

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Third Assembly

Parliamentary Record

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PART I

DEBATES

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Tuesday 18 November 1980

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: I lay on the Table my warrant nominating Mr R. Vale, Mr D.W. Collins and Ms J. D'Rozario to act as Deputy Chairman of Committees when requested to do so by the Chairman of Committees.

CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 28)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I rise to indicate that the opposition is in favour of this bill. We believe it is a sensible proposal in that it allows for the Childrens Courts in the Northern Territory to be held in the same building as other courts. However, this is provided that it is kept entirely separate from other courts.

As I have indicated, this is indeed a sensible proposal. For example, the amendments will enable the use of the number 4 court in the Alice Springs court building for Childrens Court proceedings. The design and location of this particular chamber within the main building are such that they will allow the Childrens Court to remain entirely separate from other courts in that building. Indeed, I understand that this arrangement is being carried out at this very moment and it is being carried out to the satisfaction of the legal agencies involved in the Childrens Courts. In particular, I understand that the Aboriginal Legal Service in Alice Springs has the view that the arrangements which are actually provided for in this legislation are sensible, practicable and will enable court proceedings to be carried out in a smooth way. The Alice Springs court has an entrance through which the participants in the Childrens Court are able to enter and leave without actually being exposed to any other business of the main building.

Having said that, I would like to take up an aspect in relation to juvenile offenders as it relates to the principal act in this case, which is the Child Welfare Act. I would like to dwell for a moment on the predicament of young offenders in the Territory because I feel that it is important that we ought to discuss that predicament in this Assembly. Honourable members would be aware that in Alice Springs we have an establishment known as Giles House which is rather unique in that it is the only establishment of its kind in the Northern Territory which is able to provide for the remand, training and assessment of juvenile offenders, particularly those offenders up to the age of 17 years. Under the Prisons Act, after 17 years of age, the young offenders are required to be transferred into the prisons. It is important to note that at Giles House there is a comprehensive program in respect of the education and training of each of the inmates. It is a program which usually occupies a great deal of a child's day. Indeed, under this program, individual progress is monitored and a child has a choice of a number of skills that he might want to pursue under this program. I believe that the actual advantages of involving these young offenders are obvious. They include the acquisition of useful skills, the maintenance of self-esteem and the profitable use of time.

I understand that the particular skills and education programs which are operating at Giles House compare favourably with those offered at other institutions around Australia. That actually came to light in a recent conference

which was held at the Institute of Criminology in Canberra. The statistics which came out of that conference indicated that the Giles House area of operations is unique and has a high standing compared with other institutions around Australia.

However, I am concerned that, unlike the facilities and services which are available at Giles House, there are inadequate facilities for the training and education of young offenders in the prisons of the Territory. I believe this is the crux of the problem. In Giles House, there are adequate and proper facilities to cope with the educational and the training requirements of young inmates. But when they reach the age of 17 and have to be transferred to prisons under the Prisons Act for the Territory, I believe they go to places where there are inadequate educational and training facilities. For example, at this very moment, there is a young female inmate in Giles House who was connected with the Huckitta murder case. She will be 17 shortly. This young person is undergoing education and training at Giles House to become a nursing aide. I understand she is doing very well and that the facilities provided there are obviously suited to her particular need. However, what worries me is that this young person, when she attains the age of 17, will be transferred perhaps to the Alice Springs Prison where there are inadequate facilities to cope with her particular needs. This would be a great shame and it could happen to other young people who, on attaining the age of 17, have to be transferred to prison and a situation where, really, there are no facilities to cope with their requirements.

I think it is a fairly important issue. I would ask the honourable minister responsible to look into it in a thorough fashion to see whether the upgrading of the educational and training facilities in the prisons could be carried out. In the long-term interests of young offenders who are committed to prisons, I think it would be appropriate if the government were able to actually provide for adequate and proper facilities for those young offenders who are in the prisons of the Northern Territory.

From consultation which I have had in the Alice Springs area with various people, I know that it is a shared concern which I express here today. Indeed, the crux of it then is that the government has a responsibility to provide for adequate and proper training and education facilities in the prisons of the Territory, particularly for that 17 to 21-year-old age group.

In the Alice Springs area, there is a proposal for the establishment of a community skills centre. The desire is to reach out to young people and to offer them considerable training, educational and recreational facilities such as are in existence at Giles House. In particular, these facilities and services would be offered to young people in the community who are not in conflict with the courts or who have not been referred but who are interested in participating in the centre which would be established next door to Giles House. One of the important principles of this particular centre would be to involve kids in these activities before they offend. That means, of course, that there would be a preventative aspect involved. The government ought to give more consideration to the proposal that institutions such as Giles House ought to be involved in the preventative aspects associated with juvenile offenders. It should not only be involved with juvenile offenders when they are referred from a court but it should be in a position whereby it can invite and involve other youngsters from the community who would like to participate in the activities that it has to offer. I believe that it is a worth-while proposal which should warrant the serious consideration of the government.

