the community.

The extended care services have come under some criticism in the last couple of weeks in relation to respite care. Funds have been made available in this budget to enable the Spastic Centre and the Spastic Council of the Northern Territory to provide additional services. At the same time, discussions are taking place between some community groups and the Department of Health to try to engender more funds for that area because, at the moment, the services are pressed. Hopefully, within the next couple of weeks, the Department of Health will be able to provide me with the mechanism for providing at least some level of service. At the same time, when we talk about complaints within the system, the Disabled Persons Bureau has a charter to provide information to those people requiring respite care. At no time has the Royal Darwin Hospital, which does provide respite care, turned a person in need away from its door. Those services are there and they will be maintained.

The Patient Care Committee also has been set up in the Darwin region. I was asked questions during the August sittings regarding its operation. I advised the Assembly that several independent people were appointed to that Patient Care Committee and it is functioning. Once we are able to assess the

performance of that committee, patient care committees will be established in the other regional centres.

As I said just a few moments ago, \$115m is the budget for the 1984-85 financial year for health. That is some 11% increase. At the same time, there is a void. Specialists in several fields must be recruited. In the meantime, if a particular service is not available to Territorians and there is a need for highly specialised treatment, then IPTAAS, which is a Commonwealth scheme, comes into play.

The Drug and Alcohol Bureau also comes under the Department of Health. The Drug and Alcohol Bureau has set up many committees throughout the Territory. I believe that these committees are doing a very important job. They are providing the government with the necessary information to enable it to plan. In this year's budget, additional funds have been made available through the Drug and Alcohol Bureau to many community organisations to provide services to those people who need assistance. In the last financial year, it was instrumental in setting up a sequel campaign to the 'Boozers are Losers' campaign. That was Alcohol Action Week. My information is that the advertising campaign was successful in many Territory centres. It created a very high awareness amongst the community for those people who were either associated or involved with alcohol and its related problems.

In talking about new initiatives, an announcement was made within the last 12 months regarding the children's hospital. Unfortunately, the member for Nightcliff is not here otherwise I would have been able to highlight for him the failure of the members opposite to understand or to pick up information that has been circulated throughout the community. I made an announcement that the Northern Territory government would be proceeding with the construction of a children's hospital. I received a communique saying: 'I did not know anything about it. It does not appear in any of your budget papers'. Nevertheless, the statement was made. Before one can get items into a budget, there has to be a design list. The item must be included on a capital works program. One cannot expect the plans and the infrastructure to evolve overnight. It takes time.

Nevertheless, a statement was made that we would proceed. The member responsible for health matters on the opposition benches fails to understand why we must proceed. As all Territorians would know, our population is growing. The Royal Darwin Hospital has increased its bed numbers to 350. Its maximum capacity would be just over 400. Within 2 or 3 years, we will need another hospital. It was put to us that we should consider the construction of a children's hospital within the Darwin region that would service children of the Northern Territory and provide specialist services. I am told that it is easier to recruit paediatricians than it is to recruit other specialists. I am told that we will not have any trouble in filling specialist positions within a children's hospital. We are proceeding because, in the next 2 or 3 years, there will not be enough beds at the Royal Darwin Hospital and we have a tremendous opportunity to provide that service for our youngsters within the Northern Territory.

Another initiative is the proposal to develop a private hospital. We have a private group that is willing to commit funds with very little assistance by government. The only assistance that we intend to give it is to allow it to buy a block of land at the Royal Darwin Hospital site. I look forward to that because it will give the people of Darwin a choice of whether they want to have a private service or a public service. Hopefully, in the very near future, we will see some constructive action taken by that group.

Another new initiative is occurring within your own cabbage patch, Mr Speaker. I refer to the extension to the Katherine Hospital. My only comment is that I am glad that we have taken that decision. Whether the Tindal air base proceeded or not, we had an obligation to the people of Katherine to provide that extension. It has been there on a temporary basis. As most of us know, 'temporary' in the Territory can be anything from 15 to 20 years. That is what has happened in Katherine. Those works will start in 1985 and, hopefully, we will be able to use that facility in 1986.

Another area of the budget relates to our grants-in-aid program. I would draw the attention of the honourable member opposite to page 27: 'other services'. The expenditure in 1983-84 was \$6.774m and the allocation for 1984-85 is \$7.664m, an increase of almost \$900 000. Those grants-in-aid go to approved organisations which play a very important role in providing services to the community. The allocations include over \$1m for drug and alcohol services, \$2.2m for Aboriginal health services - that is, for the Aboriginal health service and the Aboriginal institute in Katherine - \$1.7m for extended care services, \$352 000 for the Australian Red Cross transfusion service, \$2.097m for St John Ambulance - and this will make the honourable member for Leanyer happy - \$230 000 for engineering work for mosquito control. Many other organisations are given financial assistance for the provision of services within our community. I think that the Department of Health budget is solid evidence that this government desires to provide services to all sections of our community.

I would like to move on to the very important area of youth, sport and recreation. The Northern Territory government's program over the last 6 years of providing services to sporting organisations is certainly making its mark not only on the Northern Territory's sports scene but also on the sports scene in many other states. As a result of generous government travel subsidies that have been available for the last 4 years, our athletes are able to participate at national championships. They increase their skills and use their newly-acquired knowledge to assist those who are less fortunate than themselves. They also become very good ambassadors for the Northern Territory.

In the early days, we provided a 50% subsidy for Territory teams to participate at national championships. That has pretty well remained ever since. However, we have amended the scheme in many ways to allow other sportsmen to move around Australia and also to travel overseas if they have been picked to represent Australia. The travel subsidy scheme has been changed to include codes that are unable to participate at national championships because they do not have a high-level of expertise. We allow them to participate at state championships by providing a one-third travel subsidy. The classic example of that would be the Callisthenics Association of the Northern Territory. They participate against South Australia when it has its championships but they would not be able to participate at this stage in the national championships.

Other financial assistance includes the equipment grant. That has helped many small organisations develop their sports not only at the senior level but, more importantly, at the junior level. The coaching scheme will be more effective as a result of this budget. We give a \$1-for-\$1 subsidy up to \$12 500 for organisations to employ state directors of coaching. Additionally, we provide a further \$3000 which will allow the coach to go to other parts of the Territory to institute training schemes. It is felt that, until such time as the Northern Territory sportsmen are able to lift their game, so to speak, it will be very difficult for them to attain a high level of expertise. We must remember that the Northern Territory has a population base of only 137 000 people. We are able to compete very favourably with country towns such as

Bendigo or Ballarat which have populations of about 100 000. However, when you consider that we compete very well against states such as NSW and Victoria, I think our Territory sportsmen and women do a fantastic job. In fact, we have many Australian record holders and gold medal winners in the Territory at the moment.

Mr Speaker, the most important area where the government has provided financial resources has been in relation to facilities. The opening of the international basketball stadium this year certainly got things up and going for indoor sports. On 27 October, in the company of the federal Minister for Sport, John Brown, we will be opening Marrara stage 3. That will provide facilities for judo, gymnastics and table tennis.

The point that I am trying to make is that, over a number of years, the opposition has hacked at budgets and it has never once said in the last 7 years: 'That is a good initiative of the government which certainly will help our community'. But we do not really need it because the community itself lets us know what it needs. Because we have a very small population base, we are able to move around the community and have discussions with the many sporting organisations. They tell us what their plans are. If the government is able to provide some support for them, it certainly does so.

I was asked a question by the member for Millner recently. He asked me for a breakdown of the grants-in-aid for the various Territory centres. I can say honestly to this Assembly that, in the last 5 years, provision of financial assistance to the many community sporting organisations has been done fairly and equitably on a per capita basis. In fact, I demonstrated when I was in Alice Springs late last year that, per capita, Alice Springs receives \$10 per head more than Darwin. Of course, the honourable member for Stuart raises his eyebrows, but it is a fact. Facilities are being constructed not only in Darwin but also in many other regional centres: Tennant Creek, Katherine, Gove, Groote Eylandt and Alice Springs. Just after Easter next year we hope to be able to open a velodrome in Alice Springs which will certainly provide great impetus for the sport of cycling. It could also provide a focal point for baseball in Australia.

The YMCA has almost completed its multipurpose indoor stadium at Sadadeen. I inspected that facility very recently. It has been built with the assistance of a 4-to-1 grant from the government. I think the Northern Territory government provided \$500 000 and the YMCA just over \$100 000. The important thing is that those community organisations are able, through this government and through this budget, to provide funds for the construction of facilities. Last year, the Boy Scouts established a scout hall at Sanderson.

Within this budget, there is a small provision for special projects which allows organisations which need support for a special project which does not come within the strict guidelines of the grants-in-aid scheme to obtain financial assistance. A very significant amount of \$80 000 has been provided in this budget for the International Year of the Youth. As most members would be aware, 1985 has been declared International Year of the Youth. The Division of Youth, Sport and Recreation is now planning various projects for that year.

Mr Speaker, nearly \$6m will be spent on new projects and on expanding existing services of the Department of Health. As I said, that is in response to population growth and the demand for more sophisticated care. New equipment and new services include a major initiative through the provision of \$900 000 to establish the Menzies School of Health Research at the Royal Darwin Hospital. The Menzies Foundation will contribute a further \$100 000. The Menzies school

will research health problems related to living in the tropics and remote areas and will be of significant value in improving the health of Territorians and others in similar regions, both in Australia and overseas.

The budget also provides some \$73 000 for the formation of an epidemiology branch in the Department of Health. The branch will prepare computer data to assist disease research and evaluation by the Department of Health. Modifications to Dundas House in Parap are included in the budget at a cost of \$100 000. We understand that the work should be finished this financial year. For the honourable member opposite, Dundas House will accommodate the Rehabilitation Centre which has been transferred from the old Darwin Hospital site.

Some \$176 000 is allocated towards construction of a senior citizens' centre by the Rural Old Timers and Friends Association. 5 bedsitters in the Darwin hospital will be upgraded. Provision is being made for the establishment of a sobering-up centre in Tennant Creek. In fact, that particular facility has already been opened by the Minister for Mines and Energy.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the program initiated by the Department of Health for this financial year should go a long way in providing the services needed by the community. As I indicated earlier, in some areas we do have problems in recruiting professional staff. Whilst that problem exists, we would hope that the Commonwealth broadens IPTAAS to allow people not only to go to Adelaide and Brisbane...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, in rising to address the Appropriation Bill, unlike the honourable members for Nightcliff and Casuarina, I feel it would be somewhat less than responsible not to comment on its impact or lack thereof upon my constituents. Certainly, there is provision in the budget for services in my electorate. I do not seek to judge that either in a positive or a negative sense. I rise merely to note that there are certain provisions and I will comment on them.

The issue of relative needs and the issue of determining the priorities of those needs, I do not think can be in any doubt. We have heard the member for Stuart, the shadow minister for community development, address the question of environmental health programs in Aboriginal communities and what was at the time the much-vaunted 5-year plan which has not been vaunted to quite the same extent towards the end of the 5-year period. I do not think there is any doubt that, within my electorate, the vast array of services usually provided by governments is lacking. Later, I will mention particular examples but I think, by way of introduction, it is of little surprise that neither of the 2 speakers in this afternoon's debate have felt the need to represent the interests of their electorates. I have spoken at length in this Assembly about the lack of participation in the economy and the lack of employment that characterises so many of the communities in my electorate.

One area where the provision of services in my electorate has been and continues to be a problem is in relation to school facilities. I think it would be irresponsible of me not to comment on the way that such decisions are made by the government. It would appear that the principle that determines the placement of money into schools in emerging communities in my electorate seems to be that it must come from the Commonwealth. It would appear that emerging needs in those communities are frequently regarded as relating to people who are not part of the Territory. It does not cease to surprise me how the assumption is made so easily

that schools have to be financed by the Commonwealth if they are in emerging Aboriginal communities. Of course I welcome the provision by the Commonwealth government that is noted in the budget papers for a school for the Kintore community in my electorate. But, my word, it has been a long fight to get it. For 3 full years, kids living in that community have been receiving an education that was inferior in terms of the accommodation that was available for them.

I will not expatiate on that particular matter, but all the government ministers seem to have the whiff of an election in their nostrils. With the tunnel vision that characterises so many of them, they leap so frequently into bashing the Commonwealth government in a singularly unconstructive manner. I think that I would be doing somewhat less than my job if I did not point out that there has been a serious deterioration in the provision for such emerging communities in recent years. The provision of educational facilities in Aboriginal communities has been badly served by self-government. Before some rabid backbencher leaps up and beats me over the ears with hot air, let me say that I am not attacking self-government per se. I am the first to recognise that, in many areas, self-government has served us well, but I do not believe that that should blind us to the areas where self-government has served us less than well. This is certainly one of them.

I have mentioned in this Assembly before that educational facilities in those emerging Aboriginal communities were better catered for by the previous Commonwealth administration than by this government. I do not want to see the Minister for Education leap to his feet and say: 'We have got the money. What are you whingeing about?' I think that he should take into consideration the hard struggle that it has been to get those facilities. They should have been much more easily acquired than they have been.

The other general point I wish to make about Aboriginal communities in my electorate is in relation to the provision of essential services. Frequently, there is a slip between the cup and the lip in this regard. As a model for the expenditure of funds in this area, it is important that all communities, be they Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, have the feeling that they control to as great extent as possible the expenditure of funds in those communities and that they are able to raise their own priorities. I hasten to say that I am not making a blanket criticism of the activities of the minister's department. I believe this is the appropriate place to do it and I fear that I will not be well understood. However, all honourable members have had the experience of visiting Aboriginal communities where government funds have been spent only to find that the services provided through those funds are in a state of disrepair. I venture to say that part of the reason for that lies in a lack of consensus and community determination on the expenditure goals involved. I have had sufficient experience of the discussions and the bureaucratic processes that, in the final sense, end up in the sort of documents that we have before us today. I think that one of the chief reasons that so much of the money that is spent on Aboriginal communities appears not to be wanted is that there has not been that sort of consideration. There has not been the determination by the communities themselves for the goals of that expenditure.

What am I suggesting by way of a solution? I am suggesting that communities be told that, for essential services for a particular financial year, a certain amount of money is available and they should be asked to nominate what they see as the priorities. I strongly suspect that very little of that sort of consultation goes on. Instead of a lump sum being taken by the Department of Community Development and divided up amongst a number of different projects, a sum should be allocated to each community each year to be spent in the way that members of that community determine. That may not be entirely

practical. I appreciate that, at different times, there may be emergencies or critical needs that require to be met at short notice and sums of money must be made available. However, I believe that, as a general principle - and that is what a second-reading debate is about - the Minister for Community Development could give some thought to moving in that direction.

I want to make some comments about the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. This has been of considerable interest to me. I am deeply concerned at the representations that have been made to me by various people in relation to the administration of B-TEC. Members may have seen a statement that I made recently in relation to what the Minister for Primary Production referred to as welfare needs within the pastoral industry. The point needs to be made again and again that people in the pastoral industry are well aware that they experience considerable difficulties - boom and bust conditions - because of the fluctuation of cattle prices. Anybody participating in the pastoral industry expects those sort of difficulties. However, one of the difficulties that it is not reasonable for some people in the pastoral industry to have in the forefront of their minds is the vicissitude that is visited on them because of the administration of B-TEC. I note in the budget papers the use of the Rural Adjustment Scheme in that regard. I am not quite clear in my own mind of the extent to which those funds are contributed by the Territory and the Commonwealth. I understand that there is a mixture of funds in that regard. I will be seeking further information on that.

I would like to refer particularly to the youth, sport and recreation vote. Quite honestly, I would like to hand a big bouquet to the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation who seemed to be suggesting by his comments that the opposition was interested only in being as negative as possible. On page 32 of the explanations to the Appropriation Bill, under the youth, sport and recreation and ethnic affairs portfolio, I note that there is an allocation of \$430 000 which is the government contribution towards the employment of a community recreation officer and the maintenance and watering of all public sporting and recreational facilities, including ovals, basketball and tennis courts and gymnasium facilities at Yulara. That is certainly something for which the minister is to be highly commended. I think this will be a recurrent expenditure. It is under the heading of 'other services' in that particular vote. I can only say that that is distinctly positive and perhaps we should keep it quiet because other government backbenchers might have their hands out for such a handsome contribution. I think that that particular subvention will be further commented upon, if not in this debate certainly in subsequent ones.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I turn now to the portfolios for which I am responsible and I am not sure if I shall be able to do them justice in the time available. I would like to comment on the appropriation for the Department of Transport and Works and raise some questions that I will follow up in the committee stage. I notice that the total appropriation for the Department of Transport and Works is 9.4% higher than the actual expenditure for the previous financial year. We note that the significant areas of growth over the 1983-84 expenditure were under 2 areas - 'capital items', which increased by a massive 76%, and 'other services' which increased by 30%. Another area of concern was the comparison of the 1983-84 appropriation against the 1983-84 actual expenditure which appears in the explanations that were tabled with the bill. I refer to the difference between the appropriation and the expenditure under the heading of 'administrative expenses', which increased by 88%, and the repairs and maintenance difference which saw a decrease of 27%.

A further point I wish to make in relation to the Department of Transport and Works concerns the maximum staff allocation which increased by only 8



persons, from 2232 to 2240. It strikes me that, in an area that is developing as rapidly as the Territory is, it is rather surprising to find in a department that deals with the provision of services for an ever-burgeoning population that the maximum staff allocation, the dreaded MSA, is able to be increased by such a minuscule proportion.

Before I pass on to one other matter, I make a general comment which I intend to follow up in the committee stage. I have drawn the honourable minister's attention - and I certainly would like to hear his comments in this regard - to the large increases for capital items. As I said, we have noted that the expenditure on capital items increased by 76% and I note that the majority of this increase has been in the works area where the growth has been from \$2.437m to \$4.387m, an amount of \$1.950m. In the preceding year, this item was planned to grow by up to \$112 000. However, the actual expenditure rose by only \$29 000. The question that needs to be raised is that, since the budget explanations for this financial year and for 1983-84 both claim that these provisions are for 'the programmed replacement of plant, vehicles and equipment or for new items', I believe that we are entitled to ask why estimates can vary so much from actual expenditures. If the 1983-84 proposed expenditure was programmed, then failure to actually expend that money meant that the department for which the honourable member is responsible was operating somewhat less than efficiently.

A second point is that, if the large growth in the 1984-85 proposed expenditure now includes postponed 1983-84 expenditure, this should be highlighted in the explanations. Thirdly, the size of the increase proposed for 1984-85 indicates that, on a cyclical basis, we can expect years which will place significantly larger demands on the budget. This may be unavoidable but, in the context of this debate, it is reasonable to ask how the programming seeks to overcome this or uses some options to overcome that sort of unevenness.

There is one final item I wish to comment on in the capital works program. I have a couple of questions there and the first one I note with wry amusement. I do not believe that it is possible to let this pass by entirely unnoticed. On page 8 of our hymn books, we see an unexpended authorisation of \$723 000 for the Mount John Valley residential subdivision in Alice Springs. I would be doing somewhat less than my duty if I did not bring once again to the attention of the honourable minister, his colleagues and to the people of the Northern Territory what a shambles land development in Alice Springs is. I do not intend to expatiate on that particular theme. I know it is one of extraordinary disinterest to the honourable minister but I believe that it should be noted.

I have further questions. In the capital works area, in relation to the hazardous and offensive industry development in Alice Springs...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon, I would like also to speak in support of the budget presented by the Treasurer during the last sittings of the Assembly. The main points that I would like to discuss this afternoon are those relating to roads throughout the Northern Territory. Before I take up that issue, there are several other areas I wish to discuss in relation to expenditure in central Australia.

The first concerns the proposed expenditure by the Conservation Commission for the continued beautification and rehabilitation work on the Todd River, the Charles River and along the Stuart Highway. I note in the budget papers that a total of \$765 000 has been allocated for 1984-85. This money will go a

very long way in complementing the work that the Conservation Commission has already undertaken both south of Alice Springs and through the township along the Stuart Highway and along the Charles and Todd Rivers. Members out of Alice Springs who visit central Australia from time to time will notice the tremendous amount of work that has already been done by the Conservation Commission.

In addition to that funding for the Conservation Commission, an amount of money has been allocated for the continued restoration and preservation of the work out at Arltunga. It is indeed most welcome. This year's budget allocates a total of \$490 000 for continued work on the restoration of historic buildings and internal roadworks. That is a considerable allocation. There is provision also for boundary fencing and work in the picnic areas. That work is being supplemented by bicentennial funding to celebrate our 200 years in 1988 and I propose, at a later date, to speak about the work that the Conservation Commission is doing both at Arltunga and in the forestry program in central Australia, utilising sewerage water to grow gum trees for firewood. Both of those programs are of tremendous interest. The Conservation Commission and officers attached to that commission should be congratulated for the work that they have done to date with both of those programs.

Mr Speaker, it is noted with interest that we will have 6 additional police officers in central Australia. I welcome that but I am disappointed, however, to note that, of the 6 officers, 3 will be allocated to CIB and 1 will be a prosecution officer. I am disappointed that more officers were not allocated for patrols around central Australia. In fact, I would venture the comment that other members in this Assembly from central Australia would support my remarks that additional road patrols are needed in the traffic section and for patrolling generally in and around Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, in relation to housing, almost \$11m has been allocated for the provision of additional accommodation. That works out at in excess of \$500 per head - man, woman and child - and that is far in excess of the housing expenditure of any of the states. It does not take into consideration the tremendous amount of money that is allocated in the budget through the most generous home loans scheme. However, housing still continues to be a problem in central Australia, particularly in the rental sector. I believe that this will be the case for some time despite the massive slice of its budget that the Northern Territory government allocates each year for housing.

Mr Speaker, I welcome allocations for 2 areas outside the electorate of Braitling that previously were in the electorate of Stuart. There are 3 allocations for Harts Range: \$180 000 for the provision of water to Harts Range, \$160 000 for the provision of power and, last but certainly not least, \$250 000 for the provision of a demountable school. It is my understanding that the water and power will be utilised both by the community and the school. I know that the communities of Alcoota, Mt Riddock and Harts Range will all welcome that expenditure. Indeed, I know 1 gentleman from Alcoota - a fellow about my age - who is illiterate. He has the one desire and ambition in life to learn to read and write. It is probably one of the tragedies of the bush communities that people of his age have never really had the opportunity for education. Amongst other things, he will drive the school bus from Alcoota every morning, pick up other students at Mt Riddock and then go on to Harts Range and stay with them during the day. He will take advantage of that and I congratulate him on his initiative and in finally being able to realise one of his aims in life.

Mr Speaker, I note also that Ti Tree Homestead community will be supplied with power at a cost of \$170 000. I gather that that will come from the township of

Ti Tree. That follows on from a visit that the Minister for Mines and Energy and myself made to the Ti Tree community in 1983. It is probably a visit that the honourable minister and I will remember for many a year because of the threat that was made against our lives and the lives of officials from the Department of Health. Thankfully, the person who made that threat against us has long since departed the Northern Territory for points east. I hope that he stays in that part of the world.

Mr Speaker, expenditure that will be more than welcomed by the residents of the Alice Springs farm area is \$200 000 for flood mitigation or storm water control. That is money that the residents in that area have been waiting for patiently since the bad floods of last year. I know that a number of people have hesitated to undertake additional construction on their farms or on their residential blocks because of the flooding problem. I am certain that they will all be delighted to see the amount of money that has been allocated for storm water control.

Mr Speaker, I note also that the Alice Springs area will receive an additional \$450 000 for water distribution improvements. The people in the Braitling electorate on the northern edge of town - and the honourable member for Stuart will be aware of this problem - will welcome that additional funding because of the poor water supply there, particularly in the hotter months of the year.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the money allocated to sports. Like the member for MacDonnell, I welcome the continued funding for sporting facilities and interstate competitive trips. In recent months, the Central Australian Football Club headquarters was opened. It was funded by the Northern Territory government through the Alice Springs Town Council. As mentioned by the Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, the velodrome is nearing completion. Although it is behind schedule, it will be opened next year with the contest of the century between himself and myself on pushbikes. I have been there in recent weeks and I have noticed the sharp embankments. I would advise the member for Casuarina that he can have the high road and I will stay on the low track for the race.

Mr Speaker, the basketball courts in central Australia are progressing well and, hopefully, will be ready for this year's season. The golf course is being upgraded, basically with private funding, and it will be of world standard. Nearly \$400 000 for sporting facilities at Yulara is more than welcome as is the continued funding of our competitors to travel interstate for state and national competitions. Of course, as members are aware, Northern Territory championships are held from time to time throughout the various centres in the Northern Territory. In fact, one of the most successful competitions in recent months would have been that of the Little Athletics which held its competition in Alice Springs about 2 weeks ago.

I turn now to the main area of interest to me - roads in central Australia. An additional \$1.1m will be expended on the Plenty Highway this year to take the sealing program from the 85 km peg to the 105 km peg and leave only approximately 38 km to Harts Range once that work is completed. It is noted that there is a section of that Plenty Highway which was unfinished because the contractor went into receivership - the section from the 67 km peg to the 85 km peg. The unfinished section will be completed in this year's work and will go to tender next month. The work is scheduled to commence in December this year. I congratulate the Treasurer who was acting Minister for Transport and Works when I approached him about combining the unfinished section of the contract with this new contract which is included in this year's budget.

In the budget this year, \$1m has been allocated for the upgrading of the Kings Canyon Road from Kings Canyon out to 35 km which will join up with work which was completed earlier this year. This is an upgrading of the existing bush track to a formed and gravelled road. I would pay tribute to the officers in the Departments of Transport and Works and Lands for the survey work they have done in an attempt to preserve the desert oaks, which are so attractive and grow in the sandhills, by bypassing them wherever possible. Work is scheduled to start on this upgrading in March 1985. The Hermannsburg Road or, as it is referred to in the budget papers, Larapinta Drive - it must be the longest drive in the world, certainly in Australia - will get an additional amount of money this year for sealing work. The sealing of the road from the 75 km mark to the 108 km mark will leave only 20 km. It is now over 20 years since I first travelled on that road. In those days, it was unsealed from the eastern side of what is now known as the Araluen complex. The sealing of that road will be of tremendous benefit to the Hermannsburg people, to the oil and gas development in that area and to the tourism which is being encouraged Territory-wide and particularly by the Hermannsburg people. It is probably not known to many members of this Assembly that some of the most scenic country in central Australia is on the Finke River, which is geologically the oldest known river in the world, and also Palm Valley which is just near the Finke River.

Mr Speaker, a vote of \$2.2m has been allocated for the bridge over the Todd River south of town. Once it is constructed, it will certainly be a bridge over troubled waters. The residents in the farm area and the tourist industry will welcome the construction of this bridge which is scheduled to start in June of next year. I have been advised by the department that the exact location has not been finalised but it will be somewhere in the area of the Old Timers Home, south of Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, I would like to comment on something that was included in last year's budget: the realignment and widening of the Stuart Highway from immediately south of Ti Tree through to north of Skull Creek. A contract for this work was let last week to Henry and Walker. This will be more than welcomed by the residents of Ti Tree who have waited for some years for this work. It will complement the work done by the hard-working residents and members of the Ti Tree Progress Association who have done so much in recent years to beautify the area in and around Ti Tree. Last year, Ti Tree was successful in taking out the award for the Territory's tidiest town.

Mr Speaker, the reconstruction of the Stuart Highway through Alice Springs is almost completed. I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the contractor who performed the work, McMahon Construction, and its subcontractors, and the Department of Transport and Works for keeping the traffic flowing relatively smoothly through the town during a most difficult construction period. I would also like to congratulate the other government agencies, including NTEC and the Conservation Commission, who have worked on the project. Indeed, the Conservation Commission is now moving to finalise the beautification work along this section of the road. I would pay tribute also to the traders along the Stuart Highway who bore with the government and the contractors during a most difficult period. I would warn members of the public in central Australia that the road should not be treated as a drag strip. Already there have been a number of accidents because of people travelling at far too high a speed.

Mr Speaker, I have said before that the next problem area in central Australia concerning roads will be the Stott Terrace and Todd Street intersection. Indeed, I have had some informal discussions with the Minister for Transport and Works on this. I believe some type of modification to the traffic signs on that intersection will be needed in the not-too-distant future.

Although it is not specifically allocated in the budget, I have been advised by the Department of Transport and Works that, this year, it will be undertaking a route survey of the proposed Ayers Rock to Kings Canyon connector road using aerial photography. Whatever happens, this route must cut in at or close to Kings Canyon and not come out at Willowra as is being proposed by some government departments at this stage.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would say that there is a need to take a fresh look at all roads in northern Australia, including Queensland and Western Australia, and to develop a firm and positive plan for the upgrading of lesser roads - those away from but serving major highways. The need is there to study and classify and have these roads ultimately upgraded to national highway standard. This should be done in conjunction with Queensland and Western Australia and could come under the broad heading of the outback development roads scheme. The development of roads such as the Plenty, the Lasseter, the Tanami, the Victoria, the Borroloola to Roper Bar and on to Mataranka road and the proposed link from Mataranka to Gove will be essential if our major industries - that is, pastoral, mining and tourism - are to attain maximum development in the decades ahead. Too often in the past, the lion's share of federal road money has gone to freeways and highways in the more populous states at the expense of northern Australia where the real resources in this lucky country lie.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer on again presenting a well-balanced and documented budget. I believe this is his 7th budget and I hope he will be around to present many more.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the budget. I must say that I was not surprised by the comments that were made by the member for MacDonnell but I am very concerned with the issue that he has raised and the view that he has put forward to members of the Assembly and, through the Assembly, to the electorate generally. I will refer back to that during the course of my speech.

As the Treasurer mentioned, education is one of our prime concerns. Education in any state system is a major concern. That is reflected in the budget that we have before us. In my portfolio, the overall increase is some 12.8%. The budget provides for a substantial increase in education spending in real terms and this will mean strong support for continuing programs, a number of the new and expanded programs, construction of many new facilities and the upgrading of some of the existing facilities. Mr Deputy Speaker, the net result will be further important improvements in education services for Territory students.

For the Department of Education, the appropriation is \$138.3m which is an increase over last year of 12.3%, plus \$2.5m for the Community College of Central Australia. That is an increase of 14%. Among other things, this will result in the creation of many jobs in the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the government has also decided to boost substantially the Northern Territory Tertiary Scholarship Scheme for our top matriculants by doubling the amount to be awarded and providing annual indexation to keep pace with inflation. From now on, the top 2 matriculants will receive \$4000 per year and the next 8 students will receive \$2000 per year for up to 5 years of tertiary study. The scholarships have also been extended to 6 years where necessary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, whilst speaking about scholarships, I would like to touch on teacher recruitment. This is an issue that has been raised from time to time. It is of concern, not only to myself as the Territory Minister for Education, but also to Ministers for Education in all the states of Australia. I have indicated, as have the Teachers Federation and other people in the community, that teacher recruitment is a problem. There is a shortage of teachers, particularly in the secondary education areas of maths and science. It is a national problem. I want to make that quite clear because many people think that it is only a problem in the Northern Territory. Many of the states are trying to attract secondary teachers, particularly in the subjects that I have mentioned. In fact, many of them are trying to attract teachers by offering various incentives. In New South Wales, for example, a recent advertisement offered \$300 per week to graduates whilst they were studying. The thing that did not come out during that particular exercise was that the New South Wales government was in fact only offering some 30 positions. There were over 500 applicants for those positions. It indicates that there are teachers willing to upgrade their qualifications. It is a matter of attracting them to the Northern Territory. The Victorian government guarantees employment. At this stage, that is all the incentive that it offers to would-be graduates.

In the Northern Territory, we will introduce a post-graduate diploma of secondary education next year at the community college. We have already advertised nationally that that course is available. We are calling for those wishing to study for that post-graduate diploma in secondary education to come forward. We are offering scholarships worth \$5000 each and we will guarantee employment for those who graduate. The diploma of education in the secondary sector will specialise in science, maths and computer technology, which are the areas that we are having difficulty in filling. It has been difficult for us in the past because we have not had the facilities available for teachers to upgrade their qualifications in the Northern Territory; they have had to go interstate. With this post-graduate course at the community college, we hope that people will upgrade their qualifications in the Territory. I hope that that is supported.

We are also looking at recruitment from overseas and contract employment. These areas will have to be discussed with the people involved. I refer specifically to the teachers. It is important that any considerations by governments in relation to teacher employment are discussed with the teacher organisations, in our case, the Teachers Federation.

We are also offering a number of scholarships for the Diploma of Teaching. This relates to primary school teaching. Last year, it was disappointing that many people did not choose to take up the scholarships. I hope that in the year ahead more people will show an interest. I urge the younger people in the Territory, those who are leaving school this year, to consider taking up the scholarships because there are excellent prospects in teaching and they will have a job for many years to come. The problems of teacher retention will continue until the teaching positions are filled by Territorians themselves.

Some time ago, I received a letter from Senator Ryan in relation to a particular information campaign that the Commonwealth government was proceeding with. It was due to start late in September and run for about 3 weeks. It was to encourage students to remain at school for longer periods. This is something that every government supports. The trouble that we have with the proposal of the Commonwealth government is that there are indeed very grave cost implications associated with having senior students remain at school for a longer period. On average, it costs us \$3585 per year to educate a student in a Northern Territory government high school. In addition, the Northern

Territory faces a cost of \$7000 to \$10 000 to recruit each secondary teacher. This cost is not faced by the states. I want to make it clear that we wish to provide innovative programs which will stimulate secondary students but, unless the Commonwealth faces its responsibility and provides adequate funding to support increased participation in secondary education, the states and the territories will simply not be able to provide the quality of teaching and learning that is necessary.

For every young person under the age of 18 who chooses to remain at school for the senior years and who otherwise would have been on the dole, the Commonwealth saves \$2340 per year in unemployment benefits. The Northern Territory, however, has to provide an additional \$4374 to keep that student at school. That is what it costs us to keep a student in Year 12. That does not take into account any additional capital costs that might also be involved. If the Commonwealth is really serious about increasing participation, it should return its savings to the states to enable them to cope adequately with increased enrolments. Otherwise, we will continue to have difficulty in providing programs to cater for the type of student now coming back to school. I support the efforts of the Commonwealth in relation to having students remain at school for longer periods but the cost implications are grave indeed. It is something that the government should be addressing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Aboriginal education is another area that has received a great deal of attention over the years, and so it should. This government has always continued to ensure that it undertakes its responsibilities for Aboriginal education. It is very interesting to note that, recently, many conferences in the Northern Territory have addressed the problem of Aboriginal education. I attended the Australian High School Principals Association's conference in Darwin. Aboriginal education was touched upon. The workshops that have been held recently to look at the School of Northern Studies in the Territory also had Aboriginal education as a major topic. The Australian Council of State Schools Organisations conference, which I opened yesterday in Alice Springs, is looking at Aboriginal education generally. Thus, there are many organisations addressing the very real problem that we have with Aboriginal education.