At the moment, only children who have already committed a crime or who have offended against our community have the opportunity to be involved in the

Giles House program. What I am saying is that there ought to be opportunities for those young people in the community who have not offended and have not come into conflict with the courts. Those particular people involved in the Giles House program and the skills centre which will be established next door ought to have the support which they deserve from the government. I know there have been discussions with officers of the government's respective departments and that there is some interest and encouragement at that level. However, it would be good if the government ensured that the necessary funds are provided in order to allow the staff at Giles House and others involved to carry out this particular program.

I believe that the other matter which requires the attention of the government is the situation of community service orders and the specific question of whether they might be applicable to young offenders. Honourable members would know that earlier we were debating the community-service-order system under the Conditional Release of Offenders Act and it would seem at this stage that there is not a specific arrangement for this system to apply to young offenders. I would think that it is the kind of system that ought to be considered in respect of juvenile offenders so that they might be involved in the kinds of programs for which the community service orders were designed; for example, working in projects in the community which would benefit the community, which would be meaningful to them and which would also be important to them as a part of their rehabilitation. I would ask the minister responsible for that particular area to take that on board and to have this particular question examined to see whether in fact the arrangements for community service orders could apply to young offenders in certain circumstances. I understand that magistrates in the Childrens Court have occasionally issued bonds, under the community-service-order conditions, for child offenders. That has worked well in those situations. I think the nub of the problem is that we ought to be looking closely at whether the community-service-order system could be fully utilised in respect of young offenders in our community as a plausible means by which we will be able to rehabilitate and help those young offenders to take their place again in our society.

As I have indicated, the opposition supports this particular bill and I would hope that the particular situations I have outlined would be taken on board by the government. Perhaps at a later date we might be able to have some indication from the honourable the Minister for Community Development as to whether the government would be interested in looking at these particular problems which I have raised.

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): I rise briefly to support the amendment to the Child Welfare Act. I believe that this amendment has the general support of the judiciary and the general community. I believe that the questions raised by the member for MacDonnell are under constant review by the Northern Territory government in its desire to provide facilities. In exceptional situations, other arrangements have to be made. The point is that, if we build an institution for juveniles, the main complaint will be that we will fill them. The community has the desire to restrict itself from building these institutions to avoid that particular problem.

This particular amendment will allow the Childrens Court to hold its proceedings in the same building as other courts. As mentioned by the honourable member for MacDonnell, there is a separate entrance in the Alice Springs Court. When the lower courts are constructed in Darwin, facilities will be made available to segregate the lower courts from the Childrens Court to allow the Childrens Court to function in a proper manner.

The amendment also provides advantages to those people living in remote

areas where courts facilities exist. I believe that unreasonable cost would be incurred if Childrens Courts were held in premises away from normal court buildings.

I would like to support what the honourable member for MacDonnell said regarding Giles House. Giles House in Alice Springs has a reputation for doing the job. I believe that interstate people who have visited the institution speak very highly of the training and guidance provided to juvenile offenders. Recently, the government acquired an additional piece of land in that area to provide the training facilities of which the honourable member spoke. The government is aware of the problem in the area and it is constantly updating its thoughts on that particular topic. It is a very difficult and contentious problem. I do not want to delve into the matter of the Huckitta children who are kept in that institution but I believe that we do have adequate facilities in our larger correctional services institutions. In some instances, offenders can be retained in the smaller welfare institutions until they are 17. As they move into adult status, the infrastructures provided by the Correctional Services Division are the proper places for them. I support the amendment.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I think we all agree that the problem of children in remand or in custody is a very difficult one. The honourable member for MacDonnell referred to Giles House and, as the former minister just pointed out, there is not an equivalent institution in Darwin. There are 2 thoughts on this matter. If you build such an institution, you inevitably fill it and that is a bad thing. On the other hand, there seems to be a need for a secure institution of that nature for children in Darwin and, frankly, one does not exist. I know that the government is aware of this problem and I understand that it is being considered. We will have an opportunity to discuss it further when a new child welfare bill is introduced into this Assembly next year. We know that the existing Child Welfare Act is very out of date. We know that work is proceeding on drafting a new one and we all look forward to seeing it in operation as soon as possible.