The member for MacDonnell did not surprise me by his comments but I believe that he is not being fair to his electorate or indeed to the community generally by his remarks about emerging communities and particularly by his comment about funding for facilities in those communities. The honourable member must be aware that the term 'emerging communities' frightens every government. It frightens us and it frightens the Commonwealth government. The problem is not in allowing Aborigines to go to the areas which they relate to. The problem is that the enormous cost implications related to the outstation movement have yet to be realised. The member for MacDonnell must be aware that, in the Northern Territory, there are some 250 outstations. The nearest state to us is Western Australia with 54. It drops rapidly from there to Queensland with 9, New South Wales with 3 and Victoria with 1. The other concern that we have as a government, and indeed the Commonwealth government has this concern also, is that, once a principle is set in relation to the funding of emerging communities, the cost could treble overnight. You could have another 400 communities of 6 or 12 people requesting educational facilities and services from other government authorities. Those are grave concerns for any government. To say that we should pick up the tab is absolutely ridiculous. It is something that the Commonwealth government and the state governments must talk about. We must share our responsibilities.

At Kintore alone, \$420 000 is being spent on capital works. That place is situated on the Western Australia border. Mr Deputy Speaker, in the capital works

program alone, some \$1.675m is being spent on upgrading school facilities in isolated areas. It has been an effort to talk with the Commonwealth and the communities and to have these facilities proceeded with. Other places such as Robinson River have been waiting for years. Those areas at long last are being upgraded and provided with education facilities. But the cost implications are grave indeed, and that is something that we should not lose track of.

The assistant teacher problem emerged earlier this year because the funding for that particular program was at risk. The problem that we have in all of these communities is that they require teaching aides who cost the government a lot of money. The Commonwealth government realises that. On 20 September, I had a meeting in Darwin with Clyde Holding, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, about this specific issue because, as Northern Territory Minister for Education, I could not commit this government to funding the teaching aide program without any principles for funding established first. Clyde Holding acknowledges that. We have come to an agreement that a joint working party will be set up to look at that proposal. He realises there are problems in relation to funding of teaching aides in these communities. I am sure that we will be able to address that particular problem.

However, for the honourable member to suggest that the Commonwealth government is not responsible for funding is absolutely ridiculous. I might say that I went out to Kintore with the member for MacDonnell. It was very interesting to hear the remarks that were being made by some of the people in those communities. Some of those people do not want to have a centralised system. They do not want polarisation. Indeed, there are many anthropologists in Australia who would query the direction we are taking. Those communities in the Kintore Range area have a freedom of movement that very few other people have. Once you start to polarise and place bores and facilities into position, then you are breaking down their culture and you are destroying something that is precious to the Aboriginal people.

I might reiterate what I touched on this morning in response to a question from the honourable member for Arnhem. We are trying very hard to provide facilities. We are trying very hard to have a community involved with decisions concerning that community. What I was trying to indicate this morning was that the problem at the Milingimbi school did not result from the Department of Education's actions. It was a result of a community that had responsibility for cleaning up rubbish in other areas there. It was a problem that stemmed from the maintenance of that particular system. I am sure the member for Arnhem realises that what I am saying is correct. When the maintenance of that particular system was looked after in the past, there was very little problem. But there has been a problem this year. I can tell the member for Arnhem that the Departments of Education and Community Development are discussing this issue so that we can look at ways of overcoming the problems. But to point the shooter at the Department of Education by saying that the school has been closed 11 times this year is not fair because it has resulted from another action. It is something that I am concerned about. If a facility is closed down in a community, even though it is not our fault, I will make sure that the matter is examined.

The funding of outstations is of very grave concern to many people. I hope that the honourable member for MacDonnell realises that it is not just a case of saying that the state government should pay. Three years is not a bad effort and much has happened in 3 years. I will also say that every budget that the Northern Territory government has brought down has allocated massive amounts of funding for Aboriginal communities. That cannot be denied. The work that has gone on in Aboriginal communities is a credit to the efforts of this government.



Many of the new initiatives in this budget have taken into account the difficulties that we face compared to the states. The Territory is a big place and we are talking about small and scattered communities which are established right on the borders of the Territory itself. Indeed, isolation is a very real problem in the Northern Territory. With that in mind, the satellite education program is something that we have paid a great deal of attention to. An amount of \$147 000 has been allocated in the budget this year for equipment and communication trials in preparation for the introduction of a satellite education service. The service will utilise the AUSSAT domestic satellite system. It is proposed that it will be introduced on a staged basis commencing in January 1986. It could be used for a wide range of activities. I will just mention a few of them: School of the Air programs, in-service activities for teachers and administrators, information exchange and delivery of departmental information, training of Aboriginal teachers, adult education, tutorial sessions for groups of students and presentation of lessons and extension activities for underserved groups of students. We realise that this is the start of a program. We have not allocated a great deal of money this year but the allocation will increase as time goes by. The satellite education service will open the way for a variety of interesting areas to be proceeded with and there is no doubt that the isolated communities will benefit markedly from the satellite education service to be provided.

Mr Speaker, whilst I was talking about Aboriginal education, I should have touched on Batchelor College. The department is to receive additional funding to enable the expansion of activities at Batchelor College this year. In addition to its present teacher training program, the college will train Aboriginal adult educators, provide training for Aboriginal teachers to assume promotional positions and mount a management training program for Aboriginal people. The government has also allocated funds to the college for continuation of the remote area teacher education program which was previously funded by the Commonwealth. We will also be having more lecturers appointed at Batchelor College.

Mr Speaker, in relation to Aboriginal education, we are making an effort. We are giving those communities the opportunity to receive education. I would ask all members who have large electorates with many Aboriginal communities to try to emphasise to those communities that they also have a responsibility. I am sure the honourable member for Stuart would realise what I am saying is true. It is wrong to expect a school facility to be plonked in the middle of the desert, and then to say that the children will receive an education. It does not work like that. It is important that those communities realise that they have a responsibility and we all need to work together. I think that is something that the honourable members opposite should be aware of. I am sure the honourable member for MacDonnell is aware of it.

Mr Speaker, the Darwin Community College is another area where we have spent a great deal of money. The appropriation of \$18.7m this year is a 16.3% increase on last year and will bring about a significant consolidation in college activities. Included in the allocation is \$500 000 to outfit the new general studies and learning resource centre to be finished by the end of 1984 and funding for new equipment for the external studies centre. Current work, valued at \$7.2m, is expected to be finished by the end of this year and will allow the reunification of the college on the Casuarina campus from January 1985. We have been waiting for that for a long time. Funds are provided to commence building stage 1 of student accommodation and a new welding workshop worth a total of \$5m. The funding increase will also enable the college to consolidate and complete the introduction of new teaching programs commenced the previous year with particular emphasis on subjects of proven demand, such as child care.

and computer technology. Seven new courses will commence this year and the total enrolment at the Community College is expected to increase by about 500 so that we will have a total of over 9000 students this year.

One of the disappointments in relation to the Darwin Community College has been the lack of funding for the establishment of a tourism and hospitality centre in Darwin. We have great faith in tourism and we need to address that problem. I was hoping that money would be made available this year to have such a facility established. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. We will keep pursuing that issue and, hopefully, funds will be made available next year. We have Gillen House. Whilst many in the industry and others say that Gillen House is in the wrong position - that it should be in Darwin - that is a fact of life. It is there and there is nothing we can do about it. It is a wonderful facility and one that we must continue to support. This government will continue to support Gillen House as a major training area for the tourism and hospitality industry.

I would also like to take this opportunity to correct an inference in a recent press article - and I see the author in the press gallery - about not taking into account industry wishes. The press release that I issued had a mistake in it because the issue of management of Gillen House was not one that was raised or supported by the industry itself but it was still in line with what industry required. For a long time, industry had been saying that we were appointing people from within the public service ranks and it was necessary to have someone managing that particular facility who had an idea of what tourism and hospitality was all about. It was something that the tourism industry and the Tourism Industry Training Committee had considered as a way of having a link between Gillen House and the industry. I believe that having a manager who has had experience in tourism is extremely important. It is in line with what the tourism industry wished. The Tourism Industry Training Committee also has representation on the interview panel that will select that manager for Gillen House. Whilst it does not satisfy all the needs of the industry at this stage, it is in line with trying to move closer towards having its concerns considered. That the manager of that particular facility should be experienced in the tourism area will be a major point that we will take up. I hope that it will be successful.

Mr Speaker, I do not think that anyone can deny that this budget - and, in particular, its education aspects - caters for all of the needs of Territory people. It caters for people in isolated communities, it caters for Aboriginal people and it caters for people in the towns and the cities of the Territory. I hope that we are able to continue to provide for the people of the Territory the education that will enable our students to become the people who are able to service the industries and meet the needs and requirements...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I will confine my remarks this afternoon to matters concerning racing and gaming, mines and energy and matters concerning my electorate.

Going through these blue documents that were issued with the budget papers, I was hoping to find some indication of when and how the government intended to introduce the Northern Territory TAB. I cannot find any allocation of funds in the explanations relating to the Racing and Gaming Commission. Perhaps the Treasurer can indicate where the necessary allocation of funds is for the setting up of the Northern Territory's TAB. Indeed, I will be very interested to have some idea of how it will be done - whether it will be done on an agency

basis or what is being proposed at the moment. Since the announcement of the proposal, I have not heard anything further on the matter. I have followed it with some interest over a period of time and I would appreciate the Treasurer making the Assembly aware of future proposals.

The other matter that concerns me within the racing and gaming documents relates to casino taxes and fees. On page 4 of this budget paper, it is indicated that, for 1984-85, the casino taxes and fees are estimated as \$1.28m compared with last year's \$2.47m. I know that considerable public airing has been given to this matter but, for the sake of the record, that represents about a 50% drop on what the casino contributed to the Northern Territory government last year. While you could expect perhaps a 10% growth, given inflation and normal growth over a period of 12 months, in fact the Northern Territory government will have a 50% fall in casino fees and taxes. I assume that that is about a 60% loss in revenue.

It has been explained by the Treasurer in numerous public statements that this will result from reducing the casino licensing fees from 20% in the case of the Darwin casino and from 15% in the case of the Alice Springs casino to an 8% fee for both casinos. That is a remarkable attitude for any government to adopt without giving any satisfactory explanation. I have heard none that satisfies me to date. As I understand it, the Treasurer's explanation has been that a fall in fees will result in an increase in activities with the casinos and therefore boost the tourism industry generally in the Northern Territory. Quite frankly, the logic of that escapes me. If you were to apply that logic right along the line, there would be no fees on any leisure industries at all in the Northern Territory. Indeed, there would be no liquor tax and none of the leisure industries would incur any taxes. Because the logic of the Treasurer's argument escapes me, I would be interested if he could develop it a little more in his reply because, certainly, it needs some developing.

The other interesting thing that has accompanied the introduction of the new proprietors to the casinos has been an increase in expenditure, as can be clearly seen on page 8 of Budget Paper No 2. This is under the Racing and Gaming Commission activities. Expenditure generally will rise by some \$80 000. That is a huge amount but it is an increase of some 30% over and above the normal increase for inflation. Some 30% extra will be spent on policing the gaming activities conducted in the 2 casinos. That will be accompanied by a drop in revenue which seems to be a fairly remarkable circumstance all round. The minister's public pronouncements on this matter to date have been very unsatisfactory and the logic of them, in my opinion, does not hold water let alone much else. I hope that he can contribute to that debate before this Assembly is adjourned.

Other matters that I wish to address relate to mines and energy. I will raise some questions during committee stage in relation to the allocation of staff, particularly within the executive area of the Department of Mines and Energy. However, I would like the minister to take on board a few suggestions relating to those issues contained on page 12 of the NTEC budget paper. It is a matter for the budget and a matter that should be reviewed every now and then. It concerns revenue and expenditure generated or incurred by NTEC. I would suggest that, with the proposed new gas pipeline and the development of the Channel Island power-station, this would be a suitable time for NTEC and the government to review the charging policies that NTEC has at the moment.

At the moment, there is a system operating in quite a number of states of Australia which provides an incentive for consumers to use electricity in off-peak periods. I would suggest that that is perhaps one means by which the

Northern Territory government could conserve energy. Gas pipeline or no gas pipeline, it is important that we conserve electricity or indeed energy as much as possible. Another way in which electricity consumers may be induced to conserve power would be a reversal of the schedule. At the moment, the unit costs become cheaper as you use more power. All members would be aware of the circumstances with the delivery of water whereby unit costs become more expensive the more you use. Of course, this would have to be accompanied by variations which would reflect the consumer status be it domestic, light industry, heavy industry, retail or entertainment. I do not think that such a schedule would be very difficult to develop but I am sure that it would contribute to the saving of electricity generally in the Northern Territory. With the development of the Channel Island power-station, perhaps it would be timely if the government reviewed those charges which, quite rightly, the government expects consumers to pay.

The other concern relating to mines and energy affects my electorate and other communities that have developed around mining towns. It is all very well for the Northern Territory government to go flat out to attract miners to the Northern Territory but general experience to date has been that they have been wellnigh abandoned once mining has occurred. Mining communities in the Northern Territory tend to be fairly small but their needs, however, are just as great as those of any large community such as Darwin and Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, in Nhulunbuy the primary school is easily the largest in the Northern Territory. In fact, it is twice the size of most of the primary schools in the Northern Territory. I have spoken on this matter before in the Assembly. I am quite sure all members would be aware of the situation. There is a desperate need for another primary school in Nhulunbuy. That is one area where government needs to assist the mining community. In my opinion, it has neglected that mining community at Nhulunbuy.

There is also a desperate need for women's shelters in small communities such as mining towns. The demography of a mining town consists mainly of the satellite family - mum, dad and 2.7 kids or whatever it is now. There is very little family infrastructure support in those communities. Seldom is there an uncle or an aunt or indeed a mother or father around to assist in times of domestic crisis. There is a very real need in those small communities for establishments such as women's shelters. Indeed, I believe there has been a certain amount of publicity about the need for such a centre in Jabiru. Certainly, the need exists in Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt and small communities generally. There are many mining communities which are disadvantaged because of their location. While it is not strictly the responsibility of the Department of Mines and Energy, I believe it is obligated as much as any department to see that those communities have their needs catered for. I stress that point. It is a need; it is not a luxury.

The only other matter I would like to touch on involves the Minister for Education. Once again, it is a domestic matter. I spoke on it at the last sittings. It concerns Aboriginal education. I spoke then about the needs of Aboriginal people in very remote communities and about the quite depressing conditions under which teacher aides are forced to work in isolated Aboriginal communities. Nobody in the Department of Education would be expected to work under such conditions. I would have hoped that this budget would have recognised some of those problems. I appreciate that there is a cost involved but there is also an appalling cost in persons not being able to contribute and participate in our society. There is an appalling human cost involved in that. Those costs have to be balanced. Although there is a cost, I would have hoped that there was some recognition of the pressing needs of people in very isolated

Aboriginal communities. Quite certainly, those people will be in the Northern Territory for the rest of their lives. They were born here; they will die here. They will contribute to the Northern Territory all their lives. I do not suggest for a second that other persons should not receive the full benefits that a society can provide but, quite certainly, those Aboriginal people will be here all their lives. As much as anybody else, they will play a part in the Northern Territory's future.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity this evening simply to indicate what the budget does for my electorate and what it does for the entire Northern Territory: it provides a fair and reasonable distribution of all of the available funds across the board, regardless of geographic location - despite what the member for Nhulunbuy might have us believe - regardless of race, regardless of age and regardless of social means. It provides a proper and balanced education for all of our kids. It provides better job opportunities for our kids. It provides a better lifestyle for all of us and it certainly provides greater business opportunities.

The other opportunity that this debate should give to government backbenchers is to pick up some of those points raised by opposition members. Unfortunately, once again our opposition members have given us nothing or at least very little with which to work. Their contribution to date has been generally lacking in constructive criticism. In itself, I suppose that must be an endorsement of the balanced and well-presented budget given to us by the Treasurer. Opposition members have provided us with nothing more than a whimper or, at very best, a token gesture or nitpicking. Hopefully, the speakers to follow might address themselves directly to constructive advice on the budget program. However, I guess general support for the budget is understandable. Even the shadow treasurer made the point that it represents much of the same old thing - the same old growth and development, the same old progress, the same old responsible approach to laying solid foundations for a prosperous and stable future for all Territorians. Most of all, it provides the same old balanced program. Of this budget, Territorians certainly would be correct in saying that it is much the same old thing but better.

The budget recognises the needs and aspirations of all Territorians. It provides a program balancing economic development and lifestyle packages. It provides a program which gives us the infrastructure necessary to develop our known resources and our local industry and provides a catalyst for future development, research, exploration and development of new industries. It provides new initiatives such as a free trade zone which will undoubtedly allow the development of new industries including high technology industries. At the same time, the government remains committed to educational facilities, including the development of a university. I am pleased to hear that negotiations are well in hand for the development of common year packages in association with the University of Queensland to allow our local Territory students to remain here and advance their tertiary education at least to a certain extent. In addition, it provides improved facilities for the community colleges' apprenticeship training and, of course, the Territory has a most impressive record in that area compared with interstate.

A subject which is of particular concern to me, and which I was pleased to hear the Minister for Education refer to, is the question of mathematics and secondary science education. These subjects are necessary for the technological education of our students to assist them in contributing to the high-technology development that we will see. I understand that those courses are to be introduced at the community college and are currently awaiting accreditation.

The program provides support for labour-intensive industries, in particular tourism. Not only are dollars provided for the expansion of the available market, both nationally and overseas, but also for roadworks and other necessary services. Those roadworks, of course, will be of benefit not only to the tourism industry but to many other existing and potential users such as primary industry, mining and community access.

The program includes other infrastructural services such as power, and I do not mean just the Channel Island project which, in itself, is illustrative of the sort of initiative and foresight typical of the progressive government that we have. I refer to the provision of reticulated electricity to people in remote settlements and townships, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of the idyllic and isolated communities that they choose to live in and also the comforts of urban life.

The other services involved in the program include sewerage and water supply works. Whilst sewerage systems provide the facilities necessary to ensure health and hygiene, water supply systems are the most basic and fundamental prerequisite both for civilised settlement and for industry. We must not only collect, distribute and utilise this valuable resource efficiently, but it is also important for us to identify and assess our total future water resources since, undoubtedly, they hold the key to many of our future projects.

In talking about water resources, it is interesting to note the program given to us by the federal government. I would like to provide some constructive criticism on the federal government's policy in this area. I expect this constructive criticism is shared by all of the states and has been relayed to the minister. Unfortunately, the Minister for Minerals and Energy has chosen to ignore not only the advice and requests of the states but the advice of those experts who have already put together a program in the Water 2000 document which was released last year and also, as I understand it, the advice of his own staff and colleagues.

One needs to look back through the history of water research programs in Australia. From 1977 up until 1983, the federal government had a national water resources program which expended some \$190m on identifying and working towards the development and assessment of this valuable commodity. The Northern Territory was able to join in that program from about 1981 and shared some of those funds to a small degree. Last year, the federal government chose to suspend the national water resources program and introduced a yet-to-be-detailed federal water resources assistance program which was supposed - but has failed so far - to bring together all of those previous Commonwealth government programs for assistance in water resource development.

Paramount amongst those responsibilities listed is this question of water resource assessment programs. When we look at the expenditure in this area over the last 4 or 5 years, we see that, whilst it was inadequate, the total national program on water resource assessment itself was somewhere between \$9m and \$10m up until 1982-83 under the federal LCP government. It dropped dramatically to just over \$6m in 1983-84 and, Mr Deputy Speaker, guess what has happened this year! This year, the program of water resource assessment has been totally wiped from the federal government's program throughout Australia, fortunately with the exception of a lousy \$1.5m which is being spent within the Northern Territory.

As I mentioned, the other states received absolutely nothing for water resource assessment but, unlike us, they have already in place most of their long-term water structures for which they are to receive in excess of \$90m this

current year. When we consider the economic potential of the northern region of Australia, the proportion of surface and subterranean water available in this area and the total or almost total lack of knowledge on this valuable resource, it is difficult to comprehend why the federal government should adopt this attitude towards identifying what will be an important contributor to the long-term development of Australia. Fortunately, the Northern Territory budget, as it has done for years to the full extent to which it is able, provides funding in this extremely important area.

The Northern Territory budget is not only about development. It includes a balanced approach to the provision of health and welfare programs for communities and housing, education and other lifestyle components. Of course, the relevant ministers will elaborate on these areas themselves. However, there is one area that I would like to highlight and that relates to our senior citizens. Once again, it is an old theme of mine but I think it is quite timely that we should mention senior citizens because last weekend saw the culmination of a most successful Territory-wide program for Senior Citizens Week. It was successful as much for its social and entertainment aspects as for the public recognition and awareness given to our 'oldies' who have contributed much towards our development.

During the week, I was reminded by many of these people that they are indebted to the Northern Territory government for its concern for and support of pensioners generally. This support is reflected in policies of the Department of Community Development and the Department of Health as well as other departments - support through a caring housing policy, through transport concessions, air fare contributions, rebates on electricity and water charges, financial contributions to aged-persons' hostels and the running thereof, towards nursing homes and certainly, as we have heard, towards new initiatives including the newly-established Geriatric Assessment Unit at the Royal Darwin Hospital. It also provides support for the Northern Territory Council on the Ageing where funds are directed towards transportation and the provision of welfare officers and office accommodation to allow senior citizens to capitalise on the various facilities that might be available to them in the community.

In direct contrast, we can look at this in light of what happens elsewhere in Australia and what our senior citizens receive from the federal government. I do not wish to elaborate on incomes and assets tests; we have heard enough about that. But, once again, there is lack of consultation by a government that supposedly prides itself on consensus. Certainly, if we look at the program of review, how in heck can our 'oldies' understand what this government is on about with incomes and assets when it changes its mind continually? Not only does it change its mind but it now introduces, at extremely short notice, a policy that will affect a great majority of our well-respected and elderly citizens in a manner that they are not able to cope with in such a short time. It has taken these people literally years, probably even decades, to plan their retirements. All of a sudden, within 3 or 4 months, they have to put together an amended package to ensure their comfortable lifestyle.

Let us look at a recent press release issued by the Minister for Social Security, Senator Grimes, when he announced some grants towards voluntary and welfare organisations to provide new services for the aged. He said that he was assisting a total of 51 organisations throughout Australia; the grants were part of a \$31m program and funds were being targeted to ensure that they improved the range of accommodation available for the aged. A list of those programs was attached to the press release and indicated 8 projects in New South Wales, 10 in Victoria, 14 in Queensland, 9 in South Australia, 6 in Western Australia, 3 in Tasmania, 1 in the ACT and none in the Northern Territory. Despite the great

shortage of accommodation for elderly people in the Northern Territory, the federal government, although it has been hoo-haing to the people of the Northern Territory about further accommodation, has done nothing. It was indicated 12 months ago, I think immediately prior to the Northern Territory election, that the Salvation Army was to get approval for development of a nursing home and day welfare centre. To date, that full approval has yet to come. It is obviously not included in the federal government's current program.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am well aware of senior citizens, pioneers in fact, of the Northern Territory who are waiting for accommodation in Tracy Lodge Hostel, in Chan Park Nursing Home and in various other places throughout the Northern Territory. It is unlikely that they will get to see that accommodation because the demand is so high. As we are all well aware, the growth in the aged population in the Northern Territory is exceeding the average growth in population. So we have this problem whereby we will not be able to accommodate people. It takes more than a day or two to put these schemes together. In fact, it will take the Salvation Army another 12 months to get its scheme under way. My constructive advice to the federal government is that it honour those commitments made over 12 months ago and give approval to a body that has its own funds and would like to get on with the job of helping some of those pioneers.

In effect, we can see that this government has provided us with both an effective and a balanced budget. I can understand the Leader of the Opposition's despair in speaking to the budget during the last sittings because he was unable to find any degree of fault with it. He was obviously in despair following the shadow treasurer's abysmal attempt to address himself to the job at hand. It was particularly abysmal compared to the relatively concise statistical analysis of last year's budget by the then shadow treasurer, a response that gave a critical appraisal together with some insight into the ALP's own economic development platform. Whilst that speech by the previous shadow treasurer was concise, certainly the fears contained therein have all proved to be unfounded.

I like to compliment those who perform but I also like to take to task those who do not. What did we get this year from our shadow treasurer, Mr Deputy Speaker? The answer is nothing. As a government backbencher, I can understand the Leader of the Opposition's frustration which must surely derive from the lack of intelligent participation by his own members, a frustration that we share with him because it is a problem for us in not having an effective opposition. I understand his frustration that led to his disparaging remark in his response to the budget last sittings when he suggested that the government backbenchers do not have a brain between them. That is a natural comment for any hotheaded politician of average intelligence who finds himself immersed in an intellectual vacuum that surrounds him on the benches opposite.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this government's track record over the past 6 years speaks for itself. Undoubtedly, this budget will be shown to be both a responsible one and a productive one.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Housing and Conservation): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Treasurer has already spoken of the total expenditure allocated in the budget to the Housing and Conservation Commissions this year. He has touched on it generally. I will touch on specific details of the budget as it affects my portfolio. At the outset, I would like to thank the member for Braitling for his remarks directed to the Conservation Commission and its work at Alice Springs. The commendation that he conferred on it is rightly deserved but, nevertheless, I think it would be pleased to hear it. I would like to assure him that the commission will continue working in the interests of the



communities in the Centre in the same way it has in the past. I was particularly interested to hear his remarks about the ring road in the Kings Canyon area. This whole area is being examined and I will be touching on it briefly when I bring to the notice of honourable members some points in the budget as it affects the work of the Conservation Commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in advising the Assembly of specific details of the Housing Commission expenditure for 1984-85, I would like first to reject completely the claims about disregard for housing needs in the Northern Territory put forward by the opposition spokesman on housing who certainly tried to make hay although the sun was not shining his way at the time. He tried to make hay out of 1 fact in isolation: that commencements would fall from 1107 to 991 in 1984-85. That is comparing the building commencements with the 1983-84 year. The same spokesman showed by his rabbiting on about this 1 fact in isolation that he was completely blind in 1 eye and could not see out of the other. He reminded me of a certain historical character, namely, one Nelson at Waterloo.

Mr B. Collins: He could see out of 1 eye.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: He was blind in 1 eye and could not see out of the other on that particular occasion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, he showed his blindness and his lack of grasp of the concomitant figures relating to housing. Instead of comparing them all, he took 1 in isolation. I think we are well aware of the accuracy of the honourable member with figures when he tried to come the raw prawn with honourable members when he was talking about the assessment of loan repayments and comparing weekly figures to monthly figures. However, somebody caught him out.

The reduction in housing commencements for 1984-85 has been made possible by the gradual movement of preferences of people towards buying in the private market and by the encouragement of the private building industry by the Housing Commission over the years, especially by such things as the safety net scheme which guarantees the private builder against loss in the event that a house is not sold privately. The introduction of the new home loans scheme under the guidelines of the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement also encourages purchasers to look beyond the public housing construction area for accommodation. We have to consider also our active encouragement of the private lending institutions in the community. This is shown in the loan package agreed to between the government and the private lending institutions which allows loans to be structured on a percentage of income rather than equal repayment figures. This will assist low-start loans and it will not involve the borrower in a commitment beyond his capacity to repay.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with a budget of just over \$168m for housing this year, compared to just over \$163m last year, it can be seen that the government is still giving priority to the housing of Territorians. In that extra commitment of about \$5m, we have to take into account such things as a great increase in salaries, an ever-increasing maintenance problem, the upgrading of substandard accommodation and rent rebates. As I said many times, the Northern Territory government contributes about 14% of its total budget to housing in the Territory compared with about 4.5% on the average by other states in Australia. This allocation is made in recognition of the growing Territory population. Most importantly, the opposition speakers always seem to forget that we want to maintain the short waiting times that we have now. These are very short waiting times for the allocation of accommodation when compared with those in the states.

During 1982-83, public housing approvals numbered 822 units of accommodation. This figure was increased to 1228 units for the 1983-84 financial year, an increase of 50%. Realistically, and keeping both our feet on the ground, there is no way that any sensible person could expect this growth to continue from year to year. It would be something that other states would only dream of in relation to their public housing but we were able to do it. There is no way that we can continue to do it and any sensible person would realise that. In the 1982-83 year compared to the 1983-84 year, private sector dwelling approvals rose from 1388 units to 1497 units. More significantly, in the first 7 calendar months of 1984, 923 private sector dwelling units were approved for construction and 193 of these were in July alone.

To give some brief details of how the budget allocation for housing is for the betterment of the people in the Northern Territory, the general public housing allocation has increased to approximately \$16m this year. The total new general public commencements have increased from 766 to 928 having regard to the merging of the 2 housing schemes - the general public and the public servant housing schemes. When we consider the rentals of the general public and the public service schemes which were merged in 1982, we see increases in the budget of \$3m in the general public rental section and \$2m in the public service rental section. This is apparent because we have made our first moves towards cost rents. Under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement, this will become mandatory. We increased our rents on average by about 12.2% some months ago.

When we consider the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme, in 1983-84 loans were extended for 1072 dwellings. This was in the private as well as in the public sector. In 1984-85, there will be a greater involvement by private lending institutions and this will reduce the funding by the Northern Territory government. When we consider home sales for the general public and for the public service, we expect to have 550 houses for sale in the coming year. This is about 100 houses in the general public sector and about 450 houses in the public service sector.

I come now to an item which is not mentioned very often but I think it will have increasing importance for housing in the Northern Territory. I refer to hostels. In the budget, there is an item in capital works for hostels that has increased to something like \$122 000. This is perhaps only a very small figure when one considers that I was talking about millions in relation to different budget items. People come to the Territory and complain from time to time about the lack of low-cost accommodation. It would certainly pay these people to examine what accommodation is offered at the hostels. I did and I would say that I was pleasantly surprised. For the information of honourable members, at a certain hostel here, a person can obtain a bed from \$5 a night to about \$17 a night. I do not think you can get much better than that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, over the years we have had to increase the allocation for maintenance of our housing stock in the Northern Territory. This may reflect on the care the tenants are giving the houses. If a tenant leaves a house in a poor state, the next tenant cannot be expected to put up with the run-down condition so more money has to be spent on maintenance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, apart from the obvious stimulus to private sector building through the movement to cost rents under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement, further stimulation is anticipated under the recently-announced Home Purchase Assistance Scheme which was also proposed under guidelines imposed by the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement. As all honourable members know, this is based on variable borrowing sums and the bank interest requirement of the scheme which will allow a greater number of

borrowers to have access to loans. The agreeable result is that the Housing Commission will be able to reduce public housing commencements next year to 991 dwelling units without extending the wait time for allocation of rental accommodation or the availability of houses for purchase. That is one of the most important features in this whole housing budget.

In line with my earlier reference to loans for purchase of dwellings, the budget provides the sum of \$37m in 1984-85. It is expected that this amount will provide in excess of 900 borrowers with a part or all of the borrowings required for purchase of their homes. I say 'a part' because, as all members will be aware, the new loans scheme is based on a \$50 000 package which, combined with the purchaser's deposit, will allow the purchase of a 2-bedroom unit on today's market. The loan sum available from the Housing Commission is a component of this package and it varies according to the income of the borrower. It will be necessary for those in the higher income brackets to seek private funding from private lending institutions. This is because of an agreement reached between the government and the banks and building societies in the Northern Territory. Additional borrowings will also be required where only a basic deposit is available on a 3-bedroom house and lending institutions may approve these sums according to the borrower's capacity to service the particular loan.

Mr Deputy Speaker, allowance has also been made for the sale of 550 units of accommodation from the Housing Commission's stock during the 1984-85 financial year. The slight preference being shown to purchase on the private market may allow a lesser rate of sale. If so, there will be a further welcome reduction in the wait time for public rental housing.

I recently alluded in a press statement to the allocation of certain moneys for the upgrading of laundry facilities in some of our old housing stock. This program was welcomed, certainly by the recipients. A high standard of service to tenants will also become available in the 1984-85 year through the introduction of a computerised maintenance system. This system will provide a more timely and cost-effective response to maintenance complaints.

In summary, the 1984-85 budget will allow the Housing Commission to improve the availability of accommodation in the public housing sector whilst concurrently encouraging further development in the private sector, a marrying of 2 areas which is not often able to be achieved so harmoniously in other parts of Australia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning to the budget allocation for the workings of the Conservation Commission, there are certainly some very interesting plans for this year and a continuation of interesting projects which started in previous years. The first item that I will allude to will be of interest to the member for Braitling: \$890 000 for the Kings Canyon National Park. I do not think many people in the Northern Territory are aware of what is at the Kings Canyon National Park. That area has far greater potential than people have realised. It is only by the development of this area by the Conservation Commission that the full potential will be seen by tourists and Territorians. At the moment, there are 2 rangers based in the park. The government has a 4-year plan for the development. This 4-year development program includes the provision of water, visitor facilities and the upgrading of an access road. Coupled with the upgrading of this access road will be consideration of the ring road linking Kings Canyon to other areas of interest in the region.

The honourable member for Braitling also spoke about the development of Arltunga. This is also a very interesting project that the Conservation

Commission will be continuing. \$190 000 is allocated for it. As well as other projects that the Conservation Commission is considering for the coming year, this is also a happy marrying of 2 interests in the community - the conservation interest and the tourist industry. Recently, I was fortunate to meet visiting rangers at a travelling seminar that came to the Northern Territory. This was a seminar of middle-management rangers from the states and the Commonwealth. One of the things that struck these rangers was how we managed to have our interests of tourism and conservation working so happily together. I think all of the rangers took back to their own states the ideas that we have been working with for a number of years. We will probably be hearing a lot more of that in the future.

At Arltunga, not only have we a Conservation Commission project but also the restoration of an important historical area. There is also consideration of future mining in this area. I understand there are still deposits of residual gold of some value. This could be considered in the future, having regard to the historic importance of the area and also the scenic attraction and the work that the Conservation Commission has done already. It will be working in close cooperation with the Mines Division on this matter.

A sum of \$100 000 has been allocated to the development of Rainbow Valley Nature Park. I say with some regret that it is one of the few areas under the aegis of the Conservation Commission that I have not yet visited. I look forward to seeing this area. While I am talking about these particular areas, one of the main aims of the Conservation Commission is to acquire areas of land representative of different conservation interests in all parts of the Northern Territory. The Rainbow Valley Nature Park represents the acquisition of an area which is not represented in other conservation areas.

\$80 000 has been allocated for the Barkly Tablelands Reserve. This is quite an interesting project in that it shows that the Conservation Commission can work happily with pastoral interests in a joint-management arrangement. This is in relation to the Longreach Waterhole which is an area of particular interest for the breeding of waterfowl. It is also an area of particular interest to tourists but, unfortunately, it experienced some degradation as a result of pastoral use. The joint-management arrangement came about because the Conservation Commission could see that the area merited preservation. The waterhole has been fenced to exclude cattle. Because of this, a number of bores will be sunk to provide an alternative water supply for the cattle.

Another important item in the budget is \$1.05m for Yulara communications. We cannot spend \$160m on that very marvellous project at Yulara without having adequate and modern communications. In fact, we must look to the future. It is a very sophisticated undertaking, a fact that we have been aware of in spending money on communications.

\$160 000 has been allocated to the Bushfires Council for the Darwin rural fire management strategy. You could say that this affects me personally in terms of my electorate. I am talking about the Vernon fire region which is in the Darwin rural area. It also involves part of the electorate of the member for Victoria River. The money spent by the Bushfires Council to encourage volunteer fire brigades to form and to train with machinery and vehicles and to work in harmony with the Fire Service and other volunteer fire brigades under its control has contributed to very good fire management and bushfire control in the area. It is not perfect yet but one can certainly see an improvement in the bushfire and fire management in the area, contributed to in no small part by the money spent by the Bushfires Council in this area.