I support this particular amendment because I am aware of the problems that arise, particularly in Darwin, because the Childrens Court occasionally must be held in very strange places in order to comply with the act as it stands. There was a practice of holding the Childrens Court in the Civic Centre. Among other problems, it was said that this was a particularly public place. We would all agree with the requirement that the operation of the Childrens Court should be in secret. The operation of the Childrens Court in that building did not work terribly well. Childrens Courts have also been held in old buildings in the middle of the Darwin Hospital grounds. I think they are still being held there. I have been to those buildings and found them immensely depressing. They are surrounded by old demountable buildings which are dark, empty and generally not at all inviting. That is not the sort of environment in which we would want to see the Childrens Court operating. As soon as this amendment can come into force and as soon as the new Darwin Courthouse is completed, hopefully we will have a better environment for the conduct of the Childrens Court.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, like others who have spoken before me, I support the legislation. The Assembly has seen fit to engage in discussion on a variety of issues relating to this particular bill which, in itself, is fairly simple. Perhaps I might be permitted some small latitude to put forward a couple of points of view to the government and to the Chief Minister in particular.

As the honourable member for Fannie Bay said, we are waiting impatiently

for a new child welfare act. The government has seen fit to accord this a fairly high priority and that priority would have the support of all honourable members of the Assembly. Many of us have been made sadly aware of the problems caused by children acting in an anti-social manner in our community. I think members of parliament are particularly aware of the duties of all citizens towards the children of a community, not only for their own children but children as a specific group in our community who need extra support.

In the context of this bill, which will allow Childrens Courts to be held in the same building as other courts, it is worthy of mention that there has been not only a difference of opinion on the treatment of juvenile offenders and where they should be kept but also a difference of opinion on the style of the court which should deal with these young people. There is an emerging opinion - and I support this - which states that, far from becoming more informal and holding a group discussion, it would be of benefit to children coming before a court, particularly for the first time, to have a more formal structure so that they are made aware that they have been brought before a magistrate because they have been charged with an offence or anti-social behaviour and that society views this fairly seriously. Of course, it is up to the magistrate to decide the guilt or otherwise of the child on the evidence produced before the court.

I have been in Childrens Courts a couple of times by invitation of the magistrate and as a witness. I find that children have a very highly-developed sense of justice. Before the days of legal aid I witnessed the distress of children who were not legally represented. Welfare officers and others who sought to represent them, whilst acting with the highest motives, seemed to the children to be on the side of the parents or on the side of the police or anyone's side but theirs. Fortunately, this has not occurred to the same extent since legal aid has been available in Darwin. It is the practice of solicitors to attend the Childrens Court to ensure that no child is brought before the court unrepresented and that practice has my wholehearted support.

I think it is of the utmost importance, particularly for first offenders, that they realise that it is a judicial procedure. My understanding of the papers presented on the subject is that, if this is shown at this stage, the likelihood of recidivism is lessened. The Chief Minister will have a particular interest in the way Childrens Courts are conducted in the future. In other states, such as South Australia, juvenile aid panels have been introduced and these were seen as a panacea for all ills for some time. I have examined their operation in South Australia and I do not approve of them. I think that the children lose the sense of justice which is inherent in a court procedure. They are more inclined to manipulate the system as they see it. It will probably come under further discussion at a future time in this Assembly. The Childrens Court procedures defined as judicial procedures have my support and I think the formality of the courtroom is a good thing and not a bad thing. I support the bill.

Mr PERRON (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I would like to thank honourable members for their comments. Quite clearly, there is some interest in this subject and members will have opportunities in the near future to debate legislation on the subject generally which will allow for a great deal of debate on matters such as the member for Nightcliff touched on.

I must touch on 2 points raised by members. I think it might be useful if the member for MacDonnell, if he has not already done so, looked at the jail at Alice Springs, particularly the women's section that he expressed some concern about. I believe that it does have considerable facilities for the further education of inmates. Whilst it is certainly not the free and

open atmosphere that exists at Giles House - far from it - it is a prison and indeed there are facilities for the training and education of inmates. The staff there impress me as people genuinely interested in this field. Two members mentioned that, if you build an institution, you generally fill it. Well, it is interesting to note that the clientele at Giles House is dropping and the department has put it down largely to what it believes is the success of other programs that have been instituted throughout the community such as preventing the children from getting into trouble and also some counselling of parents before young people actually break the law. There are other ways which the community welfare system can go about looking after young people, not necessarily law-breakers, who are in trouble. Of course, Giles House does not only accept law-breakers; it also accepts children whose parents have had considerable difficulty in controlling them. However, I do have great regard for the staff at Giles House. I think it is a very well-run institution and a credit to the Northern Territory. I thank honourable members for their remarks.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 12)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill seeks to correct 2 anomalies which have obviously come to the attention of the Department of Law. From my reading of them, they seem to have effected that quite well. The bill seeks to give the Supreme Court the power to discharge absolutely, release conditionally or detain a person whom it finds unfit to plead. That is the situation now but only if a magistrate has found a person unfit to plead. Quite obviously, the Supreme Court must have that power in its own right.