There is an item of \$60 000 in the budget for the Parks and Wildlife Unit. This is to help the Conservation Commission and the Northern Territory government in their efforts to have the *Crocodylus porosus* taken from schedule 1 and placed on schedule 2 of the CITES listing. I will not go into that in detail because all honourable members are aware of it. But it is very important if we expect our 3 crocodile farms to get off the ground and become self-supporting over the years. It is very important that we continue with our crocodile population surveys. It is very important that we are represented at overseas conventions and seminars. At the moment, there is a meeting in Caracas of the crocodile species group to which the Northern Territory has sent 3 representatives to present our case. It is presented not by the Northern Territory government but by the Australian government. Nevertheless, it is our submission. This crocodile species group then reports to the species survival group, which reports to the International Union of Conservation Nations, which in turn reports to the CITES convention - the most important one - which will be meeting next year. In the meantime, the Northern Territory will be conducting an international workshop on crocodile management in the early part of 1985.

\$70 000 was allocated for pastoral and land resources assessment. This is mostly in relation to the Alice Springs and the Barkly region. It is very important to assess not only the damage that may have been done over previous years by overstocking in pastoral regions but also to ensure that no further damage is done in the future. In considering our land resources, it is also important that we work harmoniously with agricultural interests because not only must agriculture progress - and it is progressing - in the Northern Territory, we must pay regard also to the conservation of our land resources so that they are not degraded in the future.

An important item in the budget for the Conservation Commission is \$210 000 for Aboriginal trainee liaison officers. This provision is made for the ongoing services of the 3 existing Aboriginal ranger trainee liaison officers. The commission also employs Aboriginal rangers and Aboriginals in the forestry industry, park development and the Bushfires Council. In its working with and understanding of Aboriginal rangers and employees, the Conservation Commission is second to none.

There is \$787 000 for an ongoing commitment to the Berry Springs Zoo. This is to be expended on construction, including the completion of water and sewerage works, the completion of 2 houses, internal roadworks and also fencing. An item of \$70 000 will be included in the budget for next year for the development of the Olive Pink Reserve in Alice Springs. I think all of those members who live in or near to Alice Springs will appreciate the importance of this reserve and the importance of commemorating that lady's name because of what she did in her historical work in the Northern Territory.

With the few minutes that are left to me, I would like to comment on the budget allocation for public works in the rural area, with particular reference to roadworks. More than any public works in the rural area, road building and road maintenance are of the greatest importance. In its budget allocation for these roadworks, the Roads Division in the Department of Transport and Works has paid regard to the roads that are of importance to rural people. It has heeded representations made both by myself on behalf of my constituents and by the very active progress associations in the rural area. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think the people in the rural area will be very happy with that budget allocation.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to comment first on what I think was a rather amazing performance from the Minister for Housing. She has drawn the longest bow that I have seen for quite some time. There is some talk

about Blind Freddy and Blind Harry but a bow that long could have shot Harold at Hastings. She engaged in some brilliant contortions whereby the government, having taken the credit for increases in the level of public housing being achieved this year, will now take the credit as it decreases every year. It is quite amazing. On the strength of that, I think we should put her up for Chief Minister. It would not be as stupid as some of the other suggestions being made by some of the people who might achieve that position.

Let us turn back to some of the statements made earlier by the minister for Nightcliff - the member for Nightcliff; he is another minister pretender. He started off by quoting a few figures but became fairly confused because obviously he does not understand what the labour force is. It is unfortunate that he is not here but, no doubt, he will be around somewhere and be able to hear me. For his information, the labour force is defined in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication. No doubt, he has a copy of it or will be able to obtain one. Employed persons are those people who, during the survey week, worked for 1 hour or more for pay, profit etc, those persons who worked for 15 hours or more without pay in a family business or on a farm or employees who had a job but were not at work, were on paid leave, leave without pay etc, were employers or self-employed persons who had a job, business or farm but were not at work. Unemployed persons are those aged 15 and over who were not employed during the survey week and - and this is important - had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the 4 weeks up to the end of the survey week and were available for work in the survey week or would have been available except for temporary illness or were waiting to start a new job within 4 weeks from the end of the survey week and would have started in the survey week if the job had been available for them or were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been stood down without pay for less than 4 weeks up to the end of the survey week, including the whole of the survey week, for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdowns.

The reason why I have quoted that at length will become clear when I go through some updated figures we have on the labour force in the Northern Territory. In August 1983, the labour force in the Northern Territory, according to the ABS, was 64 800. It had declined in August 1984 to 58 500. In September 1983, it was 66 300; it had declined in September 1984 to 60 800. This indicated that the gap between the figures for those 2 years has diminished but is holding steady. I would like to talk about the validity of these figures. The point that I want to make is that, while the ABS admits that some of the figures may be dubious, it talks about the possibility of a procedural error at some time. However, I do not believe that any error would cover the full drop in the labour force. The point that I want to make for the benefit of the member for Nightcliff is that the government cannot shrug off the bad figures from the ABS and then take credit for the good figures. It has attempted to do that.

I would like to quote from the Australian Labour Market of September 1984:

*We conducted our annual survey of the states and territories. Economic recovery is found to be geographically broad-based although Tasmania and the Northern Territory have shown little or no improvement in employment growth during the last year.*

This is September 1984. In another statement it says:

*With the exception of Tasmania and the Northern Territory, the number of full-time jobs for the year to July 1984 has grown strongly. Again, the most surprising result is the apparent*

*dramatic deterioration in the Northern Territory with substantial falls in full-time employment recorded in recent months.*

There is one more statement that I will use to illustrate my point:

*It was only 2 years ago that we described the Northern Territory as the only boom area in Australia. This is no longer the case. The indicators of labour market performance for the Territory are showing a remarkable degree of volatility and the overall impression is of a very precarious and possibly deteriorating labour market.*

Those are the results of the Australian Labour Market survey of September 1984. We are trying to persuade the government to consider seriously that, if it is not going to accept the figures from the ABS, it had better do something about gaining more reliable figures. It can work out with the ABS a method of sampling which will give it the information which will allow it to do some economic planning. We are upset that the budget has been developed without that basic knowledge of the economic indicators and will have to be reframed in a credible manner to stand up to the real situation as it will exist in the next year.

I have some figures on full-time and part-time employment which indicate the state of flux that the Northern Territory is currently in. In August 1984, we had 45 400 full-time employees and 8600 part-time employees, giving a labour force of 58 500. In September 1984, the full-time figure had risen to 50 000 and the part-time figure had fallen to 6500, giving a total of 60 800. The indicator in that is that the labour force increased by 2300, the part-time figure decreased by 2100 and the full-time figure increased by 4600 which could possibly demonstrate that there has been some movement from part-time to full-time employment. That indicates a growth in the labour force - which is good - but the government cannot turn around and say that it will take credit for that but will reject the fact that, on the same method of calculation, the labour force has declined over that last year by a very substantial amount.

I want to turn to some points relating to unemployment. In August 1983, there were 9500 unemployed with a rate of 9.1%. By September, it was 6000 and 9%. In 1984, there has been an improvement - 4500 and 7.7% in August and, in September, 4400 and 7.2%. This indicates a drop in the number and a drop in the rate. Once again, the government has to decide how it will work between the ABS figures which it says it will not accept and those that it says it will accept.

I would like to turn to the participation rate. The participation rate is calculated by dividing the figure for the labour force by that of the population of 15 years and over. Mr Speaker, if you turn to the labour force definition, and you know what the civilian population of 15 years and over is, you will be able to work out the participation rate. It was 70.4% in August 1983 and it dropped to 61.9% by August 1984. The September figures showed a similar decline from 71.7% for 1983 to 64.2% in 1984. This is a significant fall in the participation rate. It indicates that there has been lack of growth in the labour force to match the growth in the civilian population of 15 years and over. Since the labour force is equal to the employed, plus the unemployed, insufficient growth in the labour force can mean either a lack of growth in the number of employed or that people from amongst the unemployed have dropped out of the work force, as we defined it earlier.

Let us turn to the population figures which the member for Nightcliff used to back up his assertion that everything is going excellently. He does not

appear to have very accurate figures. I would like to make it clear that this is an extremely important figure because it is one of the base figures upon which the Memorandum of Understanding's calculations are worked out. The Territory's population at 31 December 1983 was 136 813. Between the censuses, there is a complicated formula which works out how we adjust the figures as we proceed. It is worked out on the number of children covered by Northern Territory family allowances and multiplied by a factor to give the Northern Territory population. At 31 December 1983, it was 136 813. The plan estimate which was used in the negotiations in Canberra showed a 3.9% growth to 142 875 by 31 December 1984.

However, within the first 9 months of the year, growth has been only in the order of 2% which would indicate that, to maintain the growth required, we need the same increase that we had in the last 9 months for the next 3 months. That indicates that the basis of the budget was unsound because the figures on which it was determined - to establish the moneys that come to the Northern Territory - are incorrect. It indicates that, over 9 months, it has grown by less than 2%. We must now catch up the same amount in the next 3 months. Mr Deputy Speaker, according to that figure, our national increase is somewhere in the order of 1.8%. We have an increase here of about 2%. We estimate that the effect on tax sharing will be in the vicinity of \$8m to \$10m. The figures indicate that, if the natural population growth was deducted from the population increase figures that we have had so far this year, our immigration from other states has, in fact, fallen almost to zero. That would indicate what is happening in the Northern Territory independently from the ABS figures. I raise this as a warning and I hope that the Treasurer and other ministers take it on board and do more work in determining the reasons for it and then try to find out what it will do to their planning.

I would now like to turn to some of the points made by the Minister for Health. I see that the increase in Commonwealth money to the Department of Health is 14.5% and growth was three-quarters of that rate. However, that still indicates a healthy increase in the gross amount of money going to health. I would like to make a few points regarding the minister's statement on the Appropriation Bill. For a start, it was a statement indicating the various functions of the department. However, no figures were attached. A number of states have adopted this principle and it is one with which I disagree fairly strongly. I cannot see how we can work out how we are going in public health, the Drug and Alcohol Bureau, the Nursing Division, the Institute for Aboriginal Health and so on, when we do not have figures to compare their funding with their expenditure.

There are a few other points I wish to speak on. The first one relates to the hospital about which I asked a question of the minister this morning. I said that he failed to give me the answer. I was referring to that part of the question concerning the total capacity of the Royal Darwin Hospital. He did not answer that this morning. He gave an indication this afternoon which, if I am correct, would put it somewhere over 400. He said somewhere in the vicinity of 350 are there at the moment, and there is about an 80% occupancy rate. That means that some 180 additional beds could be accommodated at the Royal Darwin Hospital before it is fully utilised. If the private hospital goes ahead with its 100 beds, obviously there will be a transfer between the public hospital and the private hospital and that will mean that we will be looking at between 200 and 300 beds which will be vacant.

I ask him to explain to this Assembly in a bit more detail the actual need for a new children's hospital. Why do we need a new hospital building? Why can't it be located in some of the unused or under-utilised space in the Royal



Darwin Hospital? I would ask then why it must be built in Darwin, given that the numbers of child admissions in Alice Springs are roughly the same as those in Darwin and the rate of increase in hospital admissions of children in Alice Springs is some 3 times the rate in Darwin. I would like this matter to be clarified during the committee stage because the minister stated in a press release that planning and architectural work on the new hospital would continue but he has not fully informed this Assembly of his plans, nor is there any mention of it in the budget papers. We are talking in terms of a \$7m project for which all the architectural design work will be done this year but there is no mention of it in the budget and it has not been discussed fully in this Assembly. I feel that that is just not good enough.

I would like to mention the Institute for Aboriginal Health in Katherine. He stated that it was to be funded from the Aboriginal Health Service vote under the grants-in-aid scheme. It is very difficult reading through these pages, but there is an activity called 'central administration'. At this stage, this activity comprises a head office component of the department with the inclusion of the Katherine Institute for Aboriginal Health and the Drug and Alcohol Bureau. I would have thought that that meant that the institute was funded out of 'central administration'. However, the minister has just informed us that it is funded out of grants-in-aid, a completely different activity within the department. As I say, it is rather difficult when either the minister does not know where he is funding these activities from or he is tabling incorrect information.

I would have liked some more information on things such as the child health unit in Alice Springs. What are its total costs and the costs per day? One matter that I am really upset about is provision for mentally-ill persons. Despite the number of times that this matter has been raised, we still have not seen any substantial improvements. There is a need for a halfway house for proper accommodation of psychiatric patients. It is obvious from the assessment made by the patients themselves, which the minister objected to and publicly ridiculed, that substantial development is required in this area. I note that the Chief Minister believes he is pretty good at getting high rollers in. I wish he would turn his attention to getting in a couple of psychiatrists because the minister has shown himself incapable of doing so.

The Minister for Community Development had a few problems this morning with his 5-year plan. I must admit that I took considerable time trying to find out what happened to the \$2.243m that the federal government supplied through the Aboriginal Public Health Improvement Plan and where that would come out in the wash in the Department of Community Development. I looked through his explanations to the Appropriation Bill. There is nothing there. However, there is a figure in the capital works program which is less than the amount that the federal government provided. I hope that the minister will be able to explain that.

There is another point which really has me beaten. I think that the minister has been a bit unfair here. He should have given a clue so we could find this one. I know this is a competition where you hide the bucket. It is something like a pea and thimble trick. \$300 000 was provided in capital for the National Estate. I am blowed if I can find it; I give up. Just give us a clue. Is it there? Who has it? Will somebody own up? He has me beaten on that one. What did the minister do with the \$300 000 for the National Estate?

Moving on to my electorate of Stuart, I thank the Minister for Education because, after 8 years, we will have a school at Nyirripi. I thank him for the initial work on what is called a school at Kurrajong Bore. However, from what I

have been able to find out, the department does not really mean Kurrajong Bore; it means somewhere else. It calls it Kurrajong Bore in spite of the fact that everybody else calls it Soapy Bore. These are only minor details. I thank him.

I also thank the Minister for Transport and Works for some developments on the road between Lajamanu and Yuendumu. However, I was most disappointed at the lack of any further work on the sealing of the Yuendumu Road. I do not know whether any members realise it but there is a very substantial mining development in that area and a community of some 1500 people. Another fact that is not generally known is that it provides the only high-load access between Alice Springs and Darwin. Having followed a particularly high-load vehicle for some 7 hours at 25 km/h along that road, I can assure members that that is true because we had quite a discussion about it. This road should be given a fairly high priority by the government. I would hope that, in the next year, it will be substantially bituminised.

I have talked about the lack of information in the various budget papers. I ask the Minister for Community Development to explain the item called 'other services' which appears throughout his papers. 'Other services' comprises over 60% of the budget for his department and is detailed in various places by statements like this:

*Other services - provision is made for the following: child maintenance, annual grants-in-aid, operational subsidies, community welfare subsidy scheme, youth services, Children's Week, residential, family support service schemes, remote area funding package, Northern Territory child-care centre, salary subsidy, \$1.856m.*

There is no break-up. It is apparent that the Department of Community Development still has the old bucket accounting method. There are buckets everywhere. Nothing is allocated in the manner of traditional budgets. There is no breakup into the various items. It is either first come, first served or best mate, first served.

I would like to conclude by thanking the member for Berrimah. It is excellent that he has allowed the money for municipal works in Palmerston to sit around \$540 000 while Yulara has been allocated \$1.094m for municipal affairs. Yulara has a further \$369 000 for a community centre, public amphitheatre and theatre.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr MANZIE (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, I really do not know where to start. The honourable member for Stuart mentioned the thimble and the pea trick. It was a bit like that trying to follow his gist as he went along.

I am very pleased to be able to inform the Assembly that, under this Appropriation Bill, the Department of Community Development will receive an increase of \$4m over actual expenditure for 1983-84. Taking into account the one-off expenditure of \$3m for the Araluen complex last year, the increase is actually \$7m which is over 11%. This increase will allow many of the ongoing programs of the Department of Community Development to be maintained and the introduction of many new programs or initiatives.

Quite a few comments have been made today regarding Aboriginal communities and the 5-year plan and essential services on Aboriginal communities.

Mr Ede: Did you find it?

Mr MANZIE: I hear a call from the honourable member for Stuart. Actually, I did find it but, believe you me, it took some time. I had trouble even to find people working in the public service who could remember details of the scheme.

Mr Ede: Ask your boss over there. He might be able to help you.

Mr MANZIE: The honourable member for Stuart asked the question. Now he wants to tell me the answer.

Mr Ede: You don't know the answer so I may as well give it to you.

Mr MANZIE: I might inform the Assembly of the full facts relating to this 5-year plan that the honourable member is so concerned about. He must be a bit of a history buff because it goes back a long way. I see that the member for MacDonnell is leaving. Obviously, he does not want to listen to the details. In 1980, the Chief Minister made a statement in the Assembly regarding a proposed 5-year plan. It related to the provision to major Aboriginal communities of adequate water, adequate power, sewerage and a number of smaller things that most communities take for granted.

Mr B. Collins: You ought to read that document. It was a superb piece of work actually.

Mr MANZIE: As the honourable Leader of the Opposition said, the whole concept was a superb piece of work. It was a pity that it needed support from the federal government. A task force was formed under the then Co-ordinator-General, Mr McHenry. The plan was taken to the federal government seeking support to enable \$125m in those days to be spent over a 5-year period. Unfortunately, that support was not forthcoming from the Commonwealth. There was some support from the Aboriginal Public Health Improvement Plan which enabled funding to be utilised for the provision of sewerage in the major communities in the Territory. However, I make it clear that the plan itself was not implemented. The task force was disbanded in 1981. The plan was not proceeded with; it was a concept. It was a good concept, as all honourable members who were around in those days know. Unfortunately, due to lack of Commonwealth support, it could not proceed. It was a nice piece of history and the honourable member for Stuart obviously read the first proposal but did not go any further to find out what actually happened to it.

Mr B. Collins: Neither did you.

Mr MANZIE: As I admitted this morning, I knew nothing of it. I have since found out. As I said, it was a nice piece of history but it died in 1981. However, honourable members should be aware that the aims and objectives of the plan in relation to major communities in the Territory have been met. The Territory government has spent a vast amount of money over the last 6 years. I will refer to that in a minute.

I think it is probably appropriate that I talk about what is occurring in relation to TMPU funding in Aboriginal communities this year. As I said this morning, the total TMPU funding was \$22.5m.

Mr Ede: Don't tell us what you said this morning.

Mr MANZIE: If the honourable member for Stuart would like to wait a little, it will all come to him. Obviously, he does not want to understand things fully as he has proved to us all today by his mumbo jumbo regarding figures.

I think it will be quite interesting to read Hansard to see just what adds up.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a 12% increase is being provided in 1984-85 for TMPU. An additional \$1m has been provided for major Aboriginal communities for the following purposes: wage increases resulting from national wage case decisions, elevation of wages to award rates, increases in fuel costs associated with the generation of electricity and the provision of water supplies. The special projects area funding has been increased by \$400 000. These funds will be used for training of community development workers and the expansion of homemaker activities. An additional \$1m has been provided to extend town management and public utility programs to outstations, pastoral properties and emerging communities. The TMPU program this year will assist 214 communities compared to 172 in 1983-84. This comes into the realm of the problem that the Minister for Education raised. It must be of major concern to all of us that Aboriginal communities are springing up like proverbial mushrooms right throughout the Territory.

Mr Ede: Oh, no.

Mr MANZIE: I hear a groan from the member for Stuart. He likes to put his head in the sand; he likes to have a knock but he does not want to face reality.

The reality is that, as a result of Commonwealth encouragement, there are an increasing number of communities springing up right throughout the Territory. According to United Nations conventions regarding the normal quality of life that people should have, each of these communities should have fresh water available to it and proper sanitation facilities. Accordingly, this government has a responsibility to provide those facilities. As I said, we are covering 214 communities this year with that amount of funds. Certainly, it is a problem and it will become a greater problem because, as each of these communities grows, there will be need for education facilities, roads, more complex housing etc.

Aboriginal communities seem to be developing along a continuum from earlier small outstations requiring minimal support to larger communities requiring large amounts of money. At the moment, a new or emerging community is generally regarded as one which, because of its population, stability, organisation, needs or whatever, may become eligible for ongoing major community TMPU support. Examples of communities which have developed to a stage where emerging community status has been recognised are Urapunga, Kintore, Imanpa and Maryvale. Funding directed to these communities totalled \$360 000 in 1983-84 and, in 1984-85, \$609 863 will go to them - a 100% increase. When the amount of money that the Minister for Education spoke about is taken into consideration, they will benefit from over \$1m. It is certainly eating into the amount of money that we have to spread around the community.

Earlier this year, at a public meeting in Amoonguna, concern was expressed to me by a large number of people from a number of small communities in the southern region of the Territory regarding the lack of provision of suitable water supplies. Minor community TMPU expenditure for this budget relating to this problem will address the following communities. If the Assembly will bear with me, and possibly with some assistance from the member for MacDonnell with some of the pronunciations, I will read through some of the programs that are occurring in the southern region: at Papunya - relocate storage tank; at Warren Creek - upgrade water storage and reticulation; at Warumpi - relocate windmill from Papunya; at Blackwater - relocate a 15 kL tank from Papunya and provide reticulation; at Mount Liebig - extend water reticulation 200 m; at Soapy Bore - provide 22.5 kL tank and 3 m stand, upgrade existing tank and provide lid; at

Kurrajong Bore - provide a 22.5 kL tank on stand; at Soakage Bore - provide 22.5 kL tank on 6 m stand and fibreglass existing ground level tank; at Soapy Bore - equip bore with diesel pump jack, provide bore compound fence; at Kurrajong Bore - equip bore with diesel pump jack, provide bore compound fence; at Kintore - provide additional water storage, equip bore number RN13608 with a diesel motor and provide a rising main and additional reticulation; at Yuelamu - provide water reticulation; at Willowra - extend water reticulation facilities; at Ampalawatja - provide bore compound and storage shed; at Tjamankura - equip bore with mono wind turbine and provide storage and reticulation; at Kulpitara - provide water reticulation from bore and tank to community; at Pulardi - provide 10 kL storage tank on 6 m stand.

Mr Ede: We have got the drift.

Mr MANZIE: Okay. I might stop there but it does go on, Mr Speaker. If any member wishes further information, I will be quite willing to provide it to him after this sittings.

Mr Speaker, this government has often been accused by the opposition of giving Aborigines a raw deal. To quote the Leader of the Opposition this morning: 'Aborigines get it in the neck from this government'. Nothing could be further from the truth. We also had the member for MacDonnell saying that they were 'badly served by self-government'. This document was circulated to all communities and interested people in the Territory earlier this year. It explains that almost \$500m has been spent on Aboriginal development by the Northern Territory government since self-government. Is that a raw deal, Mr Speaker? What a load of rubbish. It makes one wonder about the motives of the honourable members for MacDonnell and Stuart who keep hammering that the Northern Territory government does not look after Aborigines, it gives them a raw deal, it takes away money that should be going to Aborigines. No credit is given for this massive expenditure of \$500m which has been undertaken by this government to redress 70 years of neglect by the Commonwealth.

Mr B. Collins: Where is the \$500m coming from?

Mr MANZIE: Read it. You probably have a copy but you probably do not want to read it because it might frighten you.

Mr B. Collins: I have read every word of it.

Mr MANZIE: It is disappointing to have continual derision from the opposition benches. I will give you an example, Mr Speaker, of the sort of false information that the members opposite present to the community. I have a copy of a press release from the member for MacDonnell:

*The member for MacDonnell, Mr Neil Bell, speaking after a visit to Imanpa said: 'The efforts of the local community in raising funds from a levy or chuck-in to fund the essential facilities in the community was an example of positive community development. Unfortunately, the Northern Territory government has been tardy in providing essential services for this community in recent years and it is a shame that the community has been forced to spend its own funds on essential facilities like the reticulation of water. There is an extremely high rate of unemployment in this community and their efforts in raising suitable sums of money is even more praiseworthy for that reason'. Mr Bell said that, over the last 12 months, the community has made a large contribution not only for water reticulation but also for public lighting and garbage*

*services in the community. Mr Bell said: 'I am particularly impressed that the community chuck-in should provide money for people to buy clothes for people to attend meetings convened by the Chief Minister. I suspect the Chief Minister is not aware of the efforts that the community have made'.*

I do not intend to deride the community, Mr Speaker, because I think that any contribution by a community itself is fine. However, the claim by the member for MacDonnell that the Territory government has been tardy and the community has been forced to spend its own funds on essential facilities, such as water, is garbage.

I will let you know exactly what has happened in the community of Imanpa, Mr Speaker. Let us have a look at the water provision first of all. In 1978-79, \$17 500 was spent on a drill production bore. In 1982-83, the access road was upgraded at a cost of \$40 000. In 1982-83, a drilling bore was provided at a cost of \$17 921. In 1983-84, that was carried forward and \$32 000 was provided to upgrade water storage to 200 000 L. In 1983-84, \$4000 was provided to construct rubbish trenches. In 1981-82, the community acquired a tractor, front-end loader attachment and a 3 t tipper trailer for which \$15 000 was provided. In 1983-84, the tractor was repaired. There was a solar hot water system for the craft centre. It goes on. Nevertheless, we have the member for MacDonnell impressing upon the community that these people are sitting out there and throwing in their unemployment cheques to survive. In actual fact, the figures show that many thousands of dollars have been spent by the government in the provision of water. There will be more spent in many other communities because we have a responsibility and we do the best we can with the money we are allocated by the Commonwealth.

Fortunately, a number of Aboriginal communities are starting to wake up to the fact that the continual rhetoric used by the opposition is hollow. Recently, I received a letter from an Aboriginal resource group which pointed out that the federal government had actually reneged on a \$200 000 offer to this group. To quote the letter, this offer came prior to 'their generous federal budget'. These people have stated in the letter that they realise their hopes lie with the Northern Territory government. People are starting to realise that they are being fed a lot of garbage. On my recent travels around some of these outlying communities, I was rather disappointed about the dwindling amounts of federal funding that will be allocated to the communities. For example, the federal government is actually giving the Kintore community \$100 000 less than it received last year. If the Leader of the Opposition reads the details of the changeover to self-government, he will see that the federal government was quite specific that we should maintain and be responsible for major communities and that the federal government would retain the right to fund and look after outstations. We could certainly do a far better job. At the moment, the funds are being removed at the federal level. The Territory government is having considerable trouble in obtaining equivalent funding to allow it to provide the sorts of facilities that are needed.

I turn now to some other areas in the Appropriation Bill. As promised at the 1983 election, the government will be opening a women's information service in both Darwin and Alice Springs. We normally keep our promises unlike some governments in this country. Funds have been allocated to allow this service to be operating before Christmas. Applications for positions have closed and people are being interviewed.

In the area of child care, the government has reacted quickly to an increased demand for child-care places. Planning is in place for the provision

of 152 full-time and 40 occasional places by the end of 1985. This also includes an amount of \$143 000 towards the Malak Community Centre which is being built with Territory government, Darwin City Council and Commonwealth government funding. It is hoped that this facility will be ready in June 1985. Other areas where provision for child-care services has been made are at Driver, which is a suburb of Palmerston, Humpty Doo and at the Darwin Community College creche. Family and welfare programs such as child maintenance, community welfare subsidies, family support service schemes and remote area funding packages are being expanded by an additional \$271 000.

In pursuit of this government's aim to provide greater autonomy for local government, subsidies to local government are increased by \$0.75m. As the honourable member for Stuart pointed out quite rightly, there is a subsidy to the Palmerston Development Corporation of \$0.5m and a contribution of \$1m to Yulara municipal services. While I am talking about Yulara, the honourable member mentioned also that there will be an allocation of \$398 000 towards the provision of a community centre, public amphitheatre and theatre. However, those sorts of things do not seem to interest the member for Stuart even though Yulara will be looking after 5000 or 6000 visitors a day - tourists who bring money, growth and jobs to the Territory. I am sure he does not agree with or he does not understand the mechanics of the Territory government's general thrust in providing employment and growth in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, the Appropriation Bill will allow for additional training provisions for prison officers, consumer education training and further developments in computerisation through purchasing integrated word-processing systems. The Territory government is also commencing its own Territory archives centre. We are taking over the provision of these services from the federal government. This bill also allows the purchase of equipment relating to that archives centre.

I will not take any more of the Assembly's time with details of other projects that my department is carrying out. Suffice it to say that the Appropriation Bill continues the thrust of the Northern Territory government's previous budgets in that it is one of growth and the provision of an atmosphere for continued employment and a better quality of life for all Territorians. I commend the Appropriation Bill.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I certainly shall not be long in speaking to the budget because I do not think there is a great deal that needs to be said. The budget speaks largely for itself. I would like to respond to one point that I heard raised by the strange menagerie opposite, and that is in relation to Aboriginal communities deciding, in effect, what they want for themselves. Mr Speaker, for many years now, the policy of the government has been that Aboriginal communities are asked to set their own priorities in relation to capital works within their communities - within the limits, of course, of the finance available at any particular time. I understand that officers of the Department of Community Development consult regularly with Aboriginal communities in relation to the fixing of these priorities which are accomplished as budgetary commitments allow.

In relation to my own electorate, the appropriations in the budget are very small. There is provision for traffic lights at a number of important intersections. All I can say is that those traffic lights are certainly very badly needed. I noticed another bad smash at the intersection of Rothdale Road and McMillans Road last Friday evening. Traffic lights are the best stop-gap measure that can be introduced at this stage but I believe that the Northern Territory Department of Transport and Works must look more and more at

roundabouts such as it has installed at the intersection of McMillans Road and Vanderlin Drive near the new police complex. In the reconstruction of McMillans Road, I believe that roundabouts will be appropriate in a number of places.

As for my various portfolio or departmental responsibilities, there are modest increases in allocations to the various departments that I administer with the significant exception, of course, of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. The police staff allocation is to be upgraded. There is provision for significant technical improvements in a number of other areas including the Public Service Commissioner's Office. The Northern Territory Development Corporation will continue to maintain its strong role while, at the same time, it will be able to withdraw from direct lending in a number of areas in respect of particular transactions. The Northern Territory Development Corporation formulates its policy on an ongoing basis to strengthen the private sector in particular areas; for example, in relation to lower-end-of-the-range accommodation in Alice Springs. When it believes that it has proven that such accommodation is very much a commercial proposition, then it withdraws from the area of lending. That is not to say that any particular application will not be judged on its merits. I have no fears that the Northern Territory Development Corporation will operate satisfactorily in the course of this financial year.

From memory, I think I made quite a lengthy statement at the last sittings indicating that the Northern Territory Tourist Commission has had a very significant increase in funding to enable it to undertake a vigorous marketing program, not only throughout Australia where the bulk of the Territory's tourists come from for the time being, but also to establish a stronger presence for the Territory overseas. The Northern Territory has always been conscious that the number of people in the tourist market overseas is far greater than the Australian domestic market. Of course, with the advent of travel by jumbo jet, it is far more realistic to look at turning those potential markets into actual visitors to the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, Australia's international civil aviation policy militates to a great extent against that, but the Tourist Commission and its predecessor, the Tourist Board, have marketed in the United States for over 5 years. They have been marketing in Europe for a number of years and they commenced marketing in Japan last year. Results are already beginning to show, especially from the United States and European markets and even from Japan.

Mr Speaker, this particular financial allocation will be used by the Tourist Commission to establish permanent offices overseas. Not all the appointments have been made. In the case of Japan, for instance, the office would be staffed by a Japanese person who has long experience in the tourist industry and has been a marketing manager for 2 major United States airlines in the course of the last 20 years. Appointments can be expected in the near future in Germany, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and on the west coast of the United States. I believe that, in the increasingly competitive international tourist scene, in the course of the next 2 to 3 years after establishing these offices, the Northern Territory will probably have to establish itself with an even greater presence. But it would seem appropriate to me that, if a greater expansion does take place, it would be worth while considering that the staff in those areas be recruited locally because such people would know the local conditions best. Certainly, that was one of the motivations behind the government's moving to remove the Tourist Commission from the Northern Territory Public Service.

I do not think it is necessary for me to say any more on this budget other than to mention one of the areas where the government has received the greatest criticism. I refer to sacred sites. The Aboriginal Sacred Sites Authority has



received a very significant increase in its budgetary allocation to enable it to appoint a considerably increased number of staff. The budget speaks for itself. It will be another progressive year for the Territory and, since it is the Treasurer's 7th successive and, I am certain, successful budget, I have absolutely no trouble in supporting it to the hilt. I would reiterate that I have not heard one sensible constructive criticism of it from members on the other side of this Assembly who whinge and whine about the time they have available to them in this whole day of sitting.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I will respond to a few of the points raised by honourable members although, as has been said already, not a great amount has come from the opposition. Unfortunately, I wasted my time the other night rereading the shadow treasurer's contribution to this debate at the last sittings. Sadly, about 35 minutes was wasted. He said that the opposition's attitude to the budget was that, although this government has not spelt out its long-term goals adequately, the opposition was in broad support of the government's goals as far as they are spelt out. I guess that is some sort of compliment to the government. I will accept it as such anyway. During the media coverage when the budget was first introduced, I was quite disappointed to see the member for Millner continue in his typical vein to describe the payments to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth as a 'luxury' and a 'hand-out'. Of course, he well knows our views about that sort of attitude. I will touch on that again shortly.

The honourable member for Stuart made some comments about population projections and the fact that the general purpose grant to the Northern Territory is based on a formula which includes population projections. He feels that the projections in the budget may be somewhat wrong. Indeed, he may be right because projections are made by people with the best available information: in our case, by officers in the Department of the Treasury who are very familiar with the systems. They do the best they possibly can in seeking advice from the Commonwealth, in making the projections and in assessing what sort of income we are likely to receive under the formulae in the Memorandum of Understanding. Every year, there is a possibility of some variation to the amount that is received from that amount which appears in the Appropriation Bill. In fact, I would not be surprised if we looked back and found that there was some variation virtually every year because one used a crystal ball somewhat when making that calculation.

However, one can only do one's best. Indeed, the calculations are the same for Territory revenue. In assessing how much Territory taxation we are going to receive in any one year, it is necessary to estimate how many cars will be registered, how many documents will be stamped and the sums involved in those documents, how much payroll tax will be paid by companies throughout the Northern Territory, right down to how much income will be received from the courts through fines. They are all projections and they all vary. Adjustments are made at the end of the year. If there is not enough money, then we cannot spend that much.

The honourable member for MacDonnell proposed a one-line budget for Aboriginal communities to encourage them to take a greater interest in the projects which are undertaken on Aboriginal communities. I found that fairly interesting because I must confess I reflect from time to time on the subject of infrastructure on Aboriginal communities. I am no expert in this field. My trips to quite a number of Aboriginal communities over the years have been fairly disappointing. I have seen examples of clear neglect of assets such as taps that are running all the time and obviously have been running for weeks or months. I have seen toilets that are inoperative because of things that have

been jammed in them. They have not been flushed and so on. I am not raising this matter to be critical. I just think that governments have never come to grips with the problem to find the right answers. Certainly, what I am saying is not true of all communities by any means. Some of them could be described as a picture.

Regardless, in some Aboriginal communities enormous sums of government money are poured into assets and infrastructure, and it appears that no one in those communities really takes any interest whatsoever from that day on. It is even to the extent that jobs which any able-bodied man could fix in a few hours remain unfixed for months and months, even though some communities seem to be full of able-bodied persons who do not always seem to be doing very much.

I believe answers need to be found. I am interested in contributions from members like the honourable member for MacDonnell and the honourable member for Stuart who spend more time than I do in such communities. Of course, the honourable member for Victoria River, who has more recently joined us in the Assembly, will be contributing along those lines as well. As Treasurer, I will be very interested in their views on how to do things better than they have been done in the past.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy asked about funds for the establishment of TAB in the Northern Territory. He will not find them anywhere in the budget. The proposal to establish a TAB by 1 July next year will be undertaken in an administrative sense by the Racing and Gaming Commission. We must recruit a person or have someone seconded from an interstate TAB to be on the ground in the Northern Territory to establish TAB here. A fund will be established. Money will be advanced to that fund from the Treasury and the government's contribution will be recovered from TAB as time goes by.

As far as progress is concerned, we have written to all states with the exception of Tasmania because it is so far away. We wrote to all state TAB agencies asking them whether they would be prepared to assist us and provide TAB services to the Northern Territory. We asked what sorts of services they would offer. We are receiving submissions now from all of the mainland TAB agencies. It is interesting to note that they are all interested in the Northern Territory. Originally, I left Western Australia off the list of states to be approached because I thought Western Australia probably would not cover the range of races in Australia that the eastern states cover and, therefore, might not be as acceptable. However, Western Australia made an approach to us as soon as it learned that we were seeking input. We have certainly added it to the list. Officers from Treasury and from the Racing Gaming Commission and a computer expert will be travelling south next week to visit all those agencies and to hold discussions on the services to be offered to the Northern Territory and the secondment of experts to assist establish TAB in the Northern Territory. It is still the intention to have TAB operational by 1 July 1985. We will certainly need to process appropriate legislation through this Assembly.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy did not quite come to grips with the reduction in casino taxes and how it would help casinos and tourism in the Northern Territory. If he cannot grasp it now, he never will. I point out to honourable members that, when the government first advocated that the Northern Territory should have casinos, it never put forward as the reason for casinos the raising of revenue for the government or the people of the Northern Territory. That has always been considered a side benefit of casinos. Casinos were brought into the Northern Territory as significant man-made attractions to complement the very magnificent natural attractions we have in the Northern Territory. We wanted operators who would promote the Northern Territory over-

seas and interstate and bring people here to spend money. I have always advocated that casino taxes are a welcome side benefit but that is all. Casinos were not established here just to have another form of raising taxes.

The new arrangements that are being entered into will mean an initial reduction in the amount of taxation received by the government. If we want casinos to do the job they were brought here for, to be competitive internationally - which they must be considering casinos are opening up elsewhere in Australia - then we must have facilities which will be attractive to international clientele and to locals. We must match the promotions of other casino operators, and not just in Australia, although there will be some pretty aggressive marketing in Australia. We must also match overseas competition because we are aiming for the overseas market. We need operators with that expertise internationally to bring people to the Northern Territory in a big way. The downside effect of reduced taxation revenue from casinos in the Northern Territory would be short term. When we are further down the road and documents are released, honourable members will understand that the formulae will provide for a greater level of taxation to the Northern Territory than we would ever get if we allowed the status quo to continue. I can assure honourable members that taxation revenue collection will be far more attractive.

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition devoted at least half of his extended time in the budget debate reading into Hansard a report which was given to him by Federal Hotels. It seems that his priorities for spending a \$1000m in a 12-month period in the Northern Territory are quite different from most of the rest of us. The Leader of the Opposition asked whether there had ever been a report on casinos produced by the Racing and Gaming Commission. Then he went on to say that he believed that there never had been such a report. He was referring to a statement I made in the Assembly when I quoted from a report to me by the Racing and Gaming Commission on the operations of casinos in the Northern Territory. He denied that such a report existed. I am not sure why he did that. The Racing and Gaming Commission is the controlling body for casinos in the Northern Territory. Why would it not report to the minister who is responsible for it? In fact, I receive a report on both casinos every month from the Racing and Gaming Commission. It is a detailed report. I have received it every month since casinos began operating in the Northern Territory. In addition to that regular monthly report, the commission has been asked by me on several occasions for reports on Federal Hotels' compliance with the casino act and agreements. He asserted in here that there had never been such a report. He implied that I plucked out of the air a report that had some less than nice things to say.

Mr Speaker, after 7 years in politics in the Northern Territory, the Leader of the Opposition demonstrates that he still does not comprehend the very basic principles of self-government and why the Northern Territory sought to move to self-government. I will quote from Hansard just a couple of lines of his contribution to this debate. He was going on about the Memorandum of Understanding and how its integrity needs to be preserved:

*We heard once more this nonsense about the Memorandum of Understanding. It takes only 5 seconds of thought to demonstrate the absolute stupidity of the government's continued assertions that we get no more help from the federal government than is provided for under the Memorandum of Understanding. The federal government, as with any other government, is only capable of making disbursements, whether they are to the Northern Territory or to any government department, within that government's capacity to pay in that financial year.*

Mr Speaker, that really is an amazingly naive statement from a politician of 7 years' standing in the Northern Territory. Why did the Northern Territory bother to go to self-government? Why did we not stick with administration from Canberra? Why did we not continue the system of departments every year going to their ministers in Canberra with their caps in their hands seeking funds to run the Northern Territory? If that is all the Leader of the Opposition feels that the memorandum should rate, then he would have the Northern Territory behave like another federal government department. If the federal government does not have enough bickies in its bin, then we get the chop. To us, the memorandum and self-government was more than that. Self-government was about predictability of funding so that we could plan for the future of the Northern Territory and did not have to go cap in hand and be subject to the whims of the government or the politicians of the day who might feel life was pretty tough and wanted a deficit of this order or that order. There are predictable commitments by the federal government, and the memorandum and self-government are 2 of them. For the Leader of the Opposition to lump us in with a federal government department and say we are entitled to no more each year than what a government department could squeeze out of the federal government totally overlooks what self-government is all about. It is about predictability of funding. All the states have predictability of funding from the federal government inasmuch as they get in excess of 50% of their budgets from the federal government under a federal act, and that is not at the whims of federal politicians; it is negotiated every 3 to 5 years. It comes under the Commonwealth States Tax Sharing Act. The honourable member for Nhulunbuy might care to have a look at it. That is what predictability of funding is all about too.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said of the memorandum:

*It is in fact an agreement and nothing more between the federal government and the Northern Territory government. It is an agreement and nothing more between the Prime Minister of Australia and the Chief Minister in the Northern Territory. It is a condition precedent to the Northern Territory accepting the self-government act and accepting self-determination in the Northern Territory.*

To the Leader of the Opposition, it is nothing more than an agreement. If that is all he thinks of agreements, he should let the Northern Territory people know because, once again, we have had demonstrated in this Assembly that the opposition, which claims to offer an alternative government, would be an absolute disaster if it ever made it there.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Appropriation for division 10 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 11:

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, I have a number of questions I would like to ask the Chief Minister, particularly in relation to the allocation for the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit of the Department of the Chief Minister. The Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit indicates that 3 additional staff will be employed. Could he indicate whether those 3 staff result from a transfer of staff from the information service section or for some other reason? Could he provide some explanation on the future of the information service under the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit or whether its role will change?

Further, there has been a dramatic increase of about 66% in publication expenses for the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit. Could he indicate why there has been such a radical increase in this area? Thirdly, in the public relations information area, there has been an increase of 36%. This is the second year in a row where there has been a substantial increase. I would ask the Chief Minister to comment on the reason for that.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, obviously the Northern Territory bears a fairly heavy burden in relation to ceremony and hospitality. It is much more noticeable in a budget the size of the Northern Territory's than it would be in a budget for a larger state. The short answer is that the Northern Territory bears virtually the same burden of ceremony and hospitality as do the larger states in that visiting VIPs, ambassadors and other dignitaries are constantly in the Northern Territory. For instance, this week, we have the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China and the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey. Both these gentlemen require a considerable amount of work in relation to their visits. I must say that the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit of the Northern Territory government has a very good reputation right around Australia. I understand that most of the people who have visited the Northern Territory and have been looked after by the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit have considered that their visit has been one that has not perhaps been matched in other parts of this country.

It is difficult for me to say off the top of my head whether the 3 staff are coming from the information service. Certainly, there is a great deal of interaction between the former staff of the information service and the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit. I am sorry but I simply do not recall the other question. Perhaps the member would be good enough to repeat it.

Mr Chairman, 36% is not a great increase in the amount allocated for public relations. The Northern Territory is attempting to build a reputation, not just in Australia but overseas. A recent appointment in the Department of the Chief Minister was that of a Director of Overseas Publicity whose task has absolutely no relationship to the media within Australia. His full-time task is to organise publicity for the Northern Territory. It is not simply tourist related; it is related to agriculture, horticulture, the pastoral industry and the mining industry in the worldwide media. This position has been filled now for a couple of months. I simply cannot say why the increase is 36%. I would say that the government has done a particularly good job in raising the consciousness of overseas people who, as the Leader of the Opposition said this morning in one of his kinder moments, are not aware of the existence of Australia, let alone the Northern Territory. I can vouch for that because, at a cocktail party in 1980 in New York, some gentleman said to me: 'You are from Australia. Is that the island near New Zealand?' All I can say is that our efforts are meeting with some success. We could devote not just a 36% increase but an increase of \$50m to public relations for the Northern Territory outside Australia and within Australia and it would still be money well spent. What the Leader of the Opposition said this morning supports me in that belief. We are not wasting this money; we are getting value for the Northern Territory. Most Territorians recognise that because, when they do go south or overseas these days, people have even heard of the place where they have come from.

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I have 2 questions for the Chief Minister in relation to division 11. The first one refers to the activity under advisory fees. There is a considerable difference between the expenditure in 1983-84 and the allocation for 1984-85, a decrease of some 60%. What were the non-recurring expenditures that resulted in that sort of variation for advisory fees?

The second question relates to the activities of the executive. It is explained that the 1983-84 expenditure reflects temporary vacant positions for a period whereas the increased allocation for 1984-85 allows for 4 staff. Why should there be such a difference in that regard during the 2 years?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, to answer the last question first, if the positions of people with salaries in excess of \$60 000 are vacant for some period through the year, that results in considerable savings in the departmental budget. I cannot put my finger on the names of the various people whose jobs were not filled at a particular time during the year but I can obtain that information if the honourable member for MacDonnell really wants it.

As for the variation in non-recurring expenditure in relation to advisory fees, again I cannot put my finger on that but I can obtain that information at very short notice. It is a very significant reduction of \$368 000 with which I would have thought the honourable member for Macdonnell would have been delighted. In any event, I will obtain the information for him.

Appropriation for division 11 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 12 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 13:

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, there is increase in the budget in the salaries section of the executive of 38%. Does that reflect upgradings in salaries for people in the executive area in the Public Service Commissioner's Office or does it reflect additional staff being employed in that area?

Secondly, everybody applauded the initiative of the government in establishing an equal employment opportunity section. I think everyone who has been fortunate enough to meet the officer heading that section, Anne Dunn, will recognise that the government has made an extremely good choice and that, once it is properly and fully staffed, the section will make a valuable contribution to the creation of equal employment opportunities in the Northern Territory Public Service. But I am advised at this stage that the steps to staff the section properly have not been taken. I would like the Chief Minister to give us a progress report on the establishment of that office.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, I can answer this very easily because there arrived on my desk this morning a proposal in relation to the staffing of this office, which has been quite some time in gestation, by the person to whom the honourable member for Millner referred. In the circumstances of today and tomorrow, I have deferred dealing with that file. I have indicated that it should be handled by my successor. I think that is the appropriate course of action at this time. The delay in staffing has not been of our doing. I do not think the delay can be attributed to the government.

In relation to the increased allocation for the executive staff, the executive has been expanded. The position of Deputy Public Service Commissioner, for better or for worse, was done away with. The Public Service Commissioner came forward with a review of his administration and I acceded to that submission in the earlier part of this year. The additional funds relate to positions such as the appointment of the Assistant Commissioner for Equal Opportunities whose salary is at the level of E4 or E5 and runs pretty close to \$50 000. It may well account for the whole of the increase.

Appropriation for division 13 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 15 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 16:

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, I have a number of questions to ask the Chief Minister. The budget item for police provides for an increase of 29 positions. Can he indicate how many of those positions are actually police officer positions and how many of them will be administrative positions?

Secondly, as a result of the changes that the government has made to public service housing arrangements, will this have an impact on the present arrangements that are provided for police, particularly the free rent arrangement that is provided for police at present? If it is going to affect that, could he spell out exactly how it will affect that?

Thirdly, we note that the Police Force is renting accommodation at Yulara. In the view of many people, the rental of that accommodation could well be seen to be exorbitant. I am not questioning that particular item. What I would like to know is whether other accommodation is rented for police premises. He may not be able to provide the information at this stage but I would like to know what the cost of that rental accommodation is.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, I will try to deal with the 3 questions in reverse order. In relation to Yulara, the member for Millner considers the rental to be exorbitant. I do not necessarily disagree with him but the cost of construction of the accommodation is what many people would consider exorbitant as well. It would be a good thing for the member for Millner to have a look at what it costs to build outside major centres in the Northern Territory. A closer examination of the cost of construction outside major centres in the Northern Territory and, for that matter, in the major centres in the Northern Territory would indicate that it is not so much the cost of the materials but the cost of labour. Special awards were approved in relation to Yulara, including special allowances for isolation and all the rest of it. The very best facilities were installed for the workers. I am not begrudging workers that at all but it all costs money; it is added onto the bill. The police will have to pay the rent to the Yulara Development Authority for housing which probably costs 3 times what it might cost in Alice Springs. When you have a project like that, and you have nominated targets, it simply becomes a matter of how much the traffic will stand.

Let me make it quite clear in answer to the second question that there is no change in relation to the housing policy for the police. The police industrial award provides that they will be accommodated free of charge. This is a provision peculiar to the police and stems from historical precedents. The police have come down a stream different to that of the public service. Indeed, the police very much resent being considered as part of the public service. The government has no intention of interfering with the current arrangement in relation to the police. I would suggest that the member for Millner's question was mischievous. Certainly, it has not come to light in any discussions that I have had with members of the Police Association and it has not been raised before this evening.

As for the personnel increases for the police, a number of the positions are for police aides. I believe that a number of the positions relate to staffing at Palmerston. I would suspect, but I cannot be certain, that a couple of them are clerical positions. The vast majority relate to an increase in actual police personnel.

Appropriation for division 16 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 20:

Mr BELL: I have one question in relation to this particular division. I refer the minister to page 3 of the explanations document. Under the section on regional development, it mentions that the Tourist Commission has been taking leading initiatives in assistance to Aboriginal communities desirous in establishing tourism enterprises for the benefit of their community. I am interested to find out the details of those initiatives and if any of those initiatives are actually within my electorate.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, all of us are concerned with the prevalence of unemployment in Aboriginal communities. Like the Treasurer, I have to ponder at times whether all Aboriginal people really desire employment. I am not saying that in any critical sense because Aboriginal people have a different background from my own. We have to work for the future of the Northern Territory and it may be that projects for employment of Aboriginals will not necessarily get off the ground easily or in a short time. The tourist industry is an obvious area where Aboriginal people could find employment with a minimum of training and in reasonably congenial pursuits such as tour guides etc.

Whilst I am not aware of any particular initiatives in the electorate of MacDonnell, I am aware that the officer who has been appointed by the Tourist Commission, a Mr Burchett, certainly has been operating in Arnhem Land. Aboriginal people from the Kakadu region have approached him for assistance. I cannot be more specific than that because I do not check to see what he does all the time although I have had about 3 meetings with him since he was appointed about 18 months ago. I understand that his background is such that he is a person whom Aboriginal people find acceptable. I have found him to be a fairly switched on sort of fellow. Not on the basis of any great deal of information, because I would not expect to see concrete results in this area for quite a period of years, I assume that he is doing a reasonable job.

In the Office of Aboriginal Liaison, we have also appointed a woman to undertake supportive work in a similar way, although not simply confined to the area of tourism. Basically, we are waiting for the approach from Aborigines, although we are making known the fact that services and assistance are available. We want motivated people to have the opportunity for employment because more and more young people are growing up in Aboriginal communities. I think there will be some very frustrated young Aboriginal people many of whom have almost as great a desire for material things today as anyone else in the community. They will become more and more frustrated and a very grave problem area in our community.

All this is instanced in the boredom and frustration that results in glue sniffing and petrol sniffing. Mr Chairman, I cannot but commend this project to the honourable member for MacDonnell. I hope that he will support it because I really think those people who do some crazy things such as petrol sniffing and glue sniffing are doing it out of sheer boredom and frustration. We need at least to have some services available to advise them if they want to look at undertaking productive projects.

Appropriation for division 20 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 21:

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, the appropriation provides for an increase of 17% in salaries and is justified on the basis that there were 2 national wage case decisions of 4.3% and 4.1%. There is also an additional staff member. On the



calculations that we have made, after taking the 4.3% and 4.1% into consideration, the new staff member costs about \$112 000. Could the Chief Minister tell us who this you-beaut new staff member is?

Secondly, there is a massive increase in the administrative vote for furniture, fittings and vehicle replacements from \$68 000 to \$186 000. Could the Chief Minister indicate why that has occurred?

Thirdly, it is proposed that NTDC shift its headquarters from its present location to the Darwin Centre. My first question is: where is the Darwin Centre? A number of buildings are loosely called the Darwin Centre. Which building are we talking about? Why has Development House been judged as unsuitable for the Northern Territory Development Corporation and when was the contract to go into the Darwin Centre entered into?

Mr Chairman, under the heading of 'Development Assistance', we find that, in 1983-84, there was an expenditure of \$9.7m and, for 1984-85, there is an appropriation of \$9.9m. We can see that there is a \$200 000 difference there; that is not the real point. In 1983-84, that sum of \$9.7m included a figure of \$2.1m for the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation. There is no allowance for this in 1984-85. It appears that the slack is taken up by an allocation of \$2.1m for B-TEC. If it is a fact that B-TEC is funded on a 50:50 basis between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory, that would seem to indicate that the Territory money that is going to the development assistance area has decreased by \$1m this year. For what purpose in the 1983-84 budget was the Northern Territory Development Land Corporation loan or loans made? Secondly, what proportion of the B-TEC funds mentioned under that heading came from the Northern Territory government? Thirdly, if it is correct that the Northern Territory government funded only 50% of the B-TEC money, why has the development assistance in that area been downgraded to the extent of \$1m in terms of the Northern Territory government's direct contribution?

My last question concerns the section 'Incentives to Industry'. Could the honourable Chief Minister give us some examples of how the incentive schemes work?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Chairman, it is very hard to remember all those percentages. I will see what information I can obtain.

In relation to the change of premises, Development House is required in its entirety now by the Public Service Commissioner who wants to take the ground floor where the NTDC is. The NTDC is moving to the Darwin Centre. There is only one Darwin Centre that I know of. There is a Centrepoin and there is a Darwin Plaza but the Darwin Centre is that place down the road that is still under construction. The NTDC will rent part of the space there. I would hazard a guess that the increase for furniture and fittings would be covered by this. I will obtain the other information for the honourable member.

Appropriation for division 21 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 25:

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, it appears that there has been a reduction of \$694 000 or 17% in the interest in trust accounts. Could he indicate the reason for this and whether it in fact reflects a significant run down of trust account balances?

Secondly, there has been a significant reduction of \$805 000 in the item entitled 'Insurance at Government Risk'. Could the minister give an explanation of why there has been a reduction in that area?

Thirdly, there have been significant increases in the level of the administration expenses for the Accounting and Finance Division. Specifically, the provision for general equipment and machines has increased about 7-fold, provision for printing and publications has increased 5-fold, provision for travelling subsistence has increased 5-fold and expenditure relating to investments has increased 3-fold. Could the Treasurer provide us with the reason why that has happened?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I discussed with Treasury some time ago the reduction in balances in trust accounts where they could not be justified. We certainly have not adopted any practices whereby levels of funds which are capable of investment are not invested. There has been no change in government policy in that regard.

As for insurance and government risk, each year we make a decision as to how much money we should set aside. In fact, the Territory Insurance Office holds the money. From recollection, it started as \$0.5m per year that we would put into what is really a government self-insurance fund. Honourable members may be aware that governments carry their own insurance on an enormous range of risks, particularly risks like buildings burning down, an earthquake, cyclone damage or whatever. Governments do insure against some public risks. However, we carry the risk on general properties and deal with those things on an emergency basis. If an office block burns down, we build it again rather than insure for it. It is prudent to build up a considerable sum that is invested for us and earns interest yet can be drawn upon in the event of emergencies. We vary it from year to year. I am not sure what it is this year.

Mr Smith: It is a 66% change.

Mr PERRON: If I remember rightly, we cut it in half one year. I will obtain details for the honourable member.

I cannot explain the increase for the Accounting and Finance Section in any detail. Recently there has been a complete review by the Public Service Commissioner of the structure in Treasury. This has involved some increase in staff and some reorganisation in Treasury itself. Decisions were taken to upgrade and obtain some of the latest technological equipment for Treasury. Honourable members will appreciate that the area of government which is monitoring financial agreements, arrangements and bank accounts must do its best to keep up with modern practices and technology. If necessary, I could obtain more information but I am sure it would be the result of the reorganisation and re-equipping. I think about 14 staff were added to the Treasury in that review.

Mr LEO: Mr Chairman, I have a question for the Treasurer which relates to payroll tax. Payroll tax is perhaps the largest single area of government revenue other than the recovery of debts. It amounts to a perceived \$31m for the 1984-85 period. Does the minister have any idea what percentage of that money is public money and what percentage of it is private money and whether or not those percentages have been changing at all over the last 12 months?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I cannot provide a break-up between government payroll tax and private payroll tax although, obviously, it is a figure I could obtain fairly easily from the tax office. I think it has been explained before

that the government pays payroll tax partly as a bookkeeping exercise. Indeed, the state governments pay to themselves payroll tax on their public servants. As the states do it, particularly New South Wales and Victoria to which the Territory is compared during Grants Commission assessments, if we want to be judged as undertaking a reasonable revenue-raising effort vis-a-vis the standard states, then we must raise the taxes that they raise. I accept that it is a take-out-of-one-pocket and put-it-back-in-another bureaucratic exercise and I support it only because it would be to the financial detriment of the Territory not to undertake that activity. If the honourable member wants to know the specific amount of non-government payroll tax collections that the Territory receives, I can certainly get that information and forward it to him.

Appropriation for division 26 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 27:

Mr LEO: Mr Chairman, I must go back to budget paper no 2 in the statement of sources of revenue at page 4. It deals with the matter of casino taxes and fees. As a matter of policy, the government has reduced the casino taxes and fees to 8% based on profit. The minister assured the Assembly a few minutes ago that he believed that this policy would lead to an increase in activity in the casinos and that that would increase revenue. I ask the minister how that figure of \$1.28m was arrived at? Is it only a broad estimate or is there some means by which he is able to determine that that figure of \$1.28m will be raised out of casino taxes and fees?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, the \$1.28m was the projection made by Treasury officers of standard casino tax rates being 15% and 20%, that applied formerly to the Federal Hotels' operations to a point in the year. Unfortunately, I cannot give honourable members that point because, at the time of the preparation of these documents, it was not known at what time we would inherit the casinos, either through a purchase agreement or through the unfortunate eventual acquisition of the casinos. However, an assessment was made as to a proportion of the year at the 15% and 20% rates and the balance of the year at an 8% rate, which was the anticipated rate which would apply. That is how the \$1.28m was arrived at. As far as the Territory benefiting in the longer term, I stand by that remark. At this stage, I cannot provide details to honourable members other than to say that the new rate will be a tax of 8% on gross casino profits plus what is called an overrider rental. That overrider rental will not apply in the first couple of years. It will apply later in the arrangements and will bring us additional profits.

In addition, of course, we advocate that, without the changes that are being made to the casino operations and planned tourist developments at Myilly Point and the Alice Springs Golf Course, the Territory would not reap the fullest possible benefit in years to come. That is a subjective statement. I suppose people could argue that we cannot know that until 5 years or 10 years hence. That is the position the government stands on. We are looking at tourism as a long-term industry. We look at the casinos in the Territory and the tourist developments we are working on now as being 10-year projects. Indeed, that is how long they will take.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, I must ask the Treasurer to supply the Assembly with detail which so far he has totally failed to do in respect of the revenue which is to be gained from the Diamond Beach Casino properties. So far the only information that has been made available publicly, despite persistent questions from the opposition during the last sittings, was delivered at a 3 am press conference held by the Chief Minister. It provided no detail at all. I

understand that that information was repeated subsequently in a private briefing to some journalists. The information we have to hand so far is that we will be extracting 8% tax from the operators of the casinos for 5 years and, after that, a third of the profits from the operations. I might add that that is consistent with the figure that was given in the only public statement made so far by the Chief Minister at his interview with ABC radio on the proposed new development. As I have pointed out on previous occasions, that statement was a farago of nonsense. It was internally contradictory and provided no specific information at all.

During the last sittings, we had a statement from the Treasurer that the arrangement would be that the new casino operators would not be given a tax holiday despite the \$1.5m in the next budget in terms of forgone revenue from casinos but that they would be paying a small amount in exchange for a large amount later on. Frankly, I do not believe the Northern Territory government when it tells me that it will be extracting a third of the profits from that operation in 5 years time. We have not yet had that explained to us: a third of the profits from the operation of the Diamond Beach Casino, the Alice Springs Casino and whatever other casinos may be operating within that group at Myilly Point. I do not believe the statement from the Northern Territory government that it will be taking a third of the profits of that group as a replacement for gaming taxes.

Could the Treasurer give to the Assembly, in the dying moments of this sittings, something we have been trying to get now for 6 months: a detailed explanation of the taxation structure that is to be applied to these gaming operations? I might add that he gave undertakings that he would do this at the last sittings. What is the precise breakdown of the third of the profits which the Northern Territory government will receive from the casinos? Is it, in fact, simply a substitute for gaming taxes per se; that is, there are no other strings attached to it? Is it a third of the profits as replacement for the 8% gaming taxes that will be dropped or is it, in fact, contingent on other commitments that have been given by the Northern Territory government which are worth money; for example, the provision of guarantees for financial borrowings? Of course, that is an unexceptional arrangement. If you can find a backer with the security that a government has to provide you with the wherewithal to go to a bank and borrow money with no risk attached, that is worth money to any operation. Is part of that third of profits contingent on guarantees or undertakings that have been given by the Northern Territory government to secure loans or provide some other degree of comfort to the operators? I might add the financial press of this country is as doubtful about this particular arrangement and as curious about it as anyone else. It is no longer a joke because the cold hard facts are that, whatever arguments you may mount about the rights and wrongs of casino operations, the one thing that there is no argument about is that this entire casino affair has been the worst public relations exercise the Northern Territory has ever had in the 18 years that I have been here. It has been quite devastating.

In reference to comments made earlier by the Chief Minister about the difficulty of putting the Territory on the map, I can only confirm and support what he said. For example, the manager of the Aspinall casino in London, who was in Darwin recently and may still be here, went to Australia House in London to get some information about the Northern Territory. Despite the fact that we produce a superb collection of promotional material which I carried with me when I went overseas recently, all he could get from Australia House in London was a single duplicated sheet of paper. It is difficult enough to put the Territory on the map but, when the Chief Minister has single-handedly accomplished for the Territory the worst public relations exercise that the Northern Territory has

ever been subjected to, that makes it a serious matter indeed. The reason that this bad publicity is continuing is that all of these questions are still unanswered and these issues are still unresolved. Despite his commitments to clarify this, the Chief Minister has approximately 1 hour left of his career as Chief Minister in which to fulfill undertakings. I am obliged, of course, to ask the Treasurer to fill the gap.

It is not a laughing matter. Members opposite may think it is a huge joke but, if they talk to the Australian financial press, they will find that those journalists do not think it is a joke at all. Could the Treasurer finally give the Assembly a detailed explanation of the precise arrangements made in respect of the third of profits that are to be received from the operation? Can he tell us precisely which operations? Obviously, there are some sort of legal limits that have been placed on this now in documents that no one has seen. Is it only the current facilities that were built by Federal Hotels in which this profit will be gained? Is it from future facilities that nobody knows anything about yet that the profits will be gained? Is this third of the profit a simple replacement, as we have been led to believe, for gaming taxes or is it contingent on other assistance which the Northern Territory government has given the operators of the casinos?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition is deluding himself if he thinks that the damage that he sees as being caused by the actions of this government in regard to the takeover of casinos and the development of major tourist projects in the Northern Territory is anything like the damage that is likely to be done to the Northern Territory by the federal government if we do not get some decent speakers on our behalf either in federal parliament or here. It was really surprising to hear that mouthful of garbage from the Leader of the Opposition about damage to the Northern Territory when we have a guy who has sat here and done nothing but spew on the Northern Territory for years as far as its financial arrangements are concerned.

Mr B. Collins: Mr Chairman, as soon as the Treasurer opened his mouth, I knew that, once again, that question would not be answered. Mr Chairman, the debates on the casinos in this Assembly have done the Northern Territory no good at all.

Mr PERRON: Thanks to you.

Mr B. COLLINS: I would like to respond to that. I will not have time to cover it all in the adjournment debate as a result of the performance this morning in the Assembly. This is just a brief selection of the press on what has happened in the Northern Territory. It has one interesting theme running through it. You will not find a single article by financiers around Australia on the casino arrangements that has been based on anything that the opposition has said in respect of this matter. The simple reason is that it was not necessary. One of these articles sums it up as: 'The Northern Territory casino controversy: one of the most extraordinary business takeovers in Australia's history ...'. That is the lead paragraph of a major article in an Australian financial paper, and there is heaps of it. Mr Chairman, you will not find any reference there to anything the opposition has done because the facts speak for themselves. The people who have been watching this disgraceful affair from start to finish have simply drawn their own conclusions. And they cannot be blamed for doing that. I have heard this before from the government. It is so convenient to blame the opposition. I remember the government blaming the Northern Territory News on one occasion for scaring away billions of dollars of investment at Gardens Hill because of an adverse story. Of course, it is nonsense. Quite simply, this casino deal has attracted the worst public

relations treatment the Northern Territory has ever received. That is the legacy we are having left to us by the Chief Minister. It is no joke.

The Northern Territory Legislative Assembly deserves an answer. The Northern Territory's Treasurer would like to fool everybody that he has the answer but chooses not to give it. Of course, there are only 2 explanations. One is that the Northern Territory's Chief Minister has been keeping this entire deal extremely close to his chest. I have not the slightest doubt that 95% of the government members in this Assembly have not the slightest idea what is going on with this casino deal. Certainly, the honourable Treasurer has no idea. If that is not the case, then the answer to my question, which is a crucial unanswered question, is so embarrassing to the government that, now that we are finishing the Legislative Assembly and there is no further opportunity to raise it, he wants to try to sweep it under the carpet. The Northern Territory government has led Federal Hotels and the people of the Northern Territory to believe that there has been no special assistance given to these new overseas operators; that in fact there is no tax holiday, and I am quoting the Treasurer. It would have us believe that the 8% that is being paid instead of the 20% - and not surprisingly Federals is absolutely beside itself over it - is simply a small amount of money now in exchange for this fantasy land figure. This figure has been quoted 4 times in the last 2 weeks: a third of the profits in the context of gaming taxes. That is the way it has been deliberately put.

I do believe that the Chief Minister over the last 6 months has been trading unmercifully on his obvious popularity in the Northern Territory. He has been cashing in a lot of credits in the last 6 months because he has nothing else to run on. If we cannot get any other answer, and the Northern Territory people have failed to get any answers despite commitments given by the Chief Minister in June that everything would be explained, there is one question that must be answered. I put it simply to the Treasurer again. The Northern Territory government has made a flat statement that the revenue from this new operation will be 8% for 5 years and a third of the profits from then on. I ask the Treasurer again: on what facilities and on what operations will that third of the profits be received - from the existing Federals assets only or from any future operation? I would prefer it if I could get undivided attention from the Treasurer. What is the breakup of that third of the profits? Is it, as I believe we are being conned by the government to believe, simply a replacement for gaming taxes? If it is, it is very heady stuff indeed that that will be the revenue. It is very attractive.

Mr Speaker, it is getting a bit difficult with backbenchers in the press gallery bending ears to the press and the Leader of the House talking to the Treasurer. You might as well close down the parliament. I suggest that the honourable backbencher get out of the press gallery where he has no right to be at all. I know it is all a big yawn and a bore to the honourable Treasurer.

Mr Perron: You are absolutely right.

Mr B. COLLINS: But it is doing us a lot of harm.

Mr Perron: And you should suddenly worry. You are suddenly concerned about harm.

Mr B. COLLINS: If he wants to live in cloud cuckoo land about that, he really is having himself on because it is going to come back and hurt the Territory badly. I want the Treasurer, who keeps on telling us how easy it is to get access to financial information through the parliament and how we never

use the opportunities available to us, to give a detailed statement of the breakdown of the third of the profits which the government has announced will be in lieu of gaming taxes from the casino properties. What is the breakdown of that third of the profits? Is it only in lieu of gaming taxes, as we are supposed to believe, or is it contingent on other assistance?

Mr Perron: Where from?

Mr B. COLLINS: Where from? The honourable Chief Minister put it on the public record at 3 am. The Treasury officials have confirmed it since. It is public information. Really, the half-smart approach that is being exhibited by the whole government on this issue is unbelievable and very hard to handle.

I simply reiterate the question for the fourth time. The Treasurer is the one who keeps saying that the government is an open book and that the Legislative Assembly is the place where he is happy to reveal it. He is on the public record as saying what revenue will be derived from the casinos. He has conned us or attempted to in the last sittings by saying that the government was not offering any tax relief or tax holiday to this new operator because a third of the profits is a pretty substantial return instead of gaming taxes. What is the breakdown of that third of the profits? How much of it is in fact a replacement for gaming taxes and how much of that third of the profits is contingent on other assistance and financial comfort offered by the Northern Territory government?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, as I explained to the honourable member for Nhulunbuy, the \$1.28m in the budget is a projection of casino taxes for the present financial year and is based on a tax rate of 15% and 20% respectively under the Federal Hotels' operation and a tax rate of 8% for the casino operations for the remainder of the year. That should at least dispose of the matter before the Assembly as far as the Appropriation Bill is concerned.

The details that the honourable member is seeking in regard to the Northern Territory government's arrangements with the overseas operators, the various parties which will be involved in the ownership of the casinos and the tourist developments in Darwin and Alice Springs, will be released at the time appropriate for their release. We will not negotiate these matters through the pages of the media. We have said that dozens of times. The Leader of the Opposition wants to sit there and shed tears and tear his hair out, as he has been doing for months, because we will not release detailed information. We do not believe it is appropriate to release it at this stage. As he will know, and as is publicly known, there is an application currently before the Foreign Investment Review Board with regard to the overseas operators taking up their formal position in the Northern Territory.

Mr B. Collins: That was all fixed in April, according to the Chief Minister.

Mr PERRON: Was it really? If you have all the answers, you can answer them.

Mr B. Collins: Smart arse.

Mr PERRON: Good one. Good one.

Mr B. Collins: Whoever the leader is tomorrow, I hope it is not you.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! Will the honourable Leader of the Opposition please withdraw that last remark.

Mr B. COLLINS: Absolutely. I unreservedly withdraw the reference to the honourable Treasurer as a smart arse, Mr Chairman, absolutely.