It follows that the court must also have power to vary conditions imposed when releasing a person from custody or to absolutely discharge that person. Therefore, those 2 anomalies will be patched up by this piece of legislation and, to that extent, it has the support of the opposition.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr EVERINGHAM: I move amendment 2.1.

The purpose of this amendment is to correct a procedural omission which was not seen at the time of the drafting of the bill. Honourable members will have already noticed this omission. The Criminal Law Consolidation Bill seeks to add proposed new subsection (6A) to section 382A and this amendment seeks to ensure that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court as outlined in subsection (7) of that section 382A also extends to the proposed new subsection (6A).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 24)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, this bill attempts to do 2 things both of which we heartily commend. First, there is an attempt to clarify who exactly has responsibility for electrical safety in mines. With the boom in the sector of our economy relating to mining, we now have a number of acts which control or in some way regulate mining and the activities connected therewith. We have in the Territory the Mines Regulation Act and the Mines Safety Control Act and neither of these makes it very clear as to who would be responsible for electrical safety. The electrical safety at the moment seems to reside with the Electricity Commission under its own act. The honourable minister has attempted to clarify the responsibility. I think this is a very important issue because nobody accepts the responsibility and it is very difficult to undertake the necessary inspections of mines and so on.

As mining activity grows, we should tighten up safety measures in relation to mining and construction. We certainly do not quarrel with that particular objective.

The second aim of this bill is to remove the conflict with the Acts Interpretation Act as to the initiation of bylaws. Again, we have in the Territory in relation to a number of acts a situation where the bylaw-making power is unclear. Many members have spoken about the frustration with achieving the intentions of our acts simply because the necessary bylaws were not to hand or were incorrectly initiated. We have a large number of acts, including the Northern Territory Electricity Commission Act, in which we had difficulty with bylaws. I suppose that the act which most members would know about where we have been frustrated in achieving our aims for the want of bylaws is the Local Government Act. The minister has attempted to clear up the situation with respect to promulgation of bylaws and that, too, we commend.

The minor amendments which are related to drafting are consistent with various other amendments that we are putting through to obtain a uniform drafting style in our legislation and we do not quarrel with that. I understand from the second-reading speech of the minister that there were to be some amendments but we do not have any of these before us at the moment. Perhaps we could just wait until the minister informs us what they are. The opposition supports this bill.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): I thank the honourable member for her comments. This legislation will define responsibilities so that there are no vacuums in the matter of inspectorial safety throughout the Territory. It will also prevent the overlapping and the confusion that often come from such a problem.

The honourable member has asked whether there are any amendments. There is one amendment and I will just touch on it briefly for the honourable member's benefit. I am sorry it is not circulated. It changes the wording in section 5 from 'Mining Ordinance' to 'Mines Safety Control Act'. It is just a mechanical amendment.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 4.1.

This substitutes the words 'Mines Safety Control Act' for 'Mining Ordinance'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6 and 7 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 27)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, it appears that we are moving through amendments by pairs because this particular piece of legislation also seeks to do 2 major things to the Public Service Act. Most importantly, the first is to establish a Department of the Legislative Assembly. I believe, as does the Chief Minister, that the Department of the Legislative Assembly ought to be seen as an independent department. It is quite appropriate that it be established under a departmental structure and that the ministerial head of the department be you, Sir, the Speaker. That is certainly the position in the federal parliament of Australia.

The opposition supports the creation of this independent department. From our dealings with the officers of the current Legislative Assembly, we know that they will fiercely guard the independence of the new department. I am sure that it will carry out its functions in an appropriate manner.

The other part of the legislation deals with provisional promotions and is a sensible provision to ensure that, where people have been provisionally promoted to a position and the department in which that position exists is either abolished or has its name changed or the functions in which that position exists are removed to another department, then the provisional promotion stands notwithstanding those changes. As I say, it is a perfectly sensible and practical way of dealing with what could become a pretty tiresome and knotty kind of bureaucratic juggling.