Mr PERRON: Are you satisfied now?

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, the honourable Treasurer has established an enviable reputation for dealing with financial matters on the run. Of course, the best example of that was his now famous statement which, I think, was in connection with the Sheraton Hotels project: 'Well, if they are not happy with the offer we have given them, all they have to do is come back and we will give them a bit more to get them here'. It is quite obvious that the government has adopted a similar approach to this situation. It was an amazing situation where the government, for its own ends and particularly for the electoral chances of the Chief Minister in the federal sphere, rushed through a proposal to get new operators into the casino without having sorted out the taxing arrangements for these new operators. If this is not Sheraton Hotels revisited, I do not know what is.

We have the new operators in place. We have a situation where they are here and they are here to stay. Who is on the back foot in that situation? It is not the operators. The operators have the government over a barrel on this particular issue. It is no wonder that the government cannot give us a statement on what the taxing arrangements are going to be because the operators, having found themselves in this really fine situation that everybody would like to get into, are playing hard to get. The government is scrounging around trying to save as much as it can. If that is not true, I would like the honourable Treasurer to make a very clear statement that his government has finalised the taxing arrangements with the new casino operators. If that is the case, why is he not prepared to tell this Assembly?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, it must really be convenient to be a group in parliament which has never achieved anything in its entire period in the Assembly. That is the case with the opposition. It has never ever had the responsibility for achieving anything whatsoever. It has never had responsibility for funding, for executive authority, or for doing a deal. It has never had the satisfaction of even doing a bad deal. Mr Chairman, it is never likely to be in a position to try and do a deal on behalf of the people of the Northern Territory as this government has done many times. We are proud of them. At least we are a government of action. We have got things done and we are continuing to get them done. When the time is appropriate, we will release the necessary information. Of course, there are tax systems in existence. We cannot run casinos without them. When we have the necessary clearances to release the information, it will be released. The legislation under which the casinos are licensed and operative requires the tabling of information. In addition to that information, other information will be tabled at the appropriate time relating to the entire project, some \$300m worth of project.

The honourable members opposite would like the whole thing to be wrapped up in a big pink bow in about 3 weeks and settled. Some of these things, and one might take Yulara as an example - a project of similar size - take 5 to 7 years to put together and to finalise. This one is being done with surprising speed, having regard to the size of the project. It is being done completely. When all the t's are crossed and the i's dotted, that will be the time to table the information. This government will stand by the deals that it has done because they will benefit the Territory.

Mr LEO: Mr Chairman, it is always good to hear that any government is prepared to stand by the deals that it has done. I am quite sure that Federal



Hotels are most reassured. However, if the honourable Treasurer feels that this opposition should not question the gift of \$1.2m to an operator, and that is what it amounts to, then perhaps he should reflect upon his own role in this Assembly. Mr Chairman, \$1.2m in my electorate would build a lot of very unfortunate people a lot of houses.

There is no getting away from it. It is a tax holiday. There is no escaping that. It is a tax holiday and it is a gift to the new operators of \$1.2m. I would be prepared to accept that if the minister could in some way show me during this budget session the method by which that money would be recouped. There has been absolutely no explanation on how that money will be recouped. If the Northern Territory government and its Treasurer are going to wander around the countryside giving away \$1.2m, then would they please come to my electorate first. I will invite the Treasurer there any time to give away \$1.2m. I am flat out getting anything out of him.

However, in the absence of any explanation, this opposition has an obligation to pursue with as much vigour as possible an explanation on how that money is going to be recouped, and when and over what period of time. Until the Treasurer can give us that answer, I feel obliged to keep questioning him.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, hopefully, this is the last time on this particular line. I have no objection to the member asking how the tax was calculated. I have explained how the tax in the Appropriation Bill was calculated.

On the question of the government receiving less tax this year and picking up greater revenue in subsequent years, I guess he is not prepared to accept my earlier statement. It does not particularly bother me. In any event, I said earlier that it is because we want to put the casinos on the map in the Northern Territory. That would never have happened had they remained in the hands of their previous owner. The premises themselves, the equipment and the decor must be at least reasonably attractive to the customers we are trying to bring here. As well as that, the very services that are provided in those casinos must be upgraded. The marketing for those casinos has yet to be implemented, let alone upgraded. Those are the types of activities which are being undertaken by the new owners and operators. They will be undertaken at quite a high level, as honourable members will learn when the necessary information is released. I appreciate they are somewhat in the dark as to the details of the arrangements. That is the way it is because we are not in a position at this time to release them. When we are, we will release the details. There will be wads of reading for them then. There will be so much reading that it will boggle their minds. I am sure they will get to the bottom of it and they will work it all out. It will be released at the appropriate time.

If we had done what the Leader of the Opposition wanted us to do, we would have been at square one in these negotiations because it would have been with his full involvement and across the front page of the newspaper 6 months ago. We would be nowhere now if we had released the information that they wanted released back in the days when they found some snippet of information in a room at the casino. That information that was handed over to them supposedly indicated the negotiating position on this issue 6 or 9 months ago. Well, that is all right. They can carry on with this nonsense about people who are feeding them information. That is okay. We are negotiating and making arrangements behind doors because that is the only way to achieve any results whatsoever. The end result is what is important. The honourable members will have the end result in due course and not before.

Appropriation for division 27 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 30:

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I have 2 questions. One relates to alterations in staffing levels and the other seeks information in relation to a particular project in Alice Springs.

I will start with the question of staff reductions in various sections of the department. I refer the minister to page 16, the Planning Authority section, in which the number of staff provided for in 1984-85 is 26. The 1983-84 figure was 34 so there has been a decrease in the staffing in that area of 8. I am curious to find out why that is the case. Similarly, in the land development and allocations area, the staffing in 1984-85 was 24 by comparison with the previous year when the staffing was 17. There has been an increase in that particular case and I would like an explanation. In the Building Authority area, there has been an increase again from the 1983-84 figure of 20 to an 1984-85 figure of 25. I would be interested to get some explanation of that.

The southern division of the department is, as the explanation says on page 5, responsible for maintaining all functions associated with the department in the Alice Springs and Barkly areas. It is reasonable to ask why there is a reduction from the 1983-84 figure of 55 down to the 1984-85 figure of 50. I think it is reasonable to ask what services are likely to be affected and what sort of explanation there can be for that sort of reduction when both Alice Springs and the Territory in general are growing so rapidly.

I refer the honourable minister to page 9 of the capital works program in budget paper no 5. There is a reference to a hazardous and offensive industry development in Alice Springs at a cost of \$1.7m. I would like some sort of explanation from the Treasurer as to where that will be.

I think it is reasonable to say at this stage that the answers I am getting to the questions I am raising in this debate are generally less than satisfactory. I trust that the honourable minister can do a little better than his almost erstwhile colleague, the honourable Chief Minister, who took 12 months or so to reply to similar questions I raised last year. I believe those are reasonable questions in relation to staff changes in his department and in relation to an expensive development in Alice Springs. I look forward to hearing about them.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I will not take up the Assembly's time on the staff questions because I certainly do not have the answers. I will obtain the information and pass it on. I can assure the honourable member that there has been no reduction in the staff of the Department of Lands. If there has been some redeployment, I can certainly find out why the secretary has done that.

In regard to the offensive and hazardous industry development, that would be the area generally described as Roe Creek. That area has always been regarded as the future site for the oil refinery and a possible future abattoir for Alice Springs. The abattoir in town is quite inappropriately sited, as you would be aware, Mr Chairman. We envisage at least those 2 industries going to an area in Roe Creek. Before that happens, services must be provided to the area concerned.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, could the honourable minister advise the Assembly of the name of the company, individuals or consortium that will purchase the very significant and very valuable piece of real estate at Myilly

Point occupied by the current old Darwin Hospital and to be developed as a casino-hotel-condominium complex? Could the minister advise the Assembly as to who will be purchasing that piece of government property?

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I cannot advise who will be the purchaser of the parcel. I am not so sure that the Myilly Point site will be sold to a developer as a single parcel. It is an enormous project involving freestanding hotels, villa-type hotels, marina, water features and goodness knows what. It will be a very big project, staged over many years. As has been indicated, the project is worth \$300m. If it reaches that sort of target, the final design could take 10 years to complete because of its size. Under those sorts of arrangements, which are being worked out now, it is hard for me to say that the entire area of Myilly Point and the old hospital site will be sold as a single parcel to a single developer. Therefore, I cannot answer that.

Appropriation for division 30 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 31 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 35:

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I have 3 questions to ask the honourable Minister for Education.

Firstly, I notice a reference to the participation and equity program. I would like to know which particular projects in Alice Springs are being allocated money under the participation and equity program.

Mr Chairman, I am curious to find out the fate of the pool of specialist secondary teachers. No doubt the honourable minister will recall reference made by the then Minister for Education in last year's budget that such a pool of specialist secondary teachers would be created. As a result of my previous comments on this subject, he will no doubt be aware that I am interested. I do not believe there is any mention of that particular proposal. I am to be convinced that it was not a pre-election stunt.

My third question is specifically in relation to the schools at Harts Range and at Alcoota. I refer the honourable minister to page 13 of budget paper no 5, the capital works program. There is a subvention for additional teaching space and residences at Harts Range for \$150 000. Then there is a separate subvention that has the heading: 'Alcoota - provision of teaching area with residence (to be built at Harts Range)'. The sum there is \$120 000. I seek some elucidation of those 2 lines in the budget.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, in answer to the honourable member for MacDonnell's first question in relation to the participation and equity program, I thought that I had given that information on another occasion. For the government schools program, expenditure includes: administration - \$36 000; senior secondary certificate proposals - \$100 000; professional development - \$45 000; work experience, insurance and assistance for isolated students - \$17 600; multi-cultural education - \$950; Aboriginal education, 5 projects aimed at traditional Aboriginal students - \$14 250; target schools - \$150 000; travel - \$10 000; and other proposals - \$22 200. That is a total of \$396 000. In a TAFE program and the PEP, the expenditure is as follows: office practices, Darwin north - \$45 000; retail practices, DCC - \$25 000; Gap youth program, Alice Springs - \$46 000; common course - \$34 000; tourism and hospitality - \$28 000; tourism and hospitality, CCCA - \$19 000; migrants and refugees, Adult Migrant Education Centre - \$14 000; building skills, Yuendumu - \$14 000; work awareness, Tennant Creek, CCCA - \$8000; education officer, project administration - \$34 000; and office practices, CCCA - \$23 000.

Mr Chairman, I will have to obtain the information for the honourable member regarding the pool of specialist teachers. I will take note of the 2 points relating to Harts Range and Alcoota and I will obtain that information for the honourable member.

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I understood from what the honourable minister said that funds under the participation and equity program were actually being directed to the School of Hospitality and Tourism. I assume I heard the minister correctly. Does he have a breakdown of the particular school programs and to which schools they were directed, both at a primary and a secondary level?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I will obtain that information for the honourable member.

Appropriation for division 35 agreed to.

Appropriation for divisions 36 to 41 agreed to.

Appropriation for divisions 45 and 46 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 47:

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I have a question in relation to the provision of Palm Valley gas to the Alice Springs power-station. The minister will be aware of the difficulties experienced in that one of the cylinders in a particular turbine exploded. A second problem was condensation in the pipeline between Palm Valley and the power-station. What effect has this had on costs incurred and on revenue derived? I would appreciate some explanation from the minister.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Chairman, the honourable member was correct when he said that we lost an engine in an unfortunate circumstance as a result of the fuel that was being used. The short story is that, as the gas was being brought from the field to the powerhouse, it was being used in the engine with a level of moisture that far exceeded the specifications set down by NTEC. It was causing a decomposition in the oil which in turn prevented lubrication and eventually the engine blew up. It took some time to establish what the technical problem was. We were also involved in a take-or-pay situation for the gas which we were obliged to meet under our contract. Until we could ascertain what the technical problem was, we had to burn oil. We were lumbered with a dual fuel cost for a period of time that did not exactly please any of us.

It transpired that, when the pipe was being pressure checked with water, not all the water was taken out of the gas pipe. As the gas came down through the line, it picked up this water and took it into the engines. That caused the problem. The litigation over who was actually to blame for that is still going on and will probably continue for some time. Nevertheless, the problem has been solved. It was solved by the company cutting the pipe. It took 88 gallons of water out of the pipe at about the halfway mark. The gas producer maintains that the water was not in the gas when he produced it and the pipe transportation people maintain that they did not put it in the pipe. Maybe the fairies at the bottom of the garden put it in the pipe, Mr Chairman. We will find that out as the days go by and the people who are responsible for it will have to meet some costs for the damage and the loss that was incurred. We will work our way through that exercise like normal human beings and, in the end, we will resolve it.

About \$110 000 damage was done to the engine. I could not give a figure on the dual fuel bill but, if the honourable member thinks it important, I will obtain it for his benefit.

Appropriation for division 47 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 50:

Mr EDE: Mr Chairman, I have a few questions for the minister. I would like him to explain why the amount that is to be spent on the Aboriginal Public Health Improvement Program is \$105 000 less than the amount that the federal government provided for that purpose.

In passing, I would like to point out in relation to his statement about the \$500m spent on Aboriginals over the last 7 years that, if that is worked out on a per capita per annum basis, it comes to under \$2900 per capita per annum. If you take the general purpose recurrent and general purpose capital figures for the total population, you will find that it comes to something over \$4000 per capita per annum.

I would also like to ask about the \$23 000 which relates to additional training programs for prison officers. I would like to ask which of the 2 items, official duty fares and the maintenance of prisoners, relates to the training programs for prison officers. On page 28, there is an increase in the total allocation for unincorporated areas - \$554 000. There is provision for a \$1.094m subsidy to Yulara. If you take that out, in fact there is a reduction of \$540 000 for other unincorporated areas. I would like him to explain that reduction. Have some of those communities been incorporated and covered in that allocation?

I would also like him to provide me details of 'Other Services'. These are listed as gross items for a number of functional areas such as field services, child and family welfare, income maintenance, Aboriginal development, incorporated areas, unincorporated areas and arts and heritage.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Chairman, I will endeavour to explain some of the problems. In relation to prison officer training, there is an extra \$23 000 being allocated to the administrative and operational expenses area. The \$23 000 in relation to training would relate to all aspects of training such as travel allowance required to bring officers to Darwin and any extra TA for those particular officers. It would involve the training costs.

The next question was in relation to 'Other Services'. Normally, the explanations to that appropriation are not listed in detail. I will be quite happy to provide that information to the honourable member at a later stage.

I cannot recall the honourable member's other questions.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Stuart may repeat the question.

Mr EDE: Most of the points can be picked up in Hansard. I would accept the answers in writing. But I would ask the minister to try to explain why, on page 12 of the statement of revenue sources, we have a figure of \$2.243m for a Commonwealth payment to the Northern Territory in the Aboriginal Public Health Improvement Program and yet, when we look at the expenditure in the capital works program on pages 20-21 of that item, we have an expenditure of only \$2 138 812, a shortfall of \$105 000.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Chairman, I would be quite happy to find that information out for the honourable member and supply it to him at a later stage. I do not have that information with me at the moment.

Mr BELL: I would like an undertaking from the minister in relation to page 21 of the capital works program. For the benefit of the honourable Leader of the Opposition, I will endeavour to be as brief as possible. It relates to the provision of water supply stage 1 for Harts Range. I am rather curious to find out why the provision of a water supply is staged and what stage 2 might hold in store for that particular community. I would appreciate the honourable minister advising me at some stage.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Chairman, I have been to Harts Range recently. A bore has been sunk but no infrastructure has been connected to that bore. I presume that the next stage would be the provision of piping and tanks. However, I would be quite happy to get that information and refer it to the honourable member at a later stage.

Appropriation for division 50 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 51:

Mr EDE: Mr Chairman, I have a question for which I expect the answer to be as unsatisfactory as the last one. In the statement of revenue sources, we have an item of capital provided by the federal government of \$300 000 for the National Estate. I cannot find it anywhere. I have gone through it. I do not know where it has been spent.

Mr B. Collins: It is in the Mindil Beach casino trust.

Mr EDE: I know it is there. I want him to admit it. It is the National Estate.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Chairman, I am pretty sure the honourable members probably picked the wrong time to ask this question because it does not relate to museums and art galleries. However, I will supply the information to him in detail. For his benefit, I can explain that the National Trust in the Northern Territory is funded by both the Territory government and the Commonwealth government. I believe that it is getting a total of about \$400 000 this year. Of that, \$300 000 is from the Commonwealth and \$100 000 is from the Territory government.

Appropriation for division 51 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 55:

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I refer the honourable Attorney-General to page 11 of the explanatory document. I note that the incidental expenses for 1984-85 for the Crown Solicitors unit are \$112 000. This compares with a 1983-84 figure of \$3500. My question is: why the 32-fold increase?

My second question refers to the costs of the briefing of counsel by the Crown Solicitor's office. I note that the expenditure for 1983-84 was \$213 000 which compares with an allocation in 1983-84 of \$175 000. I believe we are entitled to ask why there was that overrun.

My third question relates to an increased provision which is allegedly due to an increase in the upper limit awardable under the Criminal Injuries (Compensation) Act. It is my recollection that the Criminal Injuries (Compensation) Act was repealed in January 1983. It is quite understandable that there would continue to be claims under that particular act because of backlogs in the courts and so on but it is difficult to see why, if the act

was repealed in January 1983, in the financial period to which this document refers, which is presumably from 1 July 1983 onwards, there needs to be such an increased provision because of increases in the upper limit of an award in an act that had been repealed 6 months beforehand.

My next question refers to the Alice Springs office of the Crown Solicitor's unit. We note that there was expenditure of \$198 000 for the 1983-84 financial year. This compared with an allocation for that period of \$107 000. I think there needs to be some explanation of why there was an 85% increase in expenditure over allocation.

My next question relates again to the Alice Springs office of the Crown Solicitor's unit. I believe it is important to raise it in the context of these considerations. It refers to the costs of briefing counsel on page 13. I understand the expenditure for the 1983-84 financial year was \$64 000. This compares with an allocation for that period of \$19 000. So it is an expenditure of more than 3 times the allocation, which I think requires explanation.

On page 25, in relation to the Supreme Court unit, the jurors' expenses allocation for 1983-84 was \$156 000. The actual expenditure was \$235 000. There are 2 questions that arise from that. Why the big difference again between expenditure and allocation and why, if there was a \$235 000 expenditure in the previous financial year, it is only necessary to budget \$190 000 for this financial year?

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I think that all of those questions are quite reasonable. Quite frankly, of all the areas of government, the operations of the Department of Law, in terms of expenditure and commitment during any one financial year, would have to be the most unpredictable. I have found myself in the embarrassing position on a number of occasions - and not just during a single expenditure review which most executives do halfway through a financial year - of having to go back to Cabinet and advising it of the way the exigencies of the operations of the Department of Law are panning up for a particular year. We can never tell how many witnesses there are going to be for the defence. We can always predict how many there are for the prosecution. You can never tell how long a trial is going to go. It is a difficult area. Anyone casually observing these documents, and I do not say that disrespectfully, would not have a full appreciation of the day-to-day difficulties of the Department of Law and the difficulties of predicting precisely what is going to happen.

Mr Chairman, last year would have been one of the most difficult years I think any small Department of Law would have experienced in this country for many years. We had the Parap murder case which went through a series of appeals. We had the Chamberlain case which completely upset all expectations. We had a series of matters to do with constitutional and legal interpretation in land claims. Irrespective of your view, Mr Chairman, the government figured, and I believe rightly, that they had to be determined as questions of law. They were matters of great constitutional importance to the Northern Territory and they had to be determined.

At the beginning of any financial year, the Department of Law takes the attitude that the best and most promising scenario is the one that ought to be put forward to the Assembly. But I think we all ought to bear in mind that it is absolutely inevitable that those predictions are going to be wrong. They always will be wrong in any state or Commonwealth jurisdiction. You simply do not know how much crime there will be and what it might mean in terms of your expenditure for briefing counsel and conducting trials. We do not know and nor should we know what the attitude of the defence counsel will be as to its advice

to its clients upon conviction and their appeals to the higher courts. It is a very unpredictable area of government as far as expenditure goes.

In relation to the apparent discrepancies in figures which the honourable member raised, I can only advise him that the secretary, in consultation with myself, rearranged a number of divisions within the Department of Law last year. Those figures, which apparently represented a discrepancy in expenditure, are a result of the change of appropriations within the various divisions in the department itself. The member for MacDonnell would not have had the benefit of explanations to that. Because they were within divisions of the department, they are not subject to Treasurer's directions and therefore not tabled in the manner prescribed by the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Those are the explanations, Mr Chairman. I am afraid that we will always live with the difficulty of the Department of Law predicting what any financial year will involve us in by way of litigation.

Appropriation for division 55 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 60:

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I have some questions in relation to the explanations for division 60. I refer the Minister for Transport and Works to page 9 of the explanatory document. I noted that there had been a couple of increases that required explanation. One in particular was the increase of 76% in the capital items figure and an increase of 30% in the 'Other Services' section. This referred particularly to the subdivision of works on page 9. With regard to the capital items, there has been an increase of some 80% for the allocation in the 1984-85 financial year by comparison with expenditure for the previous financial year. It is a substantial increase and it relates specifically to what is explained in the documents here as a programmed replacement of plant, vehicles and equipment. Obviously, if those sorts of expenditures are programmed, one would expect them to be maintained fairly evenly. For similar reasons, I think it is worth asking why part of the allocation for the 1983-84 financial year was left unspent. We note that \$2.530m was allocated in the 1983-84 financial year but that only \$2.437m was spent. I am referring now to figures extrapolated from last year's budget papers. I am putting together figures in this year's document with the figures that were allocated in last year's document. I am comparing the figures on page 9 in this year's explanatory document with the figures from last year.

Further items require explanations. I refer to increases under the heading 'Other Services'. There is a considerable increase of some 30%. Again, I am comparing the 1983-84 figures with this year's figures. The allocation for 1983-84 was \$7.592m whereas the actual expenditure was \$8.246m. This is under the subdivisional dissections for the Department of Works on page 9 of the explanatory document. I think that deserves explanation.

The expenditure for 1982-83 was \$2.71m under the 'Other Services' heading. It has increased to an allocation in this financial year of \$11.917m. That is a 440% increase in 2 years. I think that needs some explanation.

I also have a question in relation to the Darwin bus service. I note that the expenditure for 1983-84 was \$174 000. That compares with an appropriation for that year of \$406 000. Less than half the amount was spent and I think that requires some explanation. While I am on bus services ...

Mr D.W. Collins: When are you going to get off.



Mr BELL: Since members of the government choose to interject, I might just point out that it is the government that has restricted this sittings to 1 day. As far as I am concerned, a considerable burden falls on the opposition in invigilating quite complex legislation and I would appreciate it if they would shut up.

Since we are on the matter of bus services, I noted with some interest that some \$70 000 has been allocated to the Palmerston Development Authority for a bus service. I am sure there would be some interest in that particular allocation in the honourable minister's home town.

Mr Robertson: Where do you get that from?

Mr BELL: If the minister cares to look at the explanations for the Palmerston Development Authority, for which he is not responsible, he will find it there.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order, the honourable member's time has expired.

Mr ROBERTSON: Perhaps the best thing that I can do after that lot is to advertise nationally for a very ancient or aged Macedonian and see if he can understand hieroglyphics and get him to interpret for me the utterances of the member for MacDonnell. I tried to listen to him carefully. In the documents that I have before me, I can find only 2 figures in all of what he said that made sense. Those are \$2.437m and \$4.38m on page 9 which relate to capital items. A perfectly reasonable explanation is already given if the honourable member can read the English language which, after his dissertation, I doubt because he certainly cannot speak it.

The other one referred to capital items on page 17 which shows expenditure of \$174 000 last year and an allocation of \$580 000 this year. If the honourable member looks carefully about 5 cm below the figures that he quoted, he will find this: 'Capital Items provides for the programmed replacement of 4 buses at \$550 000 and replacement of workshop equipment estimated to cost \$30 000'. When added together, they give \$580 000 which is the exact figure that he is querying as being inexplicable to him because he cannot understand the figure of \$174 000 that appeared in the documents when no buses were replaced last year.

Mr Bell: Yes, there is a coincidence.

Mr ROBERTSON: Isn't it fascinating, Mr Chairman. A while ago, we had the member opposite carping about someone interjecting from this side and 15 seconds later he is doing precisely the same thing himself. Perhaps, to use his own words, Mr Chairman, if he shut up and listened, he might learn something but I doubt that as well.

Mr Chairman, for both of those items, the explanatory documents used the description 'programmed replacements'. This government came into being around July 1978 and, at that stage, we would have bought vehicles for our fleet. In 2 years' time, the department replaced them. It did not replace them in the next year but in another 2 years they were replaced. Obviously, it is now timely for the Department of Transport and Works to replace them. I think constant variations in figures can be found through all departments of government, if one chooses to look, which provide for programmed replacement of vehicles. I dare say the vehicle that is assigned to the Speaker of this Assembly probably will be replaced this year. If one were to look at the appropriations for the Department of the Legislative Assembly, one might well find a variation in those capital items for replacement this year as opposed to last year.

The explanations are quite simple; it is simply a matter of the honourable member doing a bit of homework.

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I really cannot be expected to sit here during the deliberations of this committee and put up with a stream of invective in a debate in which I was seeking elucidation. I have no intention of pursuing the matter further except to place on record my contempt for the behaviour of the honourable minister in this regard. It was a reasonably complex argument, I will confess. I have figures in front of me that he quite obviously does not have. I get a little sick and tired of the Leader of the House, who would appear to have such a wonderful regard for the institutions of a Westminster system, yet the best he can come up with by way of explanation is a stream of invective such as we witnessed this evening. He will receive a letter in the post.

Appropriation for division 60 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 61:

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I will once again assume the mantle of sweet reason and try again. I refer the honourable minister to paragraph 3 on page 5 of the chapter relating to the Darwin Port Authority. I direct his attention to the statement that the operational expenditure is now classified on a divisional basis and that no direct comparisons can be made with the old classifications. Out of that, 2 questions arise, and I will make sure that I utter them sufficiently slowly for the honourable minister to internalise them and, hopefully, provide us with satisfactory answers. Firstly, why is it not possible to give comparable divisions in this year's explanations? Secondly, if it is not possible to give those comparable divisions, why does the explanatory document list 1983-84 actual expenditures against the same divisions as for this year? If the divisions are not comparable, why does the document do that? This is particularly important in relation to the sort of public debates that have been going on in this matter for some time now about the difficulties that have been experienced at the wharf. I look forward to equally sweet reason from the honourable minister.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, it is completely obvious that the divisions bear no relationship to the manner in which the divisions were presented last time. In other words, the entire structure has changed. However, I take note of what the honourable member says. I will certainly extract his question from Hansard. I am sorry I cannot give the detail sought now but I think it is reasonable that he have that detail and I will ensure that he receives it.

Appropriation for division 65 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 66:

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, I have a few comments and questions on the housing area. I would like to start by picking up a reference both the member for Nightcliff and the minister made this afternoon when they said that the reason why the Housing Commission is constructing fewer houses this year than last year is that people were more interested in buying than renting and that that process had been helped by the increased availability of private funds. I would like to point out to the honourable minister that the figures differ from town to town. There are 123 fewer houses to be built this year in Darwin, there are 48 more houses to be built in Alice Springs, there are 6 more houses to be built in Katherine, and there are 8 fewer houses to be built in Tennant Creek. Mr Chairman, if you were to accept the logic demonstrated by the 2 honourable

members, you would arrive at a conclusion that the banking finance area is more attractive to people in Darwin and Tennant Creek and that, for some strange reason, it has become less attractive in Alice Springs and Katherine.

Mr Chairman, the argument that has been put forward is obviously a nonsense and the real reason why fewer houses are to be built in Darwin and Tennant Creek - particularly in Darwin - has not been put forward by the honourable minister. I would ask the minister to attempt to provide us with the real reason. In so doing, I would also ask the minister: if we are so proud of our waiting times in the Northern Territory - and certainly it is a good aspect of our scheme - why it is that now, when the length of time people spend on waiting lists is increasing in Darwin and has been increasing over the last few months, we are building fewer houses this year than last year?

I would also ask the honourable minister to address a couple of other specific questions. Is there to be a rental purchase scheme which I understand is one of the requirements of the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement? What provisions are there - and she may well have addressed this earlier today - for crisis accommodation? In other words, how is the government proposing to spend \$150 000 that has been allocated by the Commonwealth in that area for this year? And particularly, what effort is the government going to make in the area of housing for youth? The allocation for land acquisition is down \$4m from \$16m to \$12m in rough terms. Why is that?

Mrs PADHGAM-PURICH: Mr Chairman, as far as I could note, the honourable member asked me 6 questions. I will answer them all even though, if he had listened to what I and the Treasurer had to say in relation to housing in the budget, he would not have needed to ask any of them.

I will consider housing of youth. I thought the government's policy on the housing of youth was quite clear because it is tied up with the housing of single people. I am not saying that every single person is a youth but housing for youth is tied up with the singles housing policy. As I said earlier, the government has spent some time considering this policy and, next week or the week after, we should have something concrete to bring forward. The government is very conscious of the housing situation in this regard but, as I mentioned earlier, I think young people who are in crisis or are completely homeless should take advantage of the hostel accommodation that is available in the larger centres, especially Darwin.

In the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement, \$63 000 was allocated for local government housing projects which, as anybody would agree, and it is the truth, was targeted for youth housing. However, as I said before, \$63 000 must go a long way in the Territory.

I will tie that in with crisis accommodation. We were allotted \$150 000 under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement, and \$150 000 will not go far in the Territory. We asked if we could combine the 2 amounts - \$63 000 and \$150 000 - to obtain a reasonable sum either to lease premises or to buy premises but we were not able to do this. Speaking off the top of my head, Mr Chairman, and having regard to the facts that we must be accountable for the Commonwealth housing dollar and that we want to make our housing dollar go as far as possible, we are considering joint arrangements with existing organisations, both for the housing of youth and crisis accommodation. This is being addressed at the moment because we feel that, in this way, we will be able to house more people and so make the housing dollar go further.

Regarding the rental purchase scheme that the honourable member mentioned, it is a fact that it has been mentioned in discussions on the Commonwealth

States Housing Agreement. However, I think that we have not done too badly in getting our loan scheme off the ground and I do not think we are doing too badly with our single persons housing policy which we have nearly finalised. We have one scheme working so let us get the other scheme and then we will look at whether a rental purchase scheme can be operated in the Territory. I might say that the honourable member appears to be a little ignorant of the fact that, in effect, we have already what could be called a rental purchase scheme in operation in the Territory. Through it, if people make a decision to buy their house, they enter into an agreement with the Housing Commission. The agreement lasts for about 3 years and any maintenance they do over those 3 years comes off the final purchase price of the house with a maximum amount of \$1500 or \$500 per year. It may not be quite the type of rental purchase scheme that the honourable member has in mind but we have already started it and members of the public have availed themselves of it. We have seen a need in the community and we have addressed it.

The honourable member queried the increased waiting times in Darwin. Mr Chairman, the waiting times vary from month to month. If they are considered over a longer and more sensible period, more accurate results can be obtained. The waiting times are pretty stable in all centres in the Territory. If those waiting times increase from time to time, it is only due to houses being in the process of construction and about to come on stream.

I am getting a bit tired of repeating myself but I think that, if the honourable member would care to compare waiting times to those of housing commissions elsewhere in Australia, he would see that they measure up very favourably. There is nowhere else in Australia where you can be put into rental accommodation after about a year or 18 months. It is just out of the question even to mention it to other housing ministers or housing officers elsewhere. But that is about the average time in the Territory. I do not have the figures to hand now. I think they varied from about 1 year, to 15 months, to 18 months and up to 2 years for certain types of accommodation in certain areas. Mr Chairman, as I said earlier, the waiting time may vary from time to time but, over a longer period, it is pretty stable and reflects the activity of the Housing Commission.

I think the honourable member's first question was why fewer houses are being built this year. The figures that I gave when I spoke earlier demonstrated that the gross housing numbers had come down but, when we look at the new commencements for general public housing, they increased from 766 in 1983-84 to 928 for 1984-85.

I think the honourable member was not listening. When we consider not only general public housing but also public service housing, the public service housing commencements are reduced from 302 in 1983-84 to 63 in 1984-85. But when we compare both of them, we have a reduction from 1068 to 991 commencements. However, this takes into account the activity in the private sector, the general preference in many cases for people to buy in the private sector, and the bringing together of our general public and the public service rental schemes in 1982. The new combined rental scheme commenced on 15 August and 1 September, depending on whether one was a current public servant, a new public servant or a member of the general public.

Mr Chairman, I wonder if the honourable member could refer me to the page in the explanations with the appropriation relevant to his comments on land acquisitions?

Mr Smith: Not quickly, but perhaps the minister could write to me about it.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Chairman, speaking off the top of my head, I think that it was a sum of money; it was not an area. The sum of money available for land acquisition could be tied in with the fact that the Department of Lands is undertaking actively to turn off land, not with a lower grade of services but with some regard to economy of services. This can be seen in the development of Palmerston. I am talking about different widths of roads, different forms of guttering and sewerage and water connections. This is all tied up in land acquisitions so, if economies are being actively followed in the turn-off of land, they would be reflected in the amount of money paid by the Housing Commission for land acquisition.

I might say that the Department of Lands in the Northern Territory is way out in front in actively participating in a program like this. I wrote to the federal minister regarding a program he was advocating last July to lower costs in land turn-off. I pointed out to him that we had already done something about this in our development of Palmerston. I think the smaller sum allocated to land acquisition in 1984-85 reflects the economies that the Department of Lands has achieved in turning off land.

Mr SMITH: Mr Chairman, I do not really want to pursue the logic or lack of logic of the honourable minister on some of those matters but I just point out that there is an inherent contradiction between reducing the number of houses to be built when the waiting list is increasing. That is what is happening at present and it will be very interesting to see what happens in the next 6 to 9 months. Perhaps it might even take 12 months to come through in terms of the waiting time for people on the list.

Mr Chairman, what I wanted to do in my second bite at the cherry is to take up some inane comments made by the honourable member for Wagaman. Some time ago, when the question of building standards in homes constructed by the Housing Commission was raised, after a number of people had expressed serious concern about the quality of homes, the honourable member said in a press release that the homes were structurally sound and asked what people were worried about. Mr Chairman, people are worried about having more than a structurally-sound home. If that was all they were worried about, they would be satisfied with a structurally-sound shed or something similar. What people want is a quality home that will not fall apart when they touch it, which was close to the situation with some of those houses at Palmerston. I thought the government's response was terrific. What it will do to stop it happening in future - and it will give it a fancy title and call it the 'audit approach' - is to send people in to inspect the work of the inspectors after they have inspected the work of the builders.

Mr Chairman, if you look at that logically, it is just ridiculous. It is probably the most expensive way to go about ensuring quality in the building industry. There is a much more efficient way but, for some strange reason, this government just will not come to grips with it: licensing builders. That is my opinion and it is also the opinion of the Master Builders Association. It is also the opinion of reputable builders in this town. All the builders I know who operate in that area favour the licensing of builders because they have a genuine concern for the quality of the produce and for the way that the public looks at their industry. They want to get the rubbish out of their industry. This government will not help them. In fact, this government positively acts in the reverse way.

The operations of the Housing Commission demonstrate exactly what I mean. The Housing Commission has adopted the policy of taking the lowest tender on every occasion even when it is clear that there is a significant difference

between the price anticipated by the Housing Commission and the lowest tender that is received. Not only does the Housing Commission take the lowest tender, it exercises no controls whatsoever as to who actually does the work. It is very common indeed for subcontractors to do the work for the person who actually tendered for the job. The minister is on record as saying: 'We have no control over these subcontractors. We do not know who they are. We have no way of stopping them'. If that is not an indictment - and an invitation to trouble in the building industry - of the Housing Commission, I do not know what is.

In the Palmerston situation, we could not even find out who the people were who had done the work. We knew who the tenderer was but we did not know who the subcontractor was because the Housing Commission, we were advised, did not keep a list of subcontractors. Not only do we have under this present policy a situation where anybody can go in and build a house for the government, but we have a system where they can go in and do it time after time because the government has no effective way of checking on them. The only answer that the government could come up with was to employ more people to do more checks on a random basis.

I can only point out again the attitude in the industry. I will quote from an article in the Northern Territory News by the Master Builders Association.

*The new audit system to oversee housing construction will probably not have the desired result of improving standards. What is the point of inspecting the inspectors? Would it not be a better situation if the builder himself is a self-regulating instrument? Independent assessors, appointed at random, who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring sufficient performance, face a daunting task. Approximate figures of the current situation indicate that Housing Commission inspectors have up to 70 houses per week to supervise. This means only 20 minutes per week can be spent on any given site. It is an impossible situation to police if the builder wishes to act unethically. A licensed, qualified, ethical builder would realise the house is his responsibility, not a subcontractor's. Realising the implication that his actions could jeopardise his licence would assure that the construction was correct.*

Mr Finch: It's a fairy tale.

Mr SMITH: It's a very interesting fairy tale if every other state in the whole of Australia, the whole of New Zealand, the whole of Canada and the United States license builders.

Mr Finch: It would lock the door.

Mr SMITH: It is quite easy to see that the members opposite have no answers on this and refuse even to listen to the people involved in the industry.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, I would like to ask a very simple question of the Minister for Housing. Before I do, I want to make some response to that 5-year-old demonstration we just heard in relation to the licensing of builders. The member for Wagaman interjected and said that it is nonsense to suggest that we should license builders in the Northern Territory because it would 'lock the door'. That is absolutely true. All I can do is place on the record my gratitude that the door is firmly locked in respect of airline pilots, medical practitioners, electricians, plumbers, lawyers, real estate agents etc. The

Northern Territory government, which administers the legislation that controls those areas, does not seem to have any problem with the logic of that. We all know the crazy, juvenile approaches the honourable member for Sadadeen has towards these things. We have heard him expound in relation to the licensing of plumbers and electricians. He told us that it was all a matter of letting the buyer beware and that it is absolute nonsense to suggest that we need all these repressive restrictions. The public demands it and the public deserves it. It really is nonsense when you consider that licensing operates everywhere else in Australia.

Mr Chairman, after experiencing the cyclone, I shared laboratory accommodation at Berrimah with the CSIRO structural engineering experts who came up here after the cyclone. They shipped off crates and crates of joints, foundations and other interesting bits and pieces that they picked up all over Darwin. I shared a dinner table with them - along with the other 72 people living in the laboratories at Berrimah - for a period of 3 to 4 weeks and I listened to the professional comments that they were making about the quality of building in Darwin and their absolute horror at what they had seen. For example, some houses were literally held together at the corners by 4-inch nails and nothing else. That was a common thing that they found. I saw the samples that they brought back. I dare say that, in a big shed somewhere, those samples of the pre-cyclone construction still exist.

The Northern Territory has an appalling record of quality of building construction. We are in no position to say that every state is doing it wrongly. I support the principle of licensing builders. Like many other people, I am sick and tired of the second-rate work that is being done in the Northern Territory.

Mr Chairman, I would like to ask my simple question of the Minister for Housing. Could the minister advise if the demand for public sector housing in the Northern Territory - the benchmark for the size of the waiting list and the length of the waiting time - is greater or lesser now than it was 12 months ago?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Chairman, the honourable member asked me about the waiting times. Other questions were put to me by the member for Millner which I must answer first.

He used the examples of the houses in Palmerston. He said that they were unsafe and structurally unsound. Like certain people who were trying to hog the limelight over this issue, he was scaremongering and trying to frighten people. Those people did not pay any regard to the fact that those houses were still within a warranty period. I will tell honourable members how all this arose.

A couple in the town of Palmerston wished to buy their house from the Housing Commission. They approached the Housing Commission and said that they wished to buy the house but it had some faults. A Housing Commission officer checked the faults and agreed they needed to be repaired. The people agreed to buy the house when the faults were repaired. The welding was poor but it was structurally sound. There were also cyclone bolts, pop rivets and a few other things to be replaced. All of the faults were repaired before they went in to purchase the house.

The matter then hit the headlines and we were led to believe that the houses being built by the Housing Commission were falling down around the ears of the people who had just gone into them. There were examples mentioned of other houses which had faults. All of those houses were still within the period

when the faults were expected to be found before people bought them. They were still within the warranty period. I wish that people would not become upset by this scaremongering. It is a form of nitpicking. It really upsets people. The Housing Commission responded quickly to any demands or requests made for it to inspect houses. No houses were found to be structurally unsound. There was faulty workmanship in some of the welding but no structural faults were found. The Housing Commission engaged a consultant engineer. I do not have his reports to hand but he said what I have just said. I hope that is the end of it.

The Housing Commission instituted what was called a 'hot line'. The honourable member for Berrimah and I had a talk about this with officers of the Housing Commission. To allay any problems or any fears that we felt people might have, we instituted this hot line. We publicised a number which people could ring about any problem they felt they had with their houses. The Housing Commission would inspect the houses for those faults that were mentioned. The Housing Commission received several calls on this hot line. The houses were inspected for faults, I think to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The honourable member for Millner and the honourable Leader of the Opposition both brought up the subject of licensing builders in the Northern Territory. Like other members on this side, I have a natural aversion to registration. Unfortunately, it is necessary in some cases because you could say that the few spoil it for the many. Registration and licensing is necessary in many trades and professions. We have not yet found it necessary to license builders.

Once again, the honourable member for Berrimah and I have been discussing with officers of the Housing Commission a form of licensing tradesmen. Perhaps it could be described as licensing subcontractors in their particular trade. Whether it could be described as licensing builders or not I do not know. As I said, I have a natural aversion to overregulation. I am not saying that I will not change my mind in the future. Living in the rural area, I had a natural aversion to town planning many years ago, as the honourable Minister for Lands knew. I have come to realise that, with more and more people living in the rural area, and in many cases Rafferty's rules applying, it was necessary to have town planning in the rural area.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition brought up the question of waiting time. Again, I think that he and the honourable member for Millner could be scaremongering about the question of waiting time and the increasing waiting time for public accommodation. I know that the Housing Commission will be monitoring this situation the same as it monitors all other facets of the building industry.

Mr Chairman, the honourable members opposite seem to think that the Housing Commission is some sort of monolith that is completely immovable. Both the Board of the Housing Commission and the Housing Commission officers have the facets of the workings of the Housing Commission continually under review. I would like to assure honourable members that the question of waiting time will be monitored continually. I give an undertaking now that the waiting time will not increase to a serious level in the following year.

In regard to bad workmanship from subcontractors and contractors in the building industry, rather than licensing or registering builders, contractors and subcontractors, something very simple would be better: bad work - no jobs. This should be clearly understood by the building industry. They either do good work or there are no further jobs available to them.



Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, despite the unbelievable ignorance of some of the ministers of the government's frontbench, which is either genuine stupidity or cultivated stupidity, we are not deterred; we keep coming back. I will ask the honourable Minister for Housing a question for the fourth time in the last 10 minutes. It was asked twice by the honourable member for Millner and now twice by me. The honourable minister stood up 5 minutes ago and said that, before she answered my simple questions, she would give a few answers to the questions that the honourable member for Millner had asked. I put the question again.

I am not interested in hearing another dissertation about waiting time. It has nothing to do with the question of waiting time. I will put it to her in even simpler terms. Mr Chairman, the honourable Minister for Housing said 3 or 4 times now that the reason the government is building fewer houses this year than last year, which she has acknowledged to be correct, is because that is a response to a shift in the market to private sector housing. In other words, the honourable minister told us that there was no problem with that. The market has moved, out of choice, away from public housing to private housing. Could the honourable minister tell me - just yes or no will be fine - whether the demand for public sector housing, as is evidenced by the benchmark of the length of the waiting list and the length of time you wait on the waiting list, is greater or lesser now than it was 12 months ago? Yes or no will be fine.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Chairman, I do not have last year's waiting times here now. I do not have all the figures that the honourable Leader of the Opposition requires. I will obtain the full information and send it to him.

Appropriation for division 66 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 70 and 71 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 72:

Mr SMITH: I mentioned this matter briefly in my second-reading speech. I just want to go over it again and seek a response from the minister. What appears to me to be happening in the youth, sport and recreation area is that we are getting a shift into the staff and administration area and a shift away from the provision of grants-in-aid. On the figures that I have, the staffing allocation this year has increased from 16 to 26 persons and the percentage of the budget has increased from 20% to 25%. The administration and operations vote has increased from 11% to 16% of the budget. In the grants-in-aid area, I am not saying that people in Yulara should not have recreational resources but they do not fit into what grants-in-aid are about and what grants-in-aid have been about in previous budgets. If you take out the \$430 000 for Yulara, there has in fact been a drop of \$0.5m in the grants-in-aid area from \$1.8m to \$1.3m.

It concerns me that there is a real danger and a real prospect that we are getting a little top heavy in the youth, sport and recreation area. It is something that the government may need to address in the next 12 months or so otherwise we are going to find less and less money for grants-in-aid and more and more money spent in running the grants-in-aid and whatever other activities youth, sport and recreation is involved in at the time. I seek a response.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Chairman, the honourable member for Millner raised a very valid point about staffing levels in youth, sport and recreation. The simple explanation is that, in the last 5 or 6 months, permanent staff has been put on at Marrara. I think there are 4 staff. Also, we are employing people to come into the system now for the International Year of the Youth. In fact, I

mentioned this afternoon that \$86 000 would go into the establishment of several offices in the division because we consider the International Year of the Youth in 1985 as very important.

I have always been aware of the need to maintain a reasonable cash flow to community and youth services in the Northern Territory. The explanation for the reduction in moneys is that moneys were spent on the construction of the Marrara indoor stadium. The Marrara stage 1 cost \$1.5m which came from a one-line appropriation for youth, sport and recreation. We also received \$1.5m from the Commonwealth. All these figures appeared in the 1981-82, 1982-83, and 1983-84 budgets. The honourable member shakes his head. Those moneys were in the budgets for those years. The funds were made available by the Commonwealth and were given to the Department of Transport and Works.

Many other big projects have been completed; for example, Traeger Park, where the Northern Territory government, over a period of 3 financial years, spent something like \$700 000 or \$800 000. Also, \$200 000 went to baseball, \$398 000 to the Centralian Football League and so on. Subsequently, some of those particular projects have been finalised. This year, funds have been allocated for the YMCA. Additional funds have been made available to complete the velodrome. Funds have been made available to the council for the construction of the indoor basketball court. If there is a small decrease this year in comparison to other years, it is not realistic to say that there is a shortfall and that funds are not going in. In the 1983-84 financial year, I think we spent something like \$400 000 on travel subsidies. This year I understand the figure is more likely to be around \$500 000. It goes on.

I pick up the honourable member's point about the funds not being disbursed. The Sports Lotto money goes into a sports development fund. It does not go anywhere near the salaries fund. It does not go anywhere near the administration vote. But certainly those funds go towards development of sport - for their own administration, coaching and special projects. The indications are that something like \$2.1m will be allocated through that division. In actual fact, sport will get more money this financial year than it did last year.

Appropriation for division 72 agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

#### MOTION

Report of New Parliament House Committee

Continued from page 1174.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, in adopting the report of the New Parliament House Committee, honourable members would also adopt its recommendations which are that the winning design of the new parliament house be accepted, design and documentation proceed and the winning architect engaged to complete his charter and build the new Northern Territory parliament house in the form of the winning design. It does not necessarily have to be identical to the winning design.

This is a most important motion before the Assembly because the new parliament house will probably stand for 50 or more years. It may last 100 years. It will be a very public building, parliament being what it is. I can

see in the future a well-designed building with a fair bit of public participation in facilities which we do not have at present.

The winner of the competition had fairly strong competition. There were about 200 expressions of interest and 92 actual entries in the competition. An assessment panel, which the honourable member for Wagaman will tell us a little more about, assessed those entries and came up with the winning design. As honourable members will probably be aware, the winning design does not necessarily have to be the design which is adopted by this Assembly. But I guess most people expected that that is what would happen and perhaps that is what will happen.

However, I feel compelled to say in relation to the winning design that I do not find it attractive at all. I appreciate that parliament houses should be more than just attractive buildings. But I felt it was quite important that it should be a building that did not require a half an hour lecture on architecture before one could appreciate it. I find that the winning design is of that nature, at least in the model and sketch form. It may not be of that nature when it is actually built.

However, the fact is that we have a winning design and we have a whole bunch of other designs. I thought that design number 38 was more striking and I would have opted to develop that design into a workable building for a parliament house if the decision was left to me. Of course, it was not. I would like to hear what honourable members in the Assembly have to say on this subject. The motion before the Assembly is indeed a very important one with ramifications in the Territory for a long time to come.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Speaker, for the benefit of other honourable members, I will elaborate on some of the background of how the winning entry was arrived at. Certainly, it was a most interesting exercise and fairly demanding at that. Faced with 92 entries, the job of the assessment panel was not easy. It was clear right from the start that no particular entry jumped out, if you like, and grabbed us. There was a great deal of deliberation for the entire week. It was not until the end of that week that there was some consensus about the winning entry. Each of the entries has deficiencies, including the winning one. Most of those deficiencies have been fairly well detailed by the assessment panel for the deliberation of the committee.

The winning entry was selected on a number of points. One of the main points was that it really did take the best advantage of the site compared to other entries. I also found in its favour features that would enable the general public to feel as though the building was part of them and belonged to them. They would not be isolated and removed from parliamentary members as happens in many classic and stereotype buildings.

A number of reasons are listed in the report for choosing that particular design. Basically, it was felt that that building not only had the best starting point to produce the most desired result but it also offered the most advantages from a cost point of view, an operational and planning point of view and all other features.

Some of the recommendations of the committee require elaboration before adopting and revising the brief. These things will need to be considered in full prior to tying up the architect to fulfil his obligations. The question of approved sub-consultants was examined and I am sure it will be resolved satisfactorily prior to any progression beyond the development of the basic conceptual stage.

I guess members are aware that the winning design does not necessarily illustrate the full concept of what the finished parliament house will be. It is purely a starting point from which we have selected a competent architect. I am quite certain from subsequent discussions that the architect is more suitable and that we will be able to find a workable solution in the end.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I have to be completely honest and say I do not like the design either. The member for Millner advises me that it grows on you. I guess I will just have to hang about the corridors of the current Legislative Assembly and sit in front of the thing and let it grow on me. I do not like it. I am horrified to admit that I preferred design number 38.

Having had the opportunity on a number of occasions to visit parliament houses elsewhere, I must say I agree with the Treasurer. Whilst the practicalities of the building are vitally important, the aesthetics are just as important. The building has to be practical; it has to provide proper accommodation for both the members and the staff. I heard some fascinating figures today about the support staff that is enjoyed by the House of Assembly in the ACT. It is quite interesting; they outnumber our support staff by 4:1. Obviously, the building needs to accommodate the staff and the members adequately. Obviously, we have to be careful that we do not end up with these architect one-off jobs. There is an outstanding example of that in Darwin now. It is quite interesting to look at it at night and see the odd light in the building. I understand why it is in that particular position because it is virtually unsaleable. Despite the competent advice of people involved in its construction to build a more standard design, that was not done. It is obviously important that you do not get too carried away with the aesthetics and end up with a building that is unusable. However, I think that the aesthetics of the building are just as important as its practicality. I did not work on the committee. I confess that, until that excellent display was put up outside, my involvement and my interest had not been as great as that of my colleague, the member for Millner, so I have to trust his judgment that it grows on you. I hope that it does.

In relation to the member for Wagaman's statement that it is a conceptual design - and I appreciate that it is - and it need not look like it does now, all I can say is that, for the sake of proper budgeting and for the sake of a reasonable job that is done on time, I hope that it is not changed halfway through. Having said that, I would like to give a commitment to this Assembly. Having had a look at the calendar for construction and having had a look at the date for the end of this session of the Legislative Assembly and seeing that the building would be completed 6 months after the next due date for the election in the Northern Territory, I promise to make far better use of the building, whatever its design, than the current government has.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, being on the judging panel was a very educational exercise. I should share a couple of features of that with you. We were all a bit disappointed that there were not many tropical designs. There was one from the quite well-known local architectural firm, Troppos. That was quite tropical. In fact, it set up a village-type system for our parliament house. We commended it but it did not make our real short list. The architect who exercised the most imagination was the one who shifted Government House and put it where the Nelson Building is and then said the parliament house should extend down to where Government House is now. We admired his ingenuity but he did not really get very far. I think it demonstrated that, just as there are good politicians and bad politicians, there are good architects and bad

architects. But I must say that it was very good working with the assessors. There were 3 of them and they were very good at talking about what they did. Two of them were architects and the other was a mechanical engineer. It was an educational exercise just being able to spend the week with them. It is always very interesting talking to people who are good at talking about their craft or subject.

It is quite fair to say that there was no real problem in the end in reaching a consensus on the winner. There were some problems with some of the other positions but the winner stood out quite clearly. The member for Wagaman has indicated reasonably well why we selected the winner. What appealed to me was that it made by far the best use of the site. Secondly, it provided by far the best access for the public to the whole building. I think that is very important. On a number of occasions during the assessment, the term 'people's parliament' was bandied around. In a very real sense, this building does offer the opportunity for it to be a people's parliament. The most important public space in the parliament is the reception hall; that is the feature of it. It is designed to be open to the public as much as possible. As well as that, the layout encourages both day and night use of some of the other facilities, particularly the committee room and theatrette. It is possible to enter those without going into the building proper. I think that all of that is very good.

It is quite clear that the architect knew what he was drawing when he came up with his design for the building. He did not know all that much about parliaments. There are some problems with the actual chamber and the movement patterns for Legislative Assembly staff and parliamentarians. As it is only a conceptual design, the assessors are convinced that those problems can be remedied without major difficulty. There is a positive encouragement built in for oppositions to seek to move into government because the government members have the sea view and the opposition members only have the street view over Mitchell Street. I think that is a useful carrot for oppositions.

To conclude, I believe it is a building for the 21st century. We have to remember that, in the 21st century, we will be sitting more often. We will probably have a bigger parliament and we will be making a more intensive use of that building. Of the designs we had in front of us, it was the best and it will serve us proud in the 21st century.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, like the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition, I rather favour design number 38. I am not a professional engineer or architect. I feel a little like the fellow who looks at a piece of modern art while the artist tries to explain why his artwork is so clever and will be a future leader in the field. However, I still have no feel for it. I really have no feel for the winning design. When I visited the exhibition in the Darwin Convention Centre, I walked around with no idea who had drawn any of the designs. I looked at all of the designs and the one that stood out to me as being more indicative of the Darwin scene was design number 38. I was really quite surprised when I learned that that was not the winning design; in fact, it was not even placed in the first 3 even though it was highly commended.

I find myself at odds with what we do next if other people feel the same. I know that the member for Wagaman and the member for Millner have suggested that the reception area in design number 38 is poor and that the winning design reception area gave some grandeur and scope to the design both in a utilitarian and aesthetic sense. One thing that I found when I asked about the reception area in design number 38 was that it was a large, open area. The one thing that was not a redeeming feature was that the ceiling was particularly low for so large an area. It gave one a feeling of being crushed in that area and that was

one of the major reasons, as I understand it, why that design was not rated among the top 3 designs.

I have also been told the winning design is conceptual only and, like all designs, it can be changed. Mr Speaker, we are employing the architect and not necessarily the final design that has been sketched. If that is the case with the winning design, and if number 38 - which to my mind has so many appealing features - is conceptual only, there may be engineering changes that can be made to the reception area in such a way that it does not have that unredeeming feature. Perhaps that design ought to have been looked at as well. One other feature about design number 38 which I find particularly exciting is that it was the work of a local architect. I would really like to see local architects used if at all possible, quite apart from the fact that I like that design better than any other.

Motion agreed to.

#### MOTION

Terms of Reference for New Parliament House Committee

Continued from page 1175.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move the following amendment to paragraph 3B of the motion now before the Assembly: 'Omit all words after "require"'. I think I gave sufficient explanation before.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

#### MOTION

Design and Construction of New Parliament House

Continued from page 1176.

Motion agreed to.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr DONDAS (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I would like to take this opportunity to place on record the outstanding work achievement of our departing Chief Minister, the member for Jingili. I would like placed in the Parliamentary Record his efforts for the constitutional development of the Northern Territory and its processes and, of course, the acceptance of responsibility on 1 July 1978 when the Chief Minister, with a very dedicated group of men, moved towards the further laying of the foundation stones for the development of the Northern Territory. In many instances, the Chief Minister has been described as a bull in a china shop, and that has stuck hard and fast over those years. Of course, Mr Speaker, as we all know, you cannot make an omelette unless you break some eggs. It was necessary in those early days to break the eggs to make the omelette because we inherited a system from the Commonwealth that was imposed upon us with its various infrastructures. All that infrastructure had to be changed quickly. I do not believe that we here in the Northern Territory in 1984 would be as far advanced with the constitutional development nor have such a satisfactory position with self-government without the efforts of the Chief Minister.

I feel that I can speak on this matter because I have been involved with the member for Jingili since 1974, the date of the election for the very first Legislative Assembly. I suppose by way of seniority, Mr Speaker, as one of the old boys so to speak, in the class of '74, you are really only a few months older than I am. But we all came together as a group of young people to endeavour to do our best for the Territory. I believe that Paul Everingham, as our Chief Minister, has certainly laid some very strong foundations. As we all know, it will be a very hard act to follow.

The important thing is that the Chief Minister has left a very solid base of people behind him who will carry on his wishes to take the Territory to further constitutional development. He has given of his time unstintingly to the community and at great personal sacrifice not only to himself but also to his family. He gained the respect not only of every person living in the Northern Territory but most Australians. At the same time, he has been able to well serve his electorate of Jingili.

In 1974, we scrambled in and it was the view of some of the political pundits that we would not win any seats in the northern suburbs. Fortunately, the Chief Minister won the seat of Jingili and I was lucky in those days to win the seat of Casuarina. In 1977, we ran into hard times. There were many changes. There was electoral redistribution, uranium was an issue, self-government was an issue and the number in this Assembly was an issue. There were 17 members of the Country Liberal Party and not 1 Labor member in the Assembly. That had an impact on the electorate in the 1977 election. The Chief Minister was able to win that election and again in 1980. Of course, at the 1983 election, when we increased the size and the membership of this Assembly, the Chief Minister and his team were able to defeat the Labor Party convincingly. In fact, it still has not recovered.

Many people have said in the last few days that it is an end of an era. I believe most members would support that belief. I would also like to take another view: it is the beginning of a new era whereby people of the Northern Territory will get a greater voice in the House of Representatives when that election is decided. I would like to offer to a colleague, my best wishes, and to a friend, all the best of luck for the future, Paul. You know that we are with you.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, indeed it will be the 10th anniversary in parliament of the Chief Minister on Friday this week. Coincidentally, it will be the 10th anniversary of a number of other frontbench members of the government who all came into the Legislative Assembly at the same time in 1974. I would imagine that all of those honourable members will be going out somewhere to celebrate that event at dinner. No doubt it will become known afterwards as the superannuation dinner.

Mr Speaker, I concur with and support the remarks made by the previous speaker in respect of the honourable Chief Minister, but with one amendment. Despite 10 years of valuable service to this Assembly and 7 years of good stewardship as the Northern Territory's Chief Minister, he has in fact badly marred his performance in the last 6 months. Indeed, that is unarguable. It is a matter of public record. The Chief Minister is leaving behind him a legislative monument. I am glad to say that the tone and attitude of the Assembly have picked up in the last 15 minutes because it has been an otherwise unedifying day. I was hoping it would improve somewhat. The monuments that he is leaving behind are not to the Territory's benefit. They are to the lasting damage of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, on the question of the casino Territorians, the media and everyone else have been grossly misled over the last 6 months with story, counter-story, statements, and contradictory statements. We had another classic example this afternoon when the honourable Treasurer was trying to handle the matter in the absence of the Chief Minister during the budget debate. He simply flatly contradicted statements the Chief Minister had made and expressed on one occasion his total ignorance that any such statements had ever been made. That does not augur well for the Territory. Indeed, from the performance today, I can only say that, whatever inequities I perceive in the departing Chief Minister, the new government that will take its place tomorrow will be measurably less competent than the government which is in its dying moments - the Everingham government.

The best way I can summarise how I feel about the whole casino development is to quote John Haddad. I do not do that deliberately; it is just that a quote of Haddad's encapsulated for me what I think is the most unarguable of all the arguments in respect of whatever one thinks about this development. Haddad said just a few days ago: 'We welcome Aspinalls and Pratts. We have no argument with the operators. Our argument is with the government and the way they have handled us'. Mr Speaker, whatever you think about the rights and wrongs of this debate, that company came here in good faith as an Australian company. There was euphoria, to which the honourable Treasurer has referred before. Most of it was generated by the government itself. That company has been treated very badly indeed.

I would like to go quickly over some of the ground that we all know about. The Chief Minister went off on a secret trip overseas. No one knew why he was going. He came back with a dramatic announcement. There was a big press conference. There were models of this huge development. There were front page stories in the NT News - a bonanza for the Territory. The opening paragraph said: 'Darwin and Alice Springs casinos will be sold by Federal Hotels in a huge, multi-million-dollar redevelopment deal... Future operations of the 2 casinos will be a joint venture between American casino operators...'. I will just pick one paragraph from the rest of the story: 'Millionaire financier, Sir James Goldsmith, is one of the principals of Aspinalls'. The reason I mention that particular quote is that, in the euphoria that surrounded this, the detailed story that subsequently appeared in the official publication of the NTDC contained details of the development with the attached press release which created the deliberate impression that this development was here; there was no question - we heard it for the first time today from the Treasurer - that it was 10 years off. There was no question that it would be put together over a long period of time. We were given the distinct impression that we were bringing in a lot of overseas capital. There was reference to the millionaire financiers who were going to be involved in this deal.

One report said: 'Two of the world's leading casino and hotel operators, the London-based Aspinall group and Pratt Hotels, have agreed to develop and operate new casino resort projects in the Northern Territory'. That statement stands on the public record in the face of statements recently made by one of the principals of this company in respect of the new developments and what his reaction was to them. I do want to spend some time talking about that because, on the trip that I recently had overseas, and in the discussions I had with both Pratts and Aspinalls - the details of which I have kept needlessly confidential, because that is the way I operate - I was told quite happily and easily by both Pratts and Aspinalls that they were not even interested in the Myilly Point development. The first time I had that run past me, it was a bit of a jolt. It was the first indication that I had had that there was some demarcation line between these 2 operations. Since then, John Aspinall quite happily commented



publicly on this matter. I might add that he did so precisely the same way he told me. I quote his comments to the press: 'The new casino at Myilly Point? Well, we are only interested in the existing casino. We are not absolutely certain as to what or when or where any new casino is going to be built because that is going to need a lot of funding, isn't it?' That was his response to the journalists. He then went on to say: 'Whether we make a success or not of the existing casinos is a 50-50 bet... If we successfully get the Asian gamblers to come to these casinos, it will need a miracle'.

One of the other principals of the new company said, and I am not saying there is anything necessarily terrible about these statements: 'We will of course be depending largely on the local trade. Any overseas trade will simply be an added bonus'. They are the 3 definitive statements that have been made by the principals of this new trust during the past few weeks in the Northern Territory. I know that time will simply not allow me to go into this in the detail that it needs to be gone into.

I would like one answer from the Chief Minister, just to try to tie down one of these crazy loose ends that is flapping around. The major press statement that was issued by the Chief Minister and Henry and Walker stated in its final paragraph that preliminary details of this arrangement had been given to the Foreign Investment Review Board and 'approvals from FIRB will be granted at the appropriate time'. Now that stunned me. I do want an answer from the Chief Minister on this particular piece of gobbledegook, unless it is simply deliberate misleading of the Northern Territory community. I have been told authoritatively that it is not the practice of the Foreign Investment Review Board to give assurances to anybody that it will approve and rubber stamp operations on preliminary details. We know how much of that was available 3 or 4 months ago. We know precisely how much. It would have been very preliminary indeed. It simply does not give those assurances. But it is there in black and white. I would like the honourable Chief Minister to tell me on what basis he made the statement that he had received assurances from the Foreign Investment Review Board. It is in the major press statement that he issued that approvals would be granted at the appropriate time. Unless he can give a satisfactory explanation to the Assembly, and quote the source of those assurances - who gave them to him and on what basis - that press statement simply stands as a total falsehood. I might add that it would be the first of quite a number of extraordinarily contradictory statements.

So far on the public record we have one major statement of the Chief Minister outside of that press statement. There has been one and one only. That was the interview which he did with the ABC, which obviously he later regretted. He has given no information since, only bits and pieces. One piece came as a surprise to the honourable Treasurer this afternoon in terms of tax. That information came out in the 3 am press conference when the Chief Minister publicly gave details of the 8% that will be offered for 5 years and the third of the profits tax after that.

The Chief Minister was perfectly happy to give a definite statement about that arrangement. He was quite happy. I accept the Treasurer's statement that indeed this arrangement has not been concluded. Therefore, having accepted that from the Treasurer, and he should know, it means the Chief Minister's flat statement to the press at 3 am the other morning that this had been organised was once again false and misleading. If it is not an absolute falsehood, it certainly is playing fast and loose with what the situation is. If the Chief Minister has any continuing interest in this matter, I refer him to the Hansard record and the Treasurer's answer to me today in respect of that.

Quite frankly, it is impossible to go over once again the flatly contradicting statements that are being put out again, again and again by the honourable Chief Minister in respect of this development. A new story develops every day. There is no question that the timing, as against the conception of the development, has been thrown together over the last 6 months - and have a look at the Chief Minister's own announced timetable - with the federal election well and truly in mind. I do not accept for a minute that the development itself had anything to do with that. But the timing and the way this has been pushed and shoved - and I have enough evidence for that which I will deliver at the appropriate time - have definitely been with the knowledge that we have all had for the last 3 months that there would be a federal election in December. That has been directly responsible for a public relations fiasco for the Northern Territory. That is pretty hard to argue against.

I am not suggesting that Federals would not have gone. I am not suggesting that Pratts and Aspinalls would not have been the operators. I agree with Haddad. I have no hassles with Pratts and Aspinalls. I saw their operations and I am satisfied with them. However, if Federals had not been handled in a totally unnecessary way, all of this trauma for the Northern Territory could have been avoided.

Mr Speaker, we had assurances from the Chief Minister. I quote him from Tuesday 5 June, when he referred to a previous assurance: 'I undertook and still undertake that there will be a public seminar... the Darwin council and the Alice Springs council'. He made the deliberate inference that that would be done in the near future. As we all know, the honourable Chief Minister started this job; he has failed to finish it. He has left it in a very incomplete state indeed.

The unanswered questions will be taken up by my colleague, the honourable member for Millner. The Chief Minister gave us other assurances: 'I have made it quite clear to the Northern Territory electorate that, if I am re-elected to this Assembly in 1984 and subsequently re-elected by my party to the position of leader, then I will be serving out the full term as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. I make the categorical statement that, in my view, the reporter from Woman's Day was confused and, if re-elected to the Assembly next term, and if re-elected as leader of the parliamentary CLP, I will be serving out the full term'. Those are 2 major commitments. I consider them major and important. They have both been broken in 12 months by the Chief Minister. One was to serve out his full term. I would have thought that he could have at least completed the week. The other was to explain the complete details of this arrangement. Certainly, he had an obligation to do that before he departed this Assembly, and he has failed to do so.

Mr Speaker, I do not have time to go through all this because there are stacks of it. It is not from the gutter press; it is from the Age, the Australian and the Australian Financial Review. I might add that off-the-top-of-the-head remarks and responses from the Chief Minister, such as 'Paddy McGuinness was a former Labor Party staff member', simply do not stand up because, as everyone who regularly reads that paper knows, it is trenchant in its criticism of Labor governments and Liberal governments and indeed the current Labor government. Indeed, many of the stories that have been written by Paddy McGuinness had nothing to do with it anyway.

It is unarguable that, as a result of this fiasco, and the mishandling by the Chief Minister of this deal, we have received in the last few months 2 monumentally bad pieces of publicity for the Northern Territory. One is: 'A

piece of legislation for the compulsory acquisition of private property to be handed over to another private company, courtesy of the Chief Minister's government, is his last legislative achievement'. Secondly, we have had the worst and most damaging public relations campaign in respect of the Territory's future development that we have ever copped since self-government, most of it richly deserved. You would have to say in fairness to Federal Hotels that, in respect of all the accusations of bad business practice and poor judgment, the one outstanding poor judgment and poor business practice from its point of view, which stands on the public record, was to sign a contract with the Everingham government in the first place. That was its most outstanding piece of bad business.

The Chief Minister has done a competent job over 7 years as Chief Minister but he has left the Northern Territory - and this is not secondhand information - with a serious problem of credibility in the financial community. It has in fact scared away as many dollars as it may have attracted and it is a very sad way to leave the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I cannot help but be amazed at how the Leader of the Opposition can be so terribly concerned and clutch his chest about this bad publicity that the Northern Territory is getting. When I consider his entire history, and that of his shadow treasurer and the federal ALP members in relation to the Territory's financial arrangements and the threats they are under, I wonder why he even cares. What he is talking about is peanuts. The Northern Territory will sail on with private investment pouring into this place in the future as it has in the past. He has gone all jittery at the knees over some southern articles about what we did with the casinos. We deal regularly with some big people in the financial world in this country, as can be seen by the projects that have started over the last few years. The Northern Territory has not destroyed its credibility at all over this affair, not at all. Many business people and big investors in this country have more brains than the Leader of the Opposition gives them credit for.