The only other matter which the bill deals with is of a mechanical nature. The bill has the support of the opposition.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

UNIVERSITY (INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS) BILL
(Serial 13)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, the opposition is certainly not opposed to the establishment of a university in the Northern Territory. However, we do believe there is a much more appropriate way of going about it than that being adopted at the moment by the government. I propose to move an amendment to the motion. I move that all words after 'that' be omitted and the following words be substituted: 'the bill be withdrawn and a select committee be appointed to inquire into the establishment of a university for the Northern Territory'.

This amendment will in no way affect the current operation of the planning unit as there is absolutely no need, as the government knows full well, to set up that kind of operation under an act of parliament; it can be done simply by administrative arrangement in the same way that the Aboriginal Liaison Unit operates. I stress that we are not seeking to defeat the bill; the government knows full well there are other ways of doing that. We are simply seeking to have the bill withdrawn.

There are many questions that cannot be answered at this stage about the university and there are certainly many questions that have to be asked. We have made little comment on the university to date because any comments we make at this stage will be based on speculation only because the planning unit under the guidance of Dr Eedle will not be submitting its recommendations to the government until next month. Hopefully, the minister will see fit to table those recommendations in the Assembly at the first sittings after that date. The debate on this bill is an appropriate time to raise some of the problems and some of the questions relating to the establishment of a university. I will make some general comments on that.

Although a university would be a priority for a Labor government in the Northern Territory, the need to establish such a university by 1982 needs to be questioned. To the best of my knowledge, there have been 3 firm statements by the Chief Minister - and, so far as I am aware, none by the Minister for Education - on the establishment of this university. The Chief Minister indicated that the university will probably be based on the Alaskan model, that it will possibly incorporate a school for Aboriginal studies and that it will be operational by 1982. I would like to make some comments on those statements and also touch on some of the comments that the honourable Minister for Education made in his second-reading speech. For example, he said: 'The university will be appropriate to the needs of the Territory and it will be an institution of quality'.

What are the needs of the Territory, Mr Speaker? So far as graduate employees are concerned, we need graduates in the field of agriculture, veterinary science, medicine, dentistry, engineering, particularly connected with mining, and the social sciences. Given a population of a little in excess of 100,000, only a fool would attempt to justify the expense of establishing faculties in most of these areas. I think that would be nonsense. We can only assume, and this is speculation on my part, that the planning will be looking towards satisfying the needs of Territory students rather than the needs of the Territory itself. The majority of students seeking tertiary education in the Territory do so in the general and conventional areas of arts and sciences. I would assume that the university will be looking towards

Grammar. The inference in his statement was that they could be sent away to obtain a better education at Geelong Grammar for less money than it was costing to obtain one at Dhupuma College. The problems of going outside the Territory for university students, which the minister agonised about during this second-reading speech on this bill, did not seem to be problems when applied to Aboriginal students. Quite frankly, I agree with the minister. I think that Aboriginal students would broaden their educational horizons and would be better off obtaining some of their education outside the Northern Territory. I believe that I have some philosophical support in this from the Planning Vice-Chancellor of the university when he was Director of Education.

The analogy which caused the honourable minister to renege on this undertaking - as he has done with so many of his undertakings - and close down a vital institution in the area of Aboriginal education is appropriate in respect of the provision of a university for the Northern Territory. There is no doubt at all that it would be cheaper to provide the current number of students requiring a university education in the Territory with scholarships to universities all around Australia. ANU in fact did precisely that for the first 5 years of its life. I will be very interested to measure the reasons the minister puts forward in response to that proposition against the reasons given for his closure of Dhupuma College on the ground of cost.

Let us have another look at one of the numerous undertakings on which he has reneged: the provision of matriculation courses at Sadadeen High School. Honourable members will remember that the minister made a statement in this Assembly that a full range of courses would be provided at Sadadeen up to and including matriculation courses. We know that that undertaking was subsequently broken and I do not disagree with the minister's reasons for doing so. There were a small number of students in Alice Springs requiring matriculation and it made much more sense to rationalise those courses and provide them at one school whilst providing link courses at Sadadeen High School to the Central Australian Community College. It was done on the ground of cost. I would be interested in hearing the minister's justification for establishing a university - and universities are notorious for their high cost and their high cost of maintenance - as against his reasons for removing the matriculation courses at Sadadeen and his closure of Dhupuma College on the ground of cost.