I do not intend to dwell on that. However, the Leader of the Opposition made such a point of trying to argue that things I said today contradicted what the Chief Minister said a few days ago. I am sure Hansard will show that I said arrangements with various parties to the casinos and with the tourist developments have not been concluded. A range of parties, companies, trusts, tax levels and returns are involved and the arrangements have not yet been concluded. A clear demonstration of that is that we do not have FIRB approval yet. It is coming. To say that the Chief Minister, who announced a profit-sharing arrangement a few weeks ago, has to be wrong because I said the arrangements have not been concluded is nonsense. What I said this morning is that the t's are being crossed and the i's dotted. Many of the arrangements are clearly in place but they have not been concluded. I do not see where anything I said today necessarily contradicts a word the Chief Minister has said before. The reason I was not aware of what the Chief Minister said at his 3 am conference was because I was having an enjoyable holiday interstate at the time.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say just a few more words before touching on the matter of the Chief Minister's departure. The Leader of the Opposition, in an outburst in the Assembly earlier today, indignantly claimed that the Chief Minister's action in tabling a report by the Canadian Pacific Railways people on the Hill Report and the feasibility of the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link was 'sheer political convenience' and a 'campaign plank' for the Chief Minister. Whose political convenience is it to hold a federal election? 18 months after

the federal government was elected, we have another federal election. Terrific! Whose convenience is that? It is certainly not the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory's convenience. As for a 'campaign plank', who put his big fat head on television and said: 'We will build the north-south rail link'? Who received lots of votes for it in about March 1983? But not a word. The only person who uses as a campaign plank the north-south rail link is the Chief Minister, according to the Leader of the Opposition. It is astounding just how blatantly one-sided he can be. As everybody knows, the Northern Territory government has been working continuously on demonstrating that the north-south rail link is a viable proposition as well as a political commitment - an unqualified political commitment when it was given to Territorians and subsequently taken away from us. We have not relinquished our resolve. In particular, the Chief Minister has not relinquished his resolve in demonstrating that the Hill Report was a fiasco and a setup, which it was. Hill was given his marching orders before he started the job. That has been demonstrated. But all of a sudden there is great indignation that we happen to have a report that might tear Mr Hill to pieces. It might make him produce some of that information on his methodology which he very desperately does not want to produce.

Mr Speaker, certainly, for all of those of us who came to this Assembly in 1974, the departure from the Assembly of the Chief Minister is a significant event. Probably I have been more closely associated with the Chief Minister over the past several years than many of the members inasmuch as I was, of course, his deputy for 5 years from self-government. We found ourselves fairly bewildered after the election in 1977, which was quite a disaster for the CLP at the time. In hindsight, that was not because of the number of seats we lost - with 17 out of 19 members before the election, we knew it would be hard to hang on to that sort of majority. It was a disaster because of the people we lost. We lost 5 out of 7 executive members, including the leader and deputy, overnight, in the midst of self-government negotiations by that leader and deputy. I recall clearly when, within a few days of being elected as deputy to Paul Everingham, we were sitting in a room and saying: 'What do we do next?' The fellows who were running the show were all gone. We had at that time 2 public servants, whom I will never forget and I am sure Paul will not either. One was Alan Ashley. This was prior to self-government - towards the end of 1977. Alan Ashley was brought to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth to draft up the Financial Administration and Audit Act for the Northern Territory, which would obviously be required when self-government came so we would have the financial basis for a treasury. The other was Otto Alder, who was a local public servant, and not a very high-ranking one at the time. He was a diligent fellow who somehow ended up with Alan Ashley as a team of 2 advisers on self-government. Of course, neither of them knew anything about self-government or forming a government. In that sense, it had never been done before in Australia.

We picked up the cudgels and, in a few weeks, Paul and I were in Canberra, sitting opposite up to 8 federal ministers at one time, all with their respective portfolios bearing upon the Northern Territory. Obviously, to them we were a challenge to their bureaucracies and empires. Whilst, by and large, we received cooperation from the ministers because the political will to bring the Territory to self-government was there, some of the bureaucracies fought hard and strong. We are all well aware that bureaucracies like the ANPWS were harder and stronger at that time than we were. But their day will come, and they will transfer to the Territory in due course as they must.

I think among the monuments Paul Everingham is leaving behind are some very important ones which will probably be recognised by just a few people. One of

them is the legislative program that Paul has led ever since self-government. He has been adamant about having progressive legislation in the Assembly, and we have been very progressive. In many respects - things like the Territory's lands acquisition legislation and the Criminal Code - much of our legislation is very progressive indeed, probably the most progressive legislation in Australia. It is on our books in the Territory and the effects of those modern reforms will be felt over decades to come.

In the area of Aboriginals and Aboriginal advancement, I do not think Paul will ever get the recognition he deserves for his determination to bring Aboriginals in the Northern Territory forward as fast as they can go through the legislative recognition of Aboriginal ways and through government works programs to improve their lot. There was never a time when he went bush without coming back with a shopping list of things for the settlements that he had been to. At his insistence, we would disrupt our financial programs to satisfy those needs. The appointment of Aboriginals to most statutory authorities in the Northern Territory that they could be reasonably placed on, the commitments in education, the commitment to employ in due course a percentage of Aboriginals - which some said was impossible but which Paul has always strived for adamantly - are all in an area in which Everingham is most often criticised and misunderstood, particularly interstate. If people cared to get right down and look at what he has done as the Chief Minister in charge of government programs, they would see that he has done more for them than any man I can think of.

There are other memorable occasions with Paul which I will never forget, like the time over a period of 2 days down south when he went to Sydney determined that uranium would again be exported from Australia, and via Darwin. Whilst we could do it with or without union cooperation, Everingham wanted it to go over the wharves with union labour. He achieved that through a remarkable series of manoeuvres and by persuading people. Mining companies were harder to deal with than the unions. Between 3 uranium mining companies, 3 or 4 unions and a lot of fancy footwork behind closed doors, it was an experience of how he can operate that I will never forget. He is the man responsible for the resumption of uranium exports on what one might call an industrially peaceable basis. I think that is to his eternal credit. However, once again it is one of those things that he will never receive official recognition for, and I am pleased to be able to place it in Hansard.

I wish Paul the best. I could not think of a more appropriate Territorian to represent us in Canberra.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I too would appreciate an opportunity to say some kind words about the honourable Chief Minister because everybody on this side recognises that he has made a very valid contribution to the Territory. Unfortunately, because of the fact that today is the last day and because the Chief Minister has left us some unfinished business, I am going to have to cut that short. I wish him bon voyage and invite him to answer a few questions in the time he has available.

Mr Speaker, the whole casino matter has been plagued by inconsistent statements by the Chief Minister and his Treasurer, by downright refusals to give information, by broken promises and by a failure to perform. On 17 April, he promised to have all the answers to all the questions in 2 to 3 months. On 5 June he was still promising and I quote: 'I will be delighted to make a detailed statement in relation to the project just as soon as I can'. Further, he undertook that there would be a seminar for all concerned. Well, those were the Chief Minister's promises. Here tonight is his last chance to perform and to help him I will give him a list of the questions that we would like answers to.

First of all, in respect of existing operations, we have these questions. Firstly, on 18 April Chris Raphael said that the joint venturers would review the gaming controls of the Northern Territory government. Would the Chief Minister explain whether there are changes to be made to the Northern Territory gaming laws and what these changes will entail? Secondly, if the stringent New Jersey gaming provisions have failed to prevent infringements by Pratts, how can the Northern Territory government hope to exercise adequate controls? Thirdly, what discussions have there been in relation to an increase in poker machine numbers? Fourthly, are the odds at the gaming tables going to change? Fifthly, to what extent will the new operators depend on the contribution of high-rollers? Sixthly, what net benefit does the government expect to accrue to the Northern Territory tourist economy from these high-rollers? Seventhly, were there any moves taken to reduce or minimise stamp duty and other taxes applicable to the transfer of the casino properties' licences and associated assets? Eighthly, what are the exact terms of the agreement with the operators for upgrading landscaping and promotion? Ninthly, is there a guaranteed minimum to be spent by the operators on these and related things and is there any time limit?

Mr Speaker, turning to the FIRB, the honourable Leader of the Opposition has already indicated our concern for the inconsistency of the government's attitude in that area and we would like the honourable Chief Minister, on his last day in this Assembly, to explain to this Assembly on what basis he made his statements in April, and I quote: 'All necessary consents and approvals will be granted at the appropriate time'. And later, at the acquisition handover, he said: 'A sympathetic attitude has been indicated by the FIRB at this stage'.

Turning to the tax structure, several times during the last sittings - and at this sittings after today's performance - we tried to get a clear answer from the Treasurer on the details of the tax structure for the casinos. We again call on the Treasurer or the Chief Minister to release full details of the new tax structure. We are told they will pay 8% for the first 5 years, although on 29 August the Treasurer said the reduced tax would be for 2 years at the most. How much loss will this mean to the Territory taxpayer over the next 5 years? We do not want a fob-off as to how much will be spent on refurbishing; in other words, how much will be reinvested in a private asset? We want to know how much loss in revenue the Northern Territory will suffer over the 5 years. We were told during the budget debate that the gambling taxes would be reduced for an initial short-term period to ensure a minimum level of return on investment in the property trust. Federal Hotels did not receive that. It did not need to have a guaranteed minimum level of return on investment so why does the new property trust get it and need it?

Let us get beyond the initial 5 years at 8%. What comes then? We are told the government will get one-third of the share of the profits but is that not in consideration of moneys and assurances given by the government as referred to by the Chief Minister on 27 September? What will be the gaming tax provisions after the 5 years? Territorians are entitled to know these details. Just how much will the Territory coffers end up losing? The Treasurer has said there is no tax holiday. Let him spell that out and demonstrate that his statement is true.

Mr Speaker, turning to government financial commitments, we have yet to see how much underwriting by the government will occur. On 27 September, the Chief Minister referred to returns on moneys and assurances that the government gives. What money and assurances has the government already given and what more will be given in the future? How is the spare 9% of shares in the trust to be held and when will they be offered to the public?

Turning to the Myilly Point redevelopment, there are some major questions to be answered. When the honourable Chief Minister announced his great master plan in April last, the redevelopment of Myilly Point was put forward as an essential part of the whole scheme. The Chief Minister stated: 'The acquisition of the hotel casino properties was the first logical step in the project which included a staged development of the site'. This was the club used to bludgeon Federal Hotels into agreeing to sell in April. As Mr Farrell said, he was 'persuaded by the logic of incorporating the 2 properties into the overall development'. Yet, as time has gone by, this rationale for the takeover has slipped. The great redevelopment plans have faded into the background.

We demand a full explanation of what is going on with the redevelopment plans. Let the Chief Minister get on with his unfinished business. Let him answer tonight the following questions. At what stage are the redevelopment plans? What has happened to the feasibility study into the whole redevelopment project? Why was not the whole feasibility study looked at before it was presented as a fait accompli by the Chief Minister? What is the relationship between the trust that has acquired the casino properties and the trust that is to develop the Myilly Point site? Will that development trust be undertaking the development on the Alice Springs golf course? What will be the structure of this development trust? What part will the NTDC play in this trust? What moneys, assurances, guarantees and other support will be given by the government to the development trust? How does the Chief Minister explain several statements made by representatives of Pratts and Aspinalls that all they are interested in are the existing casinos and that they have not come here to deal on the basis of building a new casino? The last of those statements was made by John Aspinall on 10 October. How does this fit in with published assertions by the NTDC that Pratts and Aspinalls have agreed to develop and operate the 2 new casino resort projects? For confirmation of that, members should look at the NTDC publication 'Indus' of August 1984. In the light of the Pratt and Aspinall disavowals, would the Chief Minister explain where the working capital for the redevelopment will come from and who will be involved in the project? Why has the government begun destroying dwellings at Myilly Point before it has announced any detailed development plan for the area? What is the value of the properties and dwellings that will be destroyed in the wake of the proposed development? Will the development include the construction of a second casino? If so, what impact will that have on the arrangement with the operators of the existing casino.

Mr Speaker, we come to the most important question of all: future investment in the Northern Territory. Certain questions need to be asked. What effect will the compulsory acquisition of Federal Hotels casinos have on future investment in the Northern Territory? What effect has it had on business confidence and what flow-on will that have on job recreation and work opportunities? This question is being asked not only in the Northern Territory but in the south, particularly by major newspapers that are respected and influential in financial matters. Major merchant bankers are asking whether it is worth investing in the Northern Territory. I know of at least 1 major retail chain that has ceased investigations into the prospect of Territory development, and that is directly as a result of the takeover of Federal Hotels. Why has no Australian company other than our own Henry and Walker, which was implicated from the start, chosen to invest in the property trust? Why was Elders not prepared to take even 1% of the deal despite strong hints by the Chief Minister that it would be the major shareholder only 4 days before the final 3 am announcement of the takeover? In view of the recent report submitted to various stock exchanges by Federals and Henry and Walker, can the Chief Minister assure this Assembly that Henry and Walker has been investigated financially in the same rigorous manner as Federals and can he provide the

Assembly with the details and result of that scrutiny? In the event of a corporate raid on Henry and Walker, are there assurances in writing as to the future of the casinos and the proposed redevelopment?

Mr Speaker, to conclude, this whole episode has been a rich tapestry of contradictions and cover-ups. The Chief Minister asserts that the agreement with Federal Hotels permitted the takeover. He has yet to explain why he had to resort to acquisition legislation with its consequent damage to investor confidence in the Northern Territory. He has yet to give this Assembly, and indeed Territorians and all Australians, adequate information relating to the proposed redevelopment. We should all ask: 'Why the secrecy?' The Chief Minister said that the government 'will not be putting a penny in'. He has yet to explain how this fits in with the references to government moneys and assurances. Surely, this must represent the major item of the Chief Minister's unfinished business in this Assembly. I invite him now to remedy this situation.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I would like to place on record my appreciation of the services of Martyn Rudolph Finger. Martyn Finger, who has been the Director-General of my department, is retiring on 30 October. I would have liked to have spent some time dilating upon the service he has rendered to this Territory and the goodwill he and his wife Audrey will leave behind them. Unfortunately, in the circumstances, I seek leave to have those remarks incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

*Martyn Rudolph Finger, CBE, FSASM (Fellow, South Australian School of Mines), Dip Industrial Management.*

*Mr Finger was born in Melbourne on 10 April 1922, eldest son and second child of Rev F.F.W. Finger who was a Lutheran Pastor with a parish in Kalbar, south-west Queensland.*

*The young Martyn received his early education in Kalbar but in 1937, at his own request, became a boarder at Immanuel College, Adelaide, where he received his leaving certificate in 1939. Also attending that school was the young Audrey Peters who, in 1946, after a lengthy war-time correspondence, became his bride.*

*After initial training as an aircraft fitter at the College of Civil Aviation in Brisbane, he became an instructor for the college in Adelaide and from there joined the RAAF in 1942. He received training as a wireless air-gunner under the Empire Training Scheme in Canada and then saw war service in England and the Middle East.*

*After demobilisation, he attended the Adelaide University where he graduated with a BE (Mech). In 1951, he joined the Commonwealth Public Service in the Department of Aviation and between that year and 1959 held various positions as an airways engineer and inspector. A period with the Commonwealth Public Service Board on management methods followed until he came to the Northern Territory as Assistant Administrator (Economic and Social Affairs) in 1968 during the incumbency of Roger Dean as Administrator. He held this post until 1973 and during this period was the senior official member of the then Northern Territory Legislative Council. Stirrings for self-government were being felt and these were significant years in the Territory's history.*



Mr Finger became a First Assistant Secretary (Resource and Development) in the newly-named Department of the Northern Territory in 1973 but Cyclone Tracy in December 1974 disrupted Darwin completely. During part of 1975 he was then Acting General Manager of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. During 1976 and 1977, when negotiations for self-government were becoming a reality, he was adviser to the then Chief Secretary, Dr Goff Letts, and in due course he became the first member of the Northern Territory Public Service.

Since self-government on 1 July 1978, he had been Director-General of the Chief Minister's Department, 2 highlights of his stewardship being the Queen's visit in 1981 and the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1982 when he was responsible for all arrangements.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1980, Mr Finger received a CBE for public service. He has also been active in the community. Among other interests have been the Royal Commonwealth Society of which he is Vice President and he was for many years Chairman of the St Andrews Lutheran Congregation.

We wish him and his loyal wife, Audrey, a long and happy retirement.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I would also like to say that it has been my privilege to serve the people in the electorate of Jingili and the people of the Northern Territory for 10 years. I hope that I may serve them for another 10.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr EVERINGHAM: I hope that I may serve them for another 20 since it meets with general approval.

Mr Speaker, I had hoped that the Federal Hotels matter had been put to bed but it seems not, so I would seek leave to incorporate this information in Hansard as well.

Leave granted.

September 21, 1984

At the outset we must say that the latest public information available on the Ipec Group (now Tal Holdings Ltd.) is the accounts for the six months ended September 30, 1983. These were lodged with the Stock Exchange on December 30, 1983, one day before Ipec share trading would have been suspended by the Exchange. These accounts disclosed a consolidated operating loss for the six months of \$10,242,000 which included \$5,368,000 in trading losses and \$4,874,000 of losses in Extraordinary Items.

Normally the next set of accounts lodged for public scrutiny would have been for the full year to March 31, 1984 which would have been lodged by June 30, 1984. However, for some reason which could only be guessed at, Ipec, Federal, and Tal changed their accounting period from a year ended March 31 to June 30. In consequence the full year accounts (which will be for a 15 month period to June 30, 1984) do not have to be lodged until September 30, 1984. In consequence the comments we make could prove to be out of date within the next ten days if the Group position has improved dramatically.

The Extraordinary Items in the accounts to September 30, 1983 were as follows:-

	<u>Six Months to 30.9.83</u>
	<u>\$'000</u>
Provision for Diminution of Investment in Associated Company	(260)
Restatement of Profit on sale of a Subsidiary Group as a consequence of adjustments to the Net Tangible Assets of that Group	
Profit previously reported	13,290
Adjusted Profit	(12,953)
Net Adjustment	(337)
Profit on sale of shares in an overseas Subsidiary Group disposed of during the current period	10,723
Provision for possible future losses	(15,000)
	(4,874)

You will note the provision for possible future losses on reinsurance contracts of a further \$15 million in respect of which the directors stated as follows:

"Southlands Reinsurance Limited claims

An action brought against the company, in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, by Home Insurance Company, one of the main reinsurers, was successful. The company has lodged an appeal and in accordance with normal accounting practice the directors have increased the provision for possible reinsurance losses from \$5 million to \$20 million."

On the other hand a note of caution, because at the same time as lodging these accounts the Chairman reported that the operations of the Group "are now trading profitably".

Also Tal Holdings announced on 1.8.84 that it had purchased for \$6.5 million the Ipec debts arising from the reinsurance guarantees (estimated value \$32.5 million). The larger part of the \$20 million provision should by now be written-back, making a significant profit. However, we refer in more detail to this intriguing transaction which in fact could have avoided Ipec Holdings Limited insolvency, and thus the collapse of the whole Group, in more detail on the last page of this report.

However, anybody looking at the accounts for the year ended March 31, 1983 and the six months ended September 30, 1983 would have to conclude the Group were in a parlous state. In fact the Finance commentators concluded just that (see attached press cuttings). Since September 1983, the liquidity and probably the profitability of the Group will be shown to have improved significantly, but even now we do not have the accounts to show it.

Specific comments on Peat Marwick Mitchell's letter tabled in the House on August 30, 1984 are as follows:

- (1) The first point Peat Marwick Mitchell make is that they have never been auditors of Federal Hotels Limited itself. The audit position of the Ipec Group is quite unusual in as much as Peat Marwick & Mitchell are the auditors of Ipec Holdings Limited and the auditors of the N.T. operatives of the Federal Hotels Limited subsidiaries, Federal Hotels (N.T.) Pty. Ltd., Federal Hotels (Darwin) Pty. Ltd. and Federal Hotels (Alice Springs) Pty. Ltd. but not the auditors of the public company, Federal Hotels Ltd.

There is no doubt that the Ipec Holdings Limited Group's accounting policies, intercompany financing, and trading relationships with companies controlled by its directors have been over the years, to say the least, unusual. In fact, Mr. Barton told the 1981 Annual Meeting "some of the companies in which I have shares are providing accounts too complex for me to understand". Mr. McClure, Ipec Finance Director and General Manager is reported to have said in December, 1979 "It is all too complicated sometimes even for the directors". (See last paragraph press cutting "C"). In fact financial press reports describing Ipec's accounting policies for years have been full of descriptions such as "unusual", "complicated", "obscure", "surprising", etc. The unusual audit arrangements typify this jumble. In fact a cynic could see it as a deliberate attempt by the directors to make it extremely difficult for anybody outside the company to draw precise information from the published accounts.

Refer following Press articles re pending suspension of shares, late reporting, arguments with auditors, etc. (See attached press clippings).

- (2) The history of the European involvement was reported in the Press in the following manner (list articles).

In a nutshell, the Ipec Europe operation accumulated losses of \$17 million before becoming profitable in the last couple of years of Ipec ownership, while the Skypak operation lost money for the time it was owned (almost \$5 million loss in the year it was sold). Capital profits were reported on both sales.

Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co. made substantial qualifications to the 1981 Accounts. These qualifications dealt with the directors capitalising what they described as establishment costs of \$17,435,000 in respect of establishing the European transport operations. At that time Peat Marwick Mitchell said as follows:

"We are of the view that the value to the Group of the aforementioned establishment costs is entirely dependent on

- (i) The ability of the European transport operations to generate sufficient future profit to justify the carrying value.
- (ii) The ability of the Group to continue to fund any further losses which may be incurred by the European transport operations until such time as the profits referred to in (i) above emerge.

In view of the operating losses which have been incurred during the period of establishment to March 31, 1981, and the fact that it has yet to be demonstrated that the venture is capable of generating sufficient future profits to justify the carrying value of the establishment costs, we are unable to form an opinion as to the directors' justification in carrying forward the establishment costs, nor have we been able to determine whether or not some or all of the costs should have been written off."

In addition, at that time Peat Marwick Mitchell further qualified the accounts on the basis that they could not form a view as to the value of the investment of \$1,287,208 in the European transport operations and whether the advance of \$13,004,000 made to a subsidiary group, Ipec Transport Holdings B.V., which is the holding company for the operating subsidiaries carrying on the European transport operations, would be recovered. This qualification was lifted by Peat Marwick Mitchell when they reported on the 1982 accounts after the European transport operations returned a profit of \$2.2 million for the year ended March 31, 1982. However the directors did not amortise any of this \$17 million investment. These establishment costs were shown as an asset in their accounts at March 31, 1982 at \$14,520,000. This was a highly unusual accounting treatment borne no doubt out of a desire to avoid reporting operating losses. However the directors' gamble in this respect appears to have paid off when they were able to sell the European transport operations at a reported profit of \$12.5 million. However, even this "profit" of \$12.5 million is likely to have been eroded by subsequent exchange losses, since the price agreed was 82 million Dutch guilders, half down and the balance over 3 years. The guilder has depreciated from about 40 Australian cents to 35 cents in the last 15 months and accordingly we calculate that their exchange loss on the contract could be approaching \$2 million Australian dollars at this stage (UNLESS THEY'VE PAID TO "HEDGE" THE CONTRACT, which seems unlikely on their past performance).

- (3) In relation to the highly illiquid position of Ipec and its unsatisfactory current ratio of 32%, and the comment that fixed assets totalled approximately 93% of total assets, Peat Marwick Mitchell say that these figures are not current (presumably they meant out-of-date). Peat Marwick Mitchell quoted that fixed assets comprised only 57.3% of the total assets of the Ipec Group according to the unaudited balance sheet at March 31, 1984. (No-one else has seen this yet). Again what some would describe as a smoke screen has been created because Ipec's parent, now Tal has changed its accounting date from March 31, 1984 to June 30, 1984, thus avoiding having to report and lodge their accounts with the Corporate Affairs Commission by June 30, 1984. They now have to September 30, 1984 to lodge their accounts and this of course means that unfortunately we cannot comment in detail on what the position was at March 31, 1984, much less September, 1984. However Peat Marwick Mitchell do not refute that the current ratio was particularly poor. Rather, in the second part of their comment on this matter they have said that finance commitments due in the next 12 months which are rolled over are included in current liabilities. Of course they are and always will be! But who is to say that they will be rolled over?

In consequence they are quite correctly included in the calculations of a current ratio. We could only describe this comment as an auditor clutching at straws in an effort to pacify a client. Peat Marwick Mitchell have picked a small point to evade the real issue. The liquidity ratio was particularly poor. It will have improved since with the sale of the Head Office building in Sydney (about \$4 million) and the sale of a half interest in the Australian transport operation to Mayne Nickless, (providing they got cash and not a guildler contract!!)

The suggestion that the company was in such severe difficulties that a Receiver may be appointed was supported at the beginning of the year by the following press articles plus the following facts.

- . \$10 million loss in 6 months to September 1983.
- . Mr. Gordon Barton's departure from the scene.
- . The mysterious Tal takeover.
- . The dropping share price for Ipec (later Tal) 86 cents on 31.7.80, down to 52 cents 31.3.83, currently around 55 cents for Tal shares.

The company itself, in the 1983 Annual Accounts, describes the Provision for Contingencies (then \$5 million) as being "raised to cover future losses which might be associated with -

- . The Group's 49% investment in Traders Prudent Insurance Company Limited
- . Possible losses in relation to other investments
- . Legal costs which may be incurred in relation to the actions being defended by the company referred to in Note 6(a) (Southlands Reinsurance)
- . Possible losses arising from litigation other than that referred to in Note 6(a) (Southlands Reinsurance)
- . Potential warranty claims arising from the sale of a subsidiary
- . Potential adjustment on finalisation of the negotiated sale price of a subsidiary
- . Possible future losses on realisation of group assets as a result of the realisation and reorganisation presently being undertaken by the Group"

DOES THAT MISERABLE CATALOGUE OF POTENTIAL LOSSES INDICATE A HEALTHY COMPANY?

Of course Peat Marwick Mitchell would be able to say literally that they are not aware of suggestions formal or informal by a creditor of Ipec or Federal that a Receiver would be appointed. No creditor would ever approach an auditor to discuss appointing a Receiver to the auditor's client. This would be telegraphing your punches. The real test is whether the company's bankers and lenders ever considered appointing a Receiver or whether they were ever concerned with the account. It would be interesting to ask them for details of discussions with their bankers or even the direct question.

"Did any lender to the Group ever contemplate appointing a Receiver to one of the companies in the Group? What pressure was applied by lenders to the Group for their indebtedness to be reduced?"

The fact is that the financial community was rife with speculation that Ipec were about to go under. (Refer attached press reports). We could not believe that Peat Marwick Mitchell were not aware of the general unrest in the financial community as to the state of Ipec's finances. Indeed the Financial press reported delays in Ipec finalising their accounts because of disputes with its auditors.

Peat Marwick Mitchell again heavily qualified the accounts for the year ended March 31, 1983 (in fact they could well have been the most substantial qualifications of any public company's report in the last 25 years). Details of the qualifications are set out on pages 29 and 30 of the annual report. Copies of the qualifications are enclosed. Peat Marwick Mitchell's qualifications proved correct as the directors themselves made the further provision suggested by Peat Marwick Mitchell when reporting on the accounts for the six months to September 30, 1983.

We attach the latest Stock Exchange Company Review Service Report on Tal Holdings Ltd. You will note that Tal have paid \$6.5 million to acquire all of the judgment debts against Ipec Holdings Ltd. which judgment debts approximated \$32.5 million. This no doubt refers to Wolfe's activities in London where he was trying to encourage insurance brokers to settle their debts due by Ipec Holdings Ltd. under the guarantees issued in respect of Southland Insurance for 30 cents in the dollar.

In Peat Marwick Mitchell's qualification in respect of the March 31, 1983 accounts it stated that Ipec Holdings Ltd. guarantees were "guarantees without stipulated limits". It also stated in that qualification that "a representative of Southlands has advised that, based on the ratio of losses to premium income experienced to date, the eventual total underwriting loss of the entire underwriting portfolio, which covered the underwriting years 1974 to 1979 inclusive, could amount to \$20,000,000".

As previously mentioned the directors changed their mind when issuing the half yearly report for the six months ended September 30, 1983 to include a further \$15 million in provisions for possible future losses on reinsurance contracts, bringing the total provision at that time to \$20 million. It would appear that in fact these losses for which judgments were obtained amounted to \$32.5 million.

Although Ipec Holdings Ltd. showed consolidated net assets of \$30,756,000 (excluding minority interests) at March 31, 1983, the holding company Ipec Holdings Ltd. had net assets at that time of only \$17,626,000. If the directors had taken Peat Marwick Mitchell's advice at that time then the net assets of Ipec Holdings Ltd. at March 31, 1983 would have been shown at only \$1,126,000. This of course would have created even more panic in the financial community and may well have led at the time to Ipec's downfall. Even worse, it now appears that the accounts of Ipec Holdings Ltd. at March 31, 1983 should have been reduced by a further \$12.5 million which would have meant that at March 31, 1983 Ipec Holdings Ltd. itself was insolvent to the extent of \$11.5 million.

Fortunately, it would appear by some master selling practice Tal has been able to purchase Ipec Holdings Ltd. debts of \$32.5 million for \$6.5 million. However, unless Tal has agreed to forgive Ipec Holdings

Ltd. a very substantial portion of its debt of \$32.5 million then Ipec Holdings Ltd. would more than likely be insolvent as of now. It would be interesting to seek full details of this position from Farrell.

Stock Exchange  
Company Review Service

TAL HOLDINGS LIMITED

(Reconstruction of IPEC Holdings Ltd.)

March 8, 1984

QUOTATION COMMENCES: Following the acquisition of IPEC HOLDINGS LTD., the shares of TAL HOLDINGS LTD. commenced quotation from March 8, 1984.

March 9, 1984

DIRECTORATE: G.P. Farrell, R.J. Maclure and J.M. Haddad have been appointed directors of the company.

May 10, 1984

ADDITIONS TO THE OFFICIAL LIST: 1,509,093 ordinary shares of 50 cents each fully paid, issued pursuant to the takeover of Ipec Holdings Limited. 97,644 11% cumulative preference shares of \$1.00 each fully paid, issued pursuant to the takeover of Ipec Holdings Limited. These shares rank equally and merge with existing quoted shares. 280,257 11% cumulative preference shares of \$1.00 each fully paid, issued pursuant to the takeover of Ipec Holdings Limited. These shares rank for half the dividend for the period ending July 31, 1984 and will therefore be quoted on a 'New' basis. The quoted and issued capital of the company is now 17,683,536 ordinary shares of 50 cents each fully paid and 4,422,790 11% cumulative preference shares of \$1.00 each fully paid. There are also on issue 2,000,000 options expiring December 6, 1988, which are at present unquoted.

July 2 1984

ACQUISITION OF WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY: Eslea Holdings Ltd. (formerly IPEC Holdings) advised of the acquisition of the remaining 51% interest in the capital of Traders Prudent Insurance Company Ltd. and the subsequent sale of the 100% holding to Fire and All Risks Insurance Company Ltd.

August 1, 1984

ACQUISITION OF ESLEA DEBTS: TAL Holdings Limited ("TAL") advises that (with the exception of a few small claims which are currently in the course of negotiation) all judgment debts, obtained against its subsidiary, Eslea Holdings Limited (formerly Ipec Holdings Limited) in the Commercial Causes Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of New South Wales Court of Appeal in these matters will be discontinued.

The judgments were given in favour of various reinsurers and arose from guarantees given by Eslea in respect of reinsurance business written on the London reinsurance market by Eslea's former subsidiary, Southlands Reinsurance Limited.

The amount paid by TAL for the acquisition of the debts is approximately \$6.5 million. The total of the present and estimated claims under the judgments is approximately \$32.5 million and TAL thus becomes the creditor of Eslea in respect of these claims and thereby the largest creditor of Eslea.

The judgment debts so acquired represent the bulk of the claims against Eslea arising from the guarantees given in respect of Southlands and the compromise effected by TAL is regarded by the Directors as a very satisfactory settlement of the claims.

Also in the course of reconstructing the affairs of TAL and Eslea, TAL has acquired directly Eslea's interest in The Federal Hotels Limited and Roadswift Transport Pty Limited which is a partner in the Ipec Transport Group. These transactions involve no change in beneficial ownership.

We attach a summary of various Press reports over the years in relation to the Ipec Group. We set out hereunder an extract of a recent letter from a former Finance Editor which sets out his and his colleagues' views (on a confidential basis) of the Group over the years, which you may find helpful.

"Please find enclosed summary of media reports and developments in the Ipec Group operations between 1979 and 1984.

As you can appreciate, I had to do a deal of behind the scenes digging - not only for factual information but also to obtain the right feel and perception of this whole issue.

I was tempted on a couple of occasions to go interstate but eventually managed to achieve a worthwhile result through persistent telephoning of my contacts of the past few years.

I have spoken to several journalists and share brokers from Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide during the past fortnight for their thoughts and summary of events that led to Ipec seeking the urgent sale of major assets.

The complex nature of the Ipec accounts seems to have made a lot of people wary of the group over the years, especially the shuffling of funds between various subsidiaries and directors' companies.

There is no doubt that many of us were waiting for a more dramatic financial crisis to develop at Ipec and Federal Hotels than ever surfaced through stock exchanges or the media. It appears the sale of prized assets enabled the group to avoid any great public embarrassment on the financial side.

The sale of Ipec's two big divisions - the European and Skypak operations - is attributed primarily to the difficult liquidity position of the group.

Federal Hotels appeared to place a big burden on the Ipec group and is seen to have been one of major reasons for the sale of group assets. Federal's major expansion on the casino and hotel front was hit by construction costs that went way above budget and occupancy levels dropped dramatically. Ballooning interest costs incurred by



Federal were reflected in losses in that company's operations which in turn were reflected onto the heavy losses announced by Ipec.

Ipec tried desperately to sell off 50 p.c. of Federal and it is thought that success in this area might have been sufficient to stem the debt tide at Ipec. However, no buyer was found so Ipec had to look further afield - to the European and Skypak operations.

Gordon Barton made no secret of the fact that the European transport and Skypak operations were to be the jewels in the future of Ipec. He predicted profits of \$50m. from the European transport operations within a couple of years.

But those transport operations that were expected to generate profits of \$50m. in a relatively short period, were sold for only \$30m.

The apparent discount factor in that deal was seen by most analysts as exemplifying the urgency in the sale of Ipec assets.

The rapid overseas expansion and burst of casino/hotel expansion forced Ipec into high gearing and the parent showed great urgency in getting its balance sheet ratios to acceptable levels.

Most analysts say it was the dramatic rise in interest costs that finally broke Ipec's financial back and forced the group to sell off some of its best transport operations to raise cash to retire debt.

More recently, Federal Hotels cut its losses back from \$1m. to \$280,000 in the six months to September 30, 1983 but there were still signs of interest cost problems. That half-yearly report showed that Federal was not completely out of the woods as the company's interest charges leapt from \$1.8m. to \$3.6m.

With the balance date change, Federal is due to report in the next 10 days on operations in the June 30 period.

Tal Holdings Ltd., which took over Ipec, now balances on June 30 so will also need to report to stock exchanges by September 30 on its results which should cover nine months."

April 1978

Police issued summons against Ipec subsidiary, Direct Acceptance Corporation, asking why the company should not lose its lender's licence. The summons, which alleged mismanagement by the finance company and that DAC was charging excessive interest rates on loans, was withdrawn when DAC agreed to several conditions including the dismantling of its door-to-door operations.

March 27, 1979

Comments by SMH Financial Editor querying large number of transactions involving the private companies of Gordon Barton and Greg Farrell. Commentator mentions that method by which Peat Marwick Mitchell goes on to justify a valuation is "a little unusual, to say the least".

June 6, 1979

Media criticism that loans by Direct Acceptance Corp. to its Ipec parent group accounted for more than 50 p.c. of DAC's assets.

October 10, 1979

Ipec Transport Group buys British freight group, Sayers, for \$4.36m. (\$3.6m. and further \$760,000 following increase in Sayers' net worth). A London report gave the purchase price as \$7m.

October 16, 1979

Financial Review report that Ipec Transport buys Dutch-German Gelders/Spectra transport group for \$25m. to \$27m.