Let us have a look at the deficiencies in the area of post-primary education for Aboriginal schoolchildren generally in the Northern Territory and the problems of high school education for isolated children in the Northern Territory. This problem has been raised again and again in this Assembly by yourself, Mr Speaker, by the member for Victoria River and by myself. Let us look at the downgrading of trade courses at the Darwin Community College. Mr Speaker, what do we need in the Territory? We need tradesmen and we need young people to work more effectively in the agricultural and pastoral areas of the Northern Territory. I am not talking about university graduates in agriculture; we have numerous universities in Australia which are churning out graduates in agricultural science and agronomy and they cannot obtain jobs. So far as the Territory is concerned, the current downgrading of the research areas of the Primary Industry Division would certainly mean that they would not obtain a job in the Northern Territory because the agronomists we are losing now are not being replaced.

If we were being catered for adequately in all these areas of basic education in the Northern Territory and if the minimum population which is considered to make a university viable, a population of half a million people, were being approached in the Northern Territory, then perhaps this proposition to establish a university at this time could be considered viable. However, there are numerous deficiencies in our education system at the moment and the question

must be raised of whether we can obtain more value for our money by spending it elsewhere.

If the university will be difficult to justify on economic grounds, what about philosophical grounds? This, of course, opens up a very interesting debate. Let us take one example which satisfies both the requirements of a great many students in the Northern Territory and also a basic Territory need: the provision of schoolteachers. If we had a university in the Northern Territory, it would be possible for people in the Northern Territory to go to pre-school in the Northern Territory, primary school in the Northern Territory, high school in the Northern Territory, obtain their BA and Dip Ed in the Northern Territory and then carry out their academic life in the Northern Territory. There are some educators who might support this concept but there are many who would oppose a cradle-to-the-grave education system in the Northern Territory.

I believe that one of the most prominent professional educators in the Northern Territory who opposes this kind of concept is the current Planning Vice-Chancellor of the university, Dr Eedle. Honourable members will recall a much publicised and important address which the Planning Vice-Chancellor gave in London when he was Director of Education. You may remember, Mr Speaker, that this speech was given some considerable publicity by the honourable member for Nightcliff. Dr Eedle proposed that he would establish a residential institution in Adelaide so that secondary school students in the Northern Territory would be able to obtain some of their education outside of the Northern Territory and to find out, as Dr Eedle put it, 'how the other 80% of Australia lived'. I would imagine that the advantages of the intellectual stimulus and divergence of approach to problems in the Territory of students obtaining their tertiary education from a diverse number of institutions around Australia and then returning to apply that knowledge in the Territory would be obvious to everyone. I will be very interested indeed to see with what degree of success the current Planning Vice-Chancellor of the university will manage to subjugate his well-known international views on this subject to the needs of his new job.

The facts are that the combination of the schemes available for students obtaining tertiary education outside the Territory and the necessary extra funding and expansion of the academic facilities available at the Darwin Community College would provide all the requirements for the provision of diploma and degree courses in the Territory for the foreseeable future at far less cost than would be involved in the establishment of a university. Financial cuts are being imposed in the schools programs at the moment to the dismay of a great many people in the Northern Territory. These are causing great difficulties in schools and the minister is well aware of this. Cuts are being made in trade courses at the Darwin Community College in the very areas where the demand for those tradesman is exceeding the supply. I will be commenting on that particular problem in a later debate in this Assembly.

I would imagine that the Territory would benefit greatly from the establishment of a proper rural education college - not mucking around with the concept, as the government is currently doing, but planning a proper college and having a close look at revamping the whole apprenticeship system in the Northern Territory so that we can include rural apprenticeships with block releases to such a college. We should put people actually on the land to learn how to raise cattle and grow crops in the Northern Territory. The one thing that we do not need in the Northern Territory at the moment is more graduates in agriculture; we need more practitioners of agriculture in the Northern Territory. We should be considering upgrading the facilities for providing

Mr Collins: That is not true either.

Mr EVERINGHAM: There is no doubt that the Northern Territory could have advertised throughout the world for 6 or 12 months and still not obtained a person with the experience and local knowledge of Dr Eedle as a Planning Vice-Chancellor. I believe the appointment to have been an excellent one and one that saved us many months in getting on with what was one of our principal pledges.

There were 2 things that I was particularly carrying after the election. One was pushing the railway construction and the other was the university. They were our most important pledges and, certainly, I was carrying the university in consultation with my colleague, the Minister for Education. However, as we saw it, we had been given the mandate to get on with this and we will get on with it. We will not be diverted by the ploy of the opposition to have a select committee when the best committee of all, the people of the Northern Territory, have already decided that we will have this university. We will have it, Mr Speaker.

I will not descend to the level of the pettifogging arguments of the honourable member for Arnhem who said that we should improve circumstances right throughout education in the Northern Territory. No one would deny that all areas of education can continually be said to be capable of improvement as practically every area of government and private administration in this world can be said to be capable of improvement. But I might just try to correct a few of the obvious misstatements. I am informed by my colleague, the Minister for Education, that children in rural areas are now able to go to a hostel in Katherine which the government acquired from the Baptist Church.

On the subject of children from the Northern Territory going to boarding schools down south, there are many parents who will adopt no other practice. Indeed, I think you yourself, Mr Speaker, being an old boy of a Sydney school, have sent your sons to a school in Sydney. I must admit that I have feelings along those lines myself. Why it is, I do not know. There is nothing logical about it; it is just that I went there and I would like my sons to go there as well. Maybe it is because we were well thrashed at that school. It is the same story in Queensland. Children are sent to board where there are facilities available. Queensland children are sent to New South Wales and New South Wales children are sent to colleges in Melbourne and Geelong. It will go on even if there are high schools at the very doorsteps. It is the choice of the parents and the parents often have to make a big financial sacrifice to do this. They believe it is worth while to send their children to these schools and they are entitled to do so if they want to.

Another point that occurred to me whilst the honourable member was speaking was his contention that there were no similarities between the situation in the Northern Territory and that prevailing in Alaska. I might say that the government has not yet taken any decision as to whether the Northern Territory university will be along the lines of an Alaskan model or not but I think that it is fair to say that the University of Alaska was established with 6 students and 6 staff. Admittedly, that was in the 1920s but I happened to go to the David Ben Gurion University in Israel a couple of weeks ago. It was established with 50 students in the middle of the Negev Desert about 10 years ago. Therefore, I do not think that the number of students who attend the founding of the university is a particularly relevant criterion because universities tend to grow. The James Cook University in Townsville was founded when I was leaving school and it has grown into a thriving institution.

The honourable member for Arnhem said that it would be better for the people of undergraduate age to have their university education down south rather than the younger children being sent to boarding schools. He said that it would be far better that someone of 13 years of age be kept in the Territory rather than someone of 18 years of age who would be more able to be sent south. All I can say is that one of the prime concerns of this government is to keep as many young people of whatever age in the Northern Territory and it will be a continual concern. But I might say that young people, on the conclusion of their university courses, are much more mobile than young children sent away to secondary school. It is much more unlikely that these young people who have been to university will return to the Territory upon the conclusion of their university course. What we have found in any event, Mr Speaker - and I am sure that you have noticed it from your own personal experience - is that, when parents are faced with this breakup in a family, they quite often decide to leave the Territory - the whole family, not just the child.

I simply reiterate that the establishment of the university is a government priority endorsed by the people of the Northern Territory. The Planning Vice-Chancellor is acting in the nature of a catalyst of all the ideas that are being put to him from areas such as the community college, from the other university vice-chancellors of Australia and from Professor Walker from whom we have already sought reports on the structure of the university. There has been absolutely no case made out for a select committee into the establishment of a Northern Territory university. The people have already answered that question and this motion is nothing more than humbug.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): I rise to support the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Arnhem. In doing so, I would like to make a few things clear because it is obvious that the Chief Minister was not listening to the honourable member. The Chief Minister's speech was really extraordinary in that it did not address a single question or issue raised by the honourable member for Arnhem. Before we go any further, I would like to say that the honourable member for Arnhem is mortally wounded by the implication of the Chief Minister that he should have read a speech that had been written for him by any person no matter how good a verbalist he may be. I assure the honourable Chief Minister that the honourable member for Arnhem was speaking in his own words and not giving a speech written by some disgruntled academic. In fact, I would say that the honourable member for Arnhem does not associate with academics at all.

Obviously, what we are looking for here is some explanation to the Northern Territory community as to what is to be the nature of this proposed institution and, more particularly, how it is to be funded. The Chief Minister says that he included this in his platform in the last Assembly election campaign and that, since his government was returned, this must mean that the Northern Territory community is happy with the idea. We know that the Northern Territory electorate is notoriously oblivious of the costs of these promises. People do not seem to concern themselves much with what these things cost and nowhere in any of the press statements that have been made by the Chief Minister or the Minister for Education, and certainly not in the second-reading speech delivered here today by the Chief Minister, have we had any indication of what this institution will cost the Northern Territory community. We cannot run every argument on cost; I will be the first to admit that. There are certain facilities which cannot be provided because of our remoteness while there are other facilities of which we can avail ourselves even though they may be remote from the Northern Territory. This proposal clearly comes into the latter category.