December, 1979

Comment in financial press that Ipec and Tjuringa companies shuffle money about to the extent that the public may never know of their success or failure.

Rod Maclure, Ipec's general manager at time, says "it is all too complicated sometimes even for the directors".

November, 1980

Losses of about \$18m. on Ipec's transport operations in Europe but group confident that break-even point can be attained early in 1981. Directors take "surprising" step of capitalising a major part of start-up losses of the European operations. This "highly unusual" move queried by auditors.

December, 1980

Ipec buys Skypak International for \$3m.-plus.

January, 1981

Borrowings by Ipec Holdings Ltd. from its 80 p.c.-owned DAC stood at \$23.66m. at July 31, 1980 but not possible to trace accurately which parts of the Ipec Group the funds went to. Gordon Barton questioned at annual meeting over money Ipec borrowed from DAC to buy Skypak and the European transport businesses. Mr. Barton tells shareholders that activities of Ipec had become very complex over the years and that consequently the accounts were also getting complicated. "Some of the companies in which I have shares are providing accounts too complex for me to understand", he told meeting.

January, 1981

The Australian Shareholders' Association questions Mr. Barton at the annual meeting on the capitalisation of \$13.5m. in establishment costs on Ipec's European transport operations. Mr. Barton said he accepted Peat Marwick qualification and told meeting problem was in valuation of goodwill. He told meeting

the European transport operations would reward Ipec shareholders within one or two years when substantial profits could be earned.

July, 1981

Capitalised losses from Ipec's European operations reach a peak of \$17.43m. Auditors take issue that they are unable to determine whether or not some or all of deferred expenditure and goodwill should be written off.

Annual Report of Direct Acceptance shows that loans made to Ipec parent again rose substantially in 1980-81. Loans by DAC to Ipec and other directors stood at \$31.25m. at March 31, 1981. That meant that out of total funds employed by DAC finance group, 45 p.c. were lent back to Ipec.

September, 1981

Financial Review reports that Ipec group facing heavy capital commitments on some of its casino and hotel developments and that group intends raising about \$20m. by developing and selling most of its real estate portfolio.

July, 1982

Ipec's preliminary report for 1981-82 reveals a \$2.45m. loss (including extraordinaries) after the company's interest bill shot up from \$7m. for the previous eight months to \$16m. in the 1981-82 financial year.

November, 1982

Age newspaper reveals that Gordon Barton has placed a one-third stake in casinos on the world market at a price of \$20m. This move described as another step in cashing of assets following a big lift in Ipec group's debt and interest bill. Noted that Federal Hotels guaranteed the obligations of its parent Ipec under a US dollar loan agreement which amounted to a \$13.5m. contingent liability at March 31, 1982.

January, 1983

Ipec faces stock exchange suspension for not lodging half yearly profit report. Report delayed while Ipec waited for results from overseas operations.

February, 1983

Ipec reports \$4.46m. loss for first half of 1982-83. Described by Financial Review as bitter blow for group which "labouring under heavy debt". Report of \$12m. capital profit from sale of an unidentified asset. Retrenchments in transport and casino divisions during six months. Federal Hotels operations hit by falling occupancy rates.

February, 1983

Gordon Barton confirms that Ipec advertised overseas to sell off 50 p.c. of Federal Hotels for \$17m. Media speculation that Ipec also intends to sell Skypak International to TNT. Media says Ipec's profitability problems have been exacerbated by the wholly-owned Federal Hotels subsidiary which is suffering from the hike in interest rates on its massive capital works program and low occupancy rates.

Mr. Barton says cost of casino investments held by Federal Hotels had grown to extent they were too big for a company of Ipec's size. "It's got too big for us - we want someone else to carry half the operation", he said. He said he did not expect Federal's profitability to improve for about two years.

Financial Review says Ipec Group under intense pressure with major asset sale in the offing which is primarily aimed at boosting the group's flagging liquidity. The Report says assets sale are in attempt to bolster Ipec's liquidity and hopefully retire some debt. Ipec Holdings Ltd. is carrying a "crippling amount of debt for a small company", says report.

Financial Review says Ipec's ill-timed and with hindsight poorly judged move into the hotel and casino industries is the prime cause of its problems. Report says Ipec clearly is overgeared with a gearing ratio of about 4-to-1 "which is unacceptable for an industrial company, hence the need for a major liquidity injection".

Mr Gordon Barton says: "We're in a position where we have to offload something because we're carrying too much debt so we certainly are going to sell something. Our preference is to sell half the hotel group". Sydney Morning Herald says at March 31, 1982, Ipec had total debts of almost \$150m. supported by shareholders' funds of \$40.66m., including minority interests.

April, 1983

Media reports that Ipec moving to sell its European transport operations. Sydney Morning Herald says sources close to Ipec group said the company's inability to sell other assets had compelled Ipec to negotiate the sale of European operations. Gordon Barton had recently described the European freight operations as the vehicle which would rescue the Ipec group from its high level of debt, the newspaper said.

"The Australian" says Ipec was haemorrhaging so severely from a blow-out in its interest bill that the earlier Skypak sale to TNT (for about \$20m. and a capital profit of \$12m.) was obviously not sufficient.

May, 1983

Gordon Barton sells most of his 51 p.c. stake in Ipec Holdings (the company he founded). The sale described as an "obscure deal" which came at a time when Ipec was being sharply reduced

in size in a bid to cut borrowings to secure the future of the Australian transport and hotel operations.

"The Age" said the need for Ipec to realise some of its larger assets became imperative last year as rising interest rates threatened to smother the group under a mountain of interest payments.

Financial Review says Ipec avoided for as long as possible the pressure to sell the newly-established European transport operations which Gordon Barton had earlier estimated would earn profits of more than \$50m. a year by the late 1980s.

July, 1983

Ipec confirms sale of Ipec Europe to TNT for about \$30m. Ipec directors said the funds from sale would be used to retire borrowing and fund trading losses in other areas of the group.

"Sydney Morning Herald" says the retirement of debt should improve Ipec's trading position which has recently been "bogged down in a morass of debt following horrific cost overruns on its hotel and casino developments in Darwin, Launceston and Alice Springs".

July, 1983

Amsterdam interview with Mr. Gordon Barton sees Barton conceding that sale of European operations was "pressed on him by the severe liquidity problems of Ipec Holdings Ltd. in Australia".

Adelaide stock exchange threatens to suspend trading in Ipec shares unless preliminary profit figures lodged by August 1.

Accounts of DAC reveal that amounts advanced to Ipec and companies controlled by Ipec directors came to 47 p.c. of net outstandings or \$40.6m. Accounts show that during 1982-83 DAC advanced a further \$10.52m. to Ipec.

August, 1983

Federal Hotels reports operating loss of \$2.03m. for 1982-83 and extraordinary losses of \$1.76m. The company's interest bill for the year was up from \$1.5m. to \$4.76m.

Ipec Holdings reports \$14.37m. loss for 1982-83 in contrast with previous year's \$2.79m. operating profit. Dividend omitted for first time in more than a decade. Main reason was crippling interest bill of \$25.84m. and the full year result showed a substantial worsening in Ipec's financial position in the second half. Financial Review said Ipec's had become overexposed in the casino sector and had been frustrated in its attempts to dispose of a part of its equity in these operations, resulting in the sale of key transport assets.

Adelaide stock exchange threatens to suspend trading in Ipec for failure to lodge its annual report.

Ipec defending Insurance suit which could potentially go into "hundreds of thousands of millions".

September, 1983

Mayne Nickless buys Greg Farrell's stake in Ipec Transport group for about \$20m.

Ipec accounts qualified by Peat Marwick.

October, 1983

Tal Holdings bids for Ipec Holdings.

November, 1983

Ipec directors recommend Tal offer.

January, 1984

Ipec Holdings reports first half loss of \$5.37m. TAL HOLDINGS LIMITED WHICH ACQUIRED IPEC HOLDINGS LTD (IN A MOVE WHICH I BELIEVE WAS TO ISOLATE THE CREDITORS OF IPEC HOLDINGS LTD FROM THE OTHER OPERATIONS IN THE GROUP), ADVISED THE SYDNEY STOCK EXCHANGE ON AUGUST 1 1984 AS FOLLOWS:-

"TAL HOLDINGS LIMITED ("TAL") ADVISED THAT (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW SMALL CLAIMS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY IN THE COURSE OF NEGOTIATION) ALL JUDGMENT DEBTS, OBTAINED AGAINST ITS SUBSIDIARY ESLEA HOLDINGS LIMITED (FORMERLY IPEC HOLDINGS LIMITED) IN THE COMMERCIAL CAUSES JURISDICTION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES, HAVE BEEN COMPROMISED BY WAY OF TAL PURCHASING AND TAKING AN ASSIGNMENT OF DEBTS. CURRENT APPEALS BY ESLEA TO THE NEW SOUTH WALES COURT OF APPEAL IN THESE MATTERS WILL BE DISCONTINUED.

THE JUDGMENTS WERE GIVEN IN FAVOUR OF VARIOUS REINSURERS AND AROSE FROM GUARANTEES GIVEN BY ESLEA IN RESPECT OF REINSURANCE BUSINESS WRITTEN ON THE LONDON REINSURANCE MARKET BY ESLEA'S FORMER SUBSIDIARY, SOUTHLANDS REINSURANCE LIMITED.

THE AMOUNT PAID BY TAL FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE DEBTS IS APPROXIMATELY \$6.5 MILLION. THE TOTAL OF THE PRESENT AND ESTIMATED CLAIMS UNDER THE JUDGMENTS IS APPROXIMATELY \$32.5 MILLION AND TAL THUS BECOMES THE CREDITOR OF ESLEA IN RESPECT OF THESE CLAIMS AND THEREBY THE LARGEST CREDITOR OF ESLEA.

THE JUDGMENT DEBTS SO ACQUIRED REPRESENT THE BULK OF THE CLAIMS AGAINST ESLEA ARISING FROM THE GUARANTEES GIVEN IN RESPECT OF SOUTHLANDS AND THE COMPROMISE EFFECTED BY TAL IS REGARDED BY THE DIRECTORS AS A VERY SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT OF THE CLAIMS.

ALSO IN THE COURSE OF RECONSTRUCTING THE AFFAIRS OF TAL AND ESLEA, TAL HAS ACQUIRED DIRECTLY ESLEA'S INTEREST IN THE FEDERAL HOTELS LIMITED AND ROADSWIFT TRANSPORT PTY LIMITED WHICH IS A PARTNER IN

THE IPEC TRANSPORT GROUP. THESE TRANSACTIONS INVOLVE NO CHANGE IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP."

THE QUESTIONS THAT ARISE FROM THIS ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

- (1) WHAT WAS THE VALUE WHICH THE DIRECTORS OF TAL AND ESLEA (FORMERLY IPEC HOLDINGS LTD) PUT ON THE ALICE SPRINGS AND DARWIN CASINO PROPERTIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF TAL ACQUIRING ESLEA'S INTEREST IN THE FEDERAL HOTELS LIMITED?
- (2) WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THE COMPROMISE ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY TAL PAID \$6.5 MILLION FOR THE JUDGMENT DEBTS AGAINST ESLEA OF \$32.5 MILLION? IS THERE TO BE A SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT?
- (3) WHAT WAS SAID BY THE DIRECTORS OF TAL (WHO ARE THE SAME AS THE DIRECTORS OF IPEC) TO THE \$32.5 MILLION JUDGMENT CREDITORS OF IPEC TO PERSUADE THOSE JUDGMENT CREDITORS TO SELL THEIR DEBTS FOR \$6.5 MILLION, ie 20 CENTS IN THE DOLLAR?
- (4) IS IT TRUE THAT THOSE JUDGMENT CREDITORS WERE TOLD BY MR WOLFE OR ANOTHER DIRECTOR OF IPEC THAT IPEC WAS INSOLVENT AND THEY WOULD GET NOTHING?
- (5) DID MR WOLFE OR ANOTHER DIRECTOR TELL THOSE CREDITORS OF IPEC EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT IPEC WOULD GO INTO LIQUIDATION OR SOME OTHER FORM OF INSOLVENCY ARRANGEMENT IF THEY PERSISTED WITH THEIR CLAIMS?
- (6) WHAT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE ESLEA (FORMERLY IPEC) MADE WITH TAL TO REPAY THE \$32.5 MILLION?
- (7) ARE THERE ANY OTHER REINSURANCE DEBTS DUE BY IPEC OR ESLEA AND IF SO, WHAT ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO PAY THOSE OTHER DEBTS?

Mr EVERINGHAM: This material can be referred to by all parties seeking details of the reasons why the government was motivated as it was. I was treating the questions of the deputy leader of the opposition seriously - even though one could not record anything like the number of questions he was rattling off and many are quite contradictory and seemingly irrelevant - until he blew himself and his whole case out of the water. He was bemoaning the Northern Territory government's actions in taking over the casinos and saying that it would destroy all credit for the Northern Territory in the rest of the country. He then went on: 'What if there is a corporate raid on Henry and Walker?' It is unbelievable: 'We do not want to invest in the Northern Territory; the whole of the rest of Australia regards us as having leprosy because of the sound, logical and sensible business decisions taken by this government but there is going to be a corporate raid on Henry and Walker because they got the casinos'. Explain that.

He is malicious, vicious, vindictive. Together with his leader, he is attempting to destroy the public credit of this Territory. That is the fact of the matter. There is absolutely no threat to the public confidence of the people of this country and this Territory. There is a great deal of investment moving forward into the Territory. I know that this government will be announcing many more schemes and projects in the next few months that will certainly benefit the people of this Territory. Why would a company with the international credibility of Kumagai Gumi - the third biggest contracting firm

in Japan, the company that the South Australian government has gone to bed with in Adelaide to help put together its casino project, the company that also is involved in the Townsville casino project - be taking an interest in the Northern Territory if it was scared of the credit of this government?

The fact is that this government enforced a contract with a certain company, namely Federal Hotels. Federal Hotels did not like that contract being enforced. That contract was to give Federal Hotels the right to run 2 casinos for 15 years provided that it ran them on certain terms. One of the terms was that it would retain financial credibility. Otherwise, clause 16.3 of the agreement said the Northern Territory government had the right to buy absolutely 100% of the shares of Federal Hotels in the Northern Territory. That is all that this government has done. Had we not signed the agreement to buy the real property with Federals, who signed willingly in April, then we could have proceeded to insist on the sale of the shares. If it had not agreed to the sale of the shares, then we could have moved forward to revoke its licences as being in breach of the agreement with us.

Mr Speaker, this is an enormous project and these people are nitpickers. They are pedlars. They are people who do not want to see anything happen for fear that it does them harm. It was said that I breached a commitment to stay in the Northern Territory parliament for another 4 years. I certainly admit readily that I agreed that I wanted to stay in the Northern Territory parliament, and I still would like to for another 4 years. But it is the breach of other commitments that has me moving out of this parliament: the breach by the Prime Minister of his commitment to build the railway and the discriminatory decision against the Northern Territory in respect of uranium mining. It is okay in South Australia but it is not all right in the Northern Territory. Of course, there is land rights.

What does the worthless carpet-bagger that we have in federal parliament at the moment do? Absolutely nothing! He is a mere mouthpiece; a lap dog of the federal government. He is not representing the Northern Territory or the people of the Northern Territory. He is coming up here to try to sell their policies to us and sell the federal government. Our one lone voice in the House Of Representatives does not ever speak for the Northern Territory. He tells us we are overfunded.

I will try to get to a few of the points that I would like to make. Aspinall is one of the leading figures in his company but the financial genius behind it is Sir James Goldsmith. I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition went to Atlantic City and London and pronounced himself satisfied with the operators but, after that radio interview that the whole Northern Territory spoke about when they heard the Leader of the Opposition backtrack so far, now says that they said to him that they had no interest in the development on the hospital site and the development at Alice Springs. What a load of rubbish. There is a stipulation in the operator's agreement. All these agreements will be tabled. A seminar will be held as soon as all the agreements are confirmed and in place. When I say confirmed and in place, I mean subject to the approval of the Foreign Investment Review Board. I understand that that approval should be forthcoming. There is absolutely no reason why it should not be. When you consider that Kumagai Gumi is something like 45% in the South Australian casino operation and a mere 14% in the Northern Territory operation, could anyone say how the Foreign Investment Review Board could find one scintilla of a reason not to approve the Northern Territory proposals? It has already apparently approved a proposal where Kumagai is 45% in Adelaide.

Mr Speaker, it seems likely that there will be 2 casinos operating. The need for additional casino space is already evidenced, given that the completion



of outstanding space within the existing casinos will be completed as part of the refurbishing program. Of course, it was conveniently forgotten by the opposition when it talked about forgoing some revenue from casino taxes that the new operators must find another \$3m to refurbish and outfit the gaming rooms and so on that, unfortunately, Federal Hotels never got around to even opening up or outfitting.

The attitude of the operators can be expressed through a clause in the agreement which says that, unless contracts for the development are signed within 5 years - that is, that the additional casino space is not available - then they have the right to terminate their licence to operate 2 casinos. What I am saying is that the 2 operators are committed to the operation of additional casino space, otherwise they will be paying the rent on it. That is a fact.

Mr Speaker, I do not apologise for what John Aspinall said. John Aspinall left London on 29 September. The final agreement was signed late on the evening of 29 September. It is very likely that John Aspinall had not been briefed on the details. There is absolutely no reason why John Aspinall should know where in the hell, if I can put it this way, Myilly Point is.

There has been no refusal to give information in relation to this matter at all. We are anxious to give the information. What concerns us is the slippery, twisting way that the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy handle the statements that are made. My colleague, the Treasurer, has illustrated that only too well tonight with the example that he gave of how the Leader of the Opposition twisted what had been said this very day. There will be a seminar and there will be a detailed statement to this Assembly. The documents will be tabled. But it is premature to table the documents before the final approval of the FIRB is obtained. I will be delighted to deal with those questions - most of them puerile, most of them irrelevant, all of them frivolous - that the deputy leader of the opposition read into Hansard tonight. It just shows the totally mischievous nature of the opposition that he rattled those questions out so fast that nobody could get them down except a shorthand writer. I had absolutely no chance to record them. He does not want the answers. He just wants to create uncertainty and doubt. Talk about political grandstanding. It is they who are trying to make the casinos an election issue. I reaffirm that this new project will go ahead. There is already a great deal of interest and there is already a quite certain demand.

It is the opposition that wants to cast doubts on this project which will create jobs for Territorians but Territorians know from the past 7 or 10 years where they can look to see jobs created. They know that it is not in the direction of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, with other members, I just add a few words on the departure of the Chief Minister from this Assembly. I would have to admit to some personal misgivings about his going but I know that what he is doing is the right thing for the Territory and for the future advancement of the Territory. I wish him well.

Mr Speaker, I think that it is imperative that something be said at this time to bring some balance into what is seen as a touchy subject: the direction that governments have taken in the advancement of Aboriginal people of this country in a number of areas. For too long the responsibility for law and order in Aboriginal communities has been shouldered by government and its normal arms of law enforcement: the police and the courts. I think it is a measure of the frustrations of both the police and the courts that the normal procedures for bringing Aboriginal wrongdoers to justice and punishment are not working. On

one hand, magistrates can see that the standard punishments of jail or fines do not provide a deterrent for the average Aboriginal and, consequently, where possible, refrain from using these measures. On the other hand, police find it so difficult to obtain convictions that they are tempted to turn a blind eye to Aboriginal wrongdoers.

When visiting Aboriginal communities, so often I have been confronted by worried Aboriginal people who demand that I or the government do something to control the violence brought about by the abuse of alcohol or by petrol sniffing. My only answer is that I cannot fix the problem and neither can the government. The burden of responsibility for fixing the problem rests with the real authorities in Aboriginal law. Our law does not work in this regard but there is an Aboriginal system that does and will work if the responsible people are prepared to shoulder what is their responsibility. Aboriginal people know that our punishments will not work. Many young Aboriginal lawbreakers enjoy their sojourn in imprisonment. It is a pity, but they do. Hefty fines are paid by the family and deprive the innocent of food and the necessities of life for a time. Time and again, the wrongdoer comes home and boasts to his peers of the good life at Berrimah or Alice Springs.

Traditional law and punishment is harsh. I do not call for a reinstatement of spearing or serious bodily harm for wrongdoers but there are other traditional remedies for the control of lawbreakers that will fit in with the general Australian system. But they require an effort and a responsibility on the part of the Aboriginal authority or the Aboriginal family where the authority lies. Personally, I believe law and order to be at the very foundation of Aboriginal advancement. It is clear that our systems are not working. We must insist that Aboriginal people shoulder the burden and do not continually put the responsibility on government and other agencies. Aboriginal communities who do perform should receive increased support while those that do not should suffer the consequences of less support.

Mr Speaker, only 20 years ago the majority of Aboriginal people living in communities scattered around the Territory were housed in humpies of iron or lesser materials. During the past 20 years the standard quality and quantity of housing in Aboriginal communities has improved beyond recognition of what it was when I first entered the Territory scene. Unfortunately, in many areas this improvement does not seem to have met with the acceptance of the Aboriginal people. Much of the housing of good quality built within the last 10 to 15 years is hardly fit for human occupation at this time. Much of the damage to housing is malicious and the responsibility of the occupiers. However, seldom is the Aboriginal occupier of a house taken to task for his misdeeds. I accept that, in many cases, the type of housing provided to Aboriginal families is not entirely suited to the needs of that family and is too often too fragile for the Aboriginal lifestyle. However, the demand for housing is great and the resources limited. Often the style of house, though unsuitable, is dictated by the occupier or the Aboriginal council in control, as is their right, but a right also carries a responsibility and too often the responsibility is not accepted.

Pressure is brought to bear on this government to provide services. We have heard a lot about this today - water, sewerage and power to people in all the remotest corners of the Territory. Basic services are considered a right by people who gather into communities of whatever size and the Territory government tries to provide basic services to all such communities within its borders. However, any service provided by government has a cost and the cost in remote areas is great. But I believe the expenditure is supported by the majority of fair-minded people in the Territory. Once again, however, the privilege of

services carries some responsibility to the user for payment and for care of those services.

On recent travellings around a number of Aboriginal communities throughout the Territory, I was very distressed to see the condition of services provided to householders. I had seen it in other places but had not realised how widespread it was. In a number of instances, sewer lines from homes were smashed and raw sewage flowed freely in and around houses. In one instance, young children were playing in the effluent. Water, in and around houses, flows freely from breaks or faulty fittings. Some homes are waterlogged from many months, perhaps years, of non-attention. In one community, power points were noticed pulled from the walls with live wiring hanging freely within the reach of young children.

Considerable achievements are attributed to this government's efforts to involve Aboriginal people more fully in the delivery of health services to their people. However, these achievements will be of little benefit if the standard of living of Aboriginal people is not improved. I am not saying that the government should continue to pour money into new and better housing and facilities but rather that it must convince the people in communities that they have a responsibility to maintain reasonable standards as facilities are provided.

Personally, I have reached a crossroads as regards the direction that education should be taking for Aboriginal people. Over many years, I have believed that Aboriginal youth should be encouraged to study and go on to bigger and better things. I have always believed that they would have to leave their communities, at least for a time, to study and obtain other opportunities and to gain experience. I thought that many would opt to stay in the wider world to reap the benefits of worthwhile employment. Mr Speaker, I have argued this point with many experienced people over the years. There is a broadly-held belief that Aboriginal people should not be encouraged to leave their communities for any purpose. However, it has been my point, and still is, that there is just no hope of providing worthwhile employment for the majority of young Aboriginal people in their communities. Not even at Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Wadeye, Maningrida or Nguiu can the majority of able-bodied people be employed adequately.

Just take Nguiu, for example, where more than anywhere else an attempt has been made to provide some form of industry, though small. The chances of adequately employing the population is not even remotely possible. With more than 500 persons under the age of 16 and at least 180 persons already unemployed, the situation can only get worse. Bathurst and Melville Islands combined have 400 registered unemployed. How can a community, in a remote area, unskilled, with few resources, costly services and a general disinclination to perform boring tasks, be expected to compete with the larger centres in the production field? What then are these people to do with an education? In time, some will take over the task performed by skilled white persons in service to the community but there is very limited potential there, Mr Speaker. Some industry may develop in the luxury-type markets - I guess tourism is one. A few can be employed in traditional arts and crafts, but what of the great majority - the 85% to 90% for whom there are no jobs? Of what good is our education system to them?

Aboriginal people are being encouraged to move out to their traditional lands. It seems to me that it is well that they do so, particularly if they are now living in a state of friction on someone else's land. However, the chances of employing young people in remote outstation areas is even less likely. The

delivery of an adequate education system is less possible. The time has come to stop pussy-footing around Aboriginal issues, and stop the mud-slinging, racist slogans which are directed at anyone who criticises. It is necessary to get an act together with the Aboriginal people that works. Unless Aboriginal authority plays its part and unless the Aboriginal family performs its duty to the young people in discipline and the shaping of character, no amount of public money and no amount of government support will right the ills in Aboriginal communities. Ills there are and do not let us slide around that. There are ills in Aboriginal communities. In many communities, Aboriginal people are not playing their part in development. Our efforts should be united and government funding and support given to genuine efforts by the people. It starts with discipline, law and order, and the rest will follow.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, in the adjournment debate this afternoon other members have inferred that it is almost 10 years since a number of members were first elected to the fully-elected Legislative Assembly. I have information supplied to me by the Deputy Clerk that, in fact, 19 people have passed through this Assembly and are no longer members of the Assembly. One, of course, the late Rupert Kentish, former member for Arnhem, is deceased. The others are living happily elsewhere in the Territory or other parts of Australia.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to take too much time. However, I think that, at this stage, after 10 years of the existence of the Legislative Assembly, it would pay to record those names for history if for no other reason. I list them in alphabetical order: Liz Andrew who represented the electorate of Sanderson; Milton Ballantine who represented the electorate of Nhulunbuy for a number of years; Jack Doolan who represented Victoria River; June D'Rozario, also from Sanderson; Jon Isaacs from Millner; the late Rupert Kentish from Arnhem; Bernard Francis Kilgariff from Alice Springs, who of course was the first Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and in 1975 became the first senator for the Northern Territory; Dawn Lawrie from Nightcliff; Goff Letts from Victoria River; Les MacFarlane from Elsey; George Eric Manuell from Alice Springs; Roderick Carson Oliver from Alice Springs; Pam O'Neil from Fannie Bay; Neville Perkins from MacDonnell; and Dave Pollock from MacDonnell. He was an interesting one, Mr Speaker. Most members would remember Dave Pollock as being totally and adamantly opposed to smoking. He would get up and walk out of any room if anyone started to smoke. He is now working for a tobacco firm in Victoria. He travels all around the country selling tobacco. He still does not smoke. He visits Alice Springs from time to time. Of course, Dave Pollock played a great and leading role in central Australian football over many years and was made a life member of the AFL several years back. Roger Ryan was a former member for Millner. Who could forget Roger Ryan? He used to goad the then member for Port Darwin, Ron Withnall, almost into hysteria so that Ron would be frothing at the mouth. If ever a bloke gave his seat away, it was Roger Ryan. Mr Speaker, you would remember the incident. The then ALP candidate for Ludmilla, Jon Isaacs, had saddled up and in fact was going to run against you in Ludmilla. But Roger Ryan stood up and said: 'Why don't you take me on - you know, I am here for the challenge'. Of course, history records that Jon Isaacs did just that and cleaned Roger Ryan up like a ton of bricks. Grant Tambling was a former member for Fannie Bay. Hyacinth Tungutalum was the first full-blood Aboriginal elected to any parliament in Australia, and Ron Withnall represented Port Darwin.

Mr Speaker, since 1974, 4 of the electorates have had 3 members. The electorate of Sanderson has had Liz Andrew, June D'Rozario and now Daryl Manzie. Fannie Bay has had Grant Tambling, Pam O'Neil and the honourable Treasurer. MacDonnell has had Dave Pollock, Neville Perkins and the present member, Neil

Bell. Millner has had Roger Ryan, Jon Isaacs and the present member, Terry Smith. Alice Springs has had 4 members. Of course, it is now called Sadadeen. As I said before, the first Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Bernie Kilgariff, was elected there, followed by Eric Manuell Rod Oliver and Denis Collins, who is the sitting member.

Mr Speaker, tonight I would also like to pay tribute to Paul Everingham but if I attempted to follow the words of the honourable Treasurer, I do not think I would do justice to Paul Everingham. However, there are some points that are interesting or rather amusing that I would like to record in Hansard. Of all the members in the Assembly, I guess that I am the one who has known Paul Everingham the longest because I was resident in Alice Springs when almost 20 years ago a young lawyer arrived there with an extremely attractive wife. I do not recollect that he had any children then. He checked into the Oasis Motel with the backside out of his trousers, as he tells people. Of course, he went on to set up a legal practice in Alice Springs and this meant that, for the first time in its history, Alice Springs had 2 lawyers. Before that, if you had wanted to sue anyone, you had to get the local lawyer first, otherwise you went to court undefended. The other legal firm that was in Alice Springs in those days was Barker and Martin and those men have both gone on to become Solicitor-Generals of the Northern Territory. In fact, the present Attorney-General worked for Barker and Martin several years later in Alice Springs.

Mr Speaker, I suppose the first disagreement that I had with Paul Everingham was in his early days in Alice Springs because he took up rugby. I reckon that anyone who takes up rugby rather than Australian rules must either come from Queensland or be strange. I believe that he was a foundation member of the Transport United club in Alice Springs and played with another man who went on to achieve Australian stardom. That was Bernie Keepers.

Paul Everingham was also a member of the first council in Alice Springs and he ran a campaign the like of which had never been seen there before and will probably never be seen again. The residents of Alice got up on the morning of the election campaign to find very attractive ladies on every polling booth in town with rosettes and straw boaters and 'Go, go, go Everingham' badges. It was interesting to note that a leading businessman in Alice Springs selected a team and Jock Nelson, who was a former member for Stuart and a former federal member, also stood as a mayoral candidate. I think that he spent about \$200 because he hired a horse and cart and put a sign on the back saying, 'Give Jock a Trot'. Jock cleaned up all of the businessmen in that team led by that other mayoral candidate with the exception of Paul Anthony Edward Everingham, who went on to become one of the first aldermen in the Alice Springs council.

Mr Speaker, the honourable Treasurer spoke of the negotiations for self-government that went on in Canberra and the lead-up to those negotiations. I can still remember one night. It was at about 1 am or 1.30 am. I was at the airport and I had dragged a photographer out there to get a photograph of Paul Everingham and Marshall Perron coming back from Canberra, 2 or 3 days before 1 July 1978. The intention was to get a photograph of them returning to the Territory carrying a briefcase with the financial agreement in it. Most members who know Paul Everingham will acknowledge that, if you get him offside and in a bad mood, he will take your head off. The plane pulled up and a hostess said that Paul Everingham was asleep so I went on board and shook him and explained why I wanted to get a photograph. He was not in a very good humour as he trotted across the tarmac but I still believe that the photograph of Marshall Perron and Paul Everingham carrying briefcases, and captioned 'Financial Agreement Signed - Politicians Bring Back the Booty', that appeared on the front

page of one of the newspapers down there was one of the best I have seen taken in central Australia in recent years.

Mr Speaker, Marshall Perron paid tribute to the work that Paul Everingham has done. I follow suit with a similar comment but I think it should also be noted that Paul has been very fortunate to have an extremely competent and efficient deputy in Marshall Perron who backed him right through those financial negotiations and the self-government agreement in 1978 and, in fact, until late last year or early this year when Marshall stood down as Deputy Chief Minister. Each complemented the other; Paul had that head-down-straight-through attitude - 'this is what we are going to do' - and Marshall had the ability to follow through and supply a lot of detail for the people who were standing back wondering exactly what it was all about and who had not followed Paul's first charge through.

I think one of the most distracting things for me was to talk to the Chief Minister on matters that I believed were of extreme importance to central Australia, only to become aware that, whilst Paul was talking to me, and obviously giving me full attention, at the same time he was dictating to 2 secretaries. I believe that probably he uses that as a ruse to keep us offguard and not let us know exactly what he is thinking. But he has that ability. It is indicative of the fact that he is a workaholic.

Mr Speaker, of course history will show that Paul Anthony Edward Everingham will become the second state or territory Attorney-General to go into federal politics. The first was from Victoria - Robert Gordon Menzies. I would like to take this opportunity tonight to wish Paul Everingham and his family all the best in the future. I am certain he is going to have a long and distinguished career in Canberra.

Mr Speaker, before I finish, I would like to pay tribute to a group of people from all over the Territory who visited central Australia during the weekend of 29 and 30 September. I refer to the Northern Territory Little Athletics Association and the clubs or centres, as they call themselves, that came from Darwin, Gove, Katherine and Tennant Creek to visit Alice Springs to compete with Alice Springs in the Northern Territory Little Athletics Championships. The competition was organised and hosted by the Alice Springs centre of the Little Athletics Association and provided an extremely enjoyable and successful weekend. I pay tribute to Alice Springs organisers and, indeed, the Territory organisers for the extremely efficient way in which the whole weekend was run.

Mr Speaker, at the conclusion of the weekend, a squad of 25 was chosen, of which ultimately 22 will be selected to represent the Northern Territory at the national championships in Melbourne in either late March or early April 1985. The Administrator of the Northern Territory, Commodore Johnston, who is the patron of the Northern Territory Little Athletics Association, remarked in his opening address at the competition that, of the competitors representing Australia at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles this year, 11, including Glenys Nunn, who won a gold medal, were former members of little athletics associations or clubs around Australia. One thing that stuck in my mind during the competition was an open invitation for the little kids of 6 years old and under to run in 2 events, a hurdles event and an ordinary flat race. These children were not competing officially; it was an invitation event. Some of them were so short they did not have to jump the hurdles; they could have run straight under them. If I had been giving the medallions out, I would have given one to each of the kids who competed - they looked so sincere and genuine in the way they ran.

I would like to pay tribute also to Richard Lim, one of the members of the Alice Springs Town Council, and officers of the town council for the work that they did in getting the ground ready for the competition and the results they achieved. I would also pay tribute to the patron of the Northern Territory Little Athletics Association, His Honour the Administrator Commodore Johnston, and Mrs Johnston. Mrs Johnston stayed one day as she had to return to Darwin on the Sunday but His Honour spent 2 days with the Little Athletics to present medallions with myself over that weekend. The only sad event of the weekend for the Administrator was that Hawthorn went down the gurgler on the Saturday and his second choice for the grand final, Port Adelaide, went down the second day.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to Reg Lowry who retired in Alice Springs as president of the Northern Territory Little Athletics Association. I am advised that Reg has been president of the NT association for 6 years and, prior to that, served the Darwin centre as its president for 4 years. Several years back he was offered the federal presidency but, because of the distance and the remoteness of the Northern Territory, he declined the offer. If one single person has done a tremendous amount to put Northern Territory Little Athletics Association on the map in the Northern Territory and, indeed, in interstate competition, it is Reg Lowry.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, it is very clear that the ALP opposition lacks staying power. At 11.30 in the evening not one of them is here in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say at the close of this sittings that Paul Everingham is a man who has won the respect of all Territorians - he has won the affection of the vast majority. For me, it has been a great experience over the last 4½ years to be associated with him and his government. I look forward, as I am sure every government member does, to our future association with Paul in the federal sphere, which will be to the benefit of the Territory.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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