What the honourable member for Arnhem is asking in his amendment is that a select committee of this Assembly be appointed to examine the establishment of a Northern Territory university. Although the terms of reference of this proposed committee have not been given, I imagine that it would examine the progression from secondary education to tertiary education and also the cost and the feasibility of establishing another tertiary educational institution in the Northern Territory. As I said, the members of the Labor Party in the Assembly do not run every argument on cost. Clearly, some items are very costly but they must be provided. Such things are harbours, power-stations and so on. Nobody suggests that we should not have a power-station here because it is too costly. However, we do suggest the economics of tertiary institutions, particularly their construction and their continuing maintenance, is now so important an issue - and one that has received no attention at all from any government member - that this should be a primary responsibility of a select committee appointed by this Assembly.

A few months ago, the Prime Minister visited Darwin to open the new Casuarina Hospital. That is an institution which we must have in the Northern Territory. We must have hospital care on our doorstep. We cannot expect that even minor ailments should be treated down south. A few remarks were made at that particular function about the cost of this institution. Although we have not been provided with any cost figures and I am not aware of any study that has been made into the cost of establishing a university, we could speculate that the cost of establishing such an institution would be at least as high as the cost of establishing Casuarina Hospital at present day prices. I think that cost was somewhere in the vicinity of \$100m. By the time we reach the stage of actually seeing something on the ground for this particular institution, we will find that the cost will have well exceeded that, particularly since it is proposed to establish this institution at Palmerston, an area that will require extensive services connected to it. I think that this Assembly should have in front of it the cost of this institution before it makes a decision on whether or not the same services offered by that institution could not be more economically offered elsewhere.

This is the main reason for the honourable member's amendment. We certainly are not saying that the parliamentary Labor Party is against the notion of a university. What we are saying is that the proposal, being so large in its capital requirements, ought to be thoroughly investigated before we commit ourselves to it.

The honourable member for Arnhem spoke at some length upon the question of the Northern Territory government's performance in other areas of education. The Chief Minister said that he saw great differences between providing secondary education in the Northern Territory - thus attempting to forestall the removal of secondary students to southern secondary institutions - and the institution that we are currently looking at. I think the indisputable fact is that you cannot look at tertiary education in isolation. You must look at where you get your students from. Clearly, the majority of these people are coming up through the secondary school system. It is just not good enough to say that the 2 things are unrelated because, unless you have a sound secondary education system, the tertiary system is bound to fail. Apart from that, we raised an argument on need.

The honourable member for Arnhem already mentioned that the proportion of the population which avails itself of university education is very small indeed. It has been hovering around the 1% mark since 1970. Recently, we noticed from the university census which was undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that this proportion has increased only very marginally. I think

it is currently 1.15%. It is a very small percentage of the population that we are proposing to isolate hundreds of millions of dollars for.

It is certainly not as if those who wish to obtain a university education in the Northern Territory from the Northern Territory cannot do so. Quite generous provisions are made for Territory students to avail themselves of a university education. All university institutions make places available for Territory students. As with other students, these are of course based on the performance in the matriculation examination. Nevertheless, some students who have not achieved the prescribed tertiary entrance score in the Territory matriculation examination have been given places at Australian universities. We also have the provision whereby those students who wish to attend university are able to get 3 air fares paid per year between their Northern Territory home and the institution which they attend. Finally, there is a means-tested, living-away-from-home allowance which is also paid to Territory students who wish to study at universities interstate. Therefore, it is not as if Territory students are deprived of a university education. Any student at all who can meet the entry requirements in his chosen course is given a place, given air fares and, depending upon the means of his household, he is also paid a living-away allowance. I think that those are fairly generous provisions for that small sector of the population which wishes to avail itself of a higher education.

Further to that, we do have at the moment a tertiary institution in the Northern Territory: the community college. Over a period of time, the community college has obtained accreditation for some of its degree courses so, certainly, students who wish to take those courses, although they are limited in type and in discipline, are able to avail themselves of what is on offer at the Darwin Community College. I do not think that this is a mean achievement by any means by the Darwin Community College. When one considers that it was established only in 1974 and has since obtained national accreditation for its BA degree in business studies and its Bachelor of Education degree, I think that the community college shows every prospect of being able to have more courses accredited as time goes on.

Mr Speaker, the opposition reinforces the concept of a community college. As I mentioned, universities cater for a very small proportion of the population. On the other hand, we have in the Northern Territory a community college that offers extensive courses in the recreational areas, in extension services, in continuing education, for degrees and for trade and technical qualifications. All these things are offered by the community college thereby catering to a wide cross-section of the population. I would say that a matter that this select committee could well address itself to is whether or not the present community college could form the nucleus of a proposed university.

Mr Speaker, I have spoken a bit about the capital costs and I admit without any hesitation that any estimate of capital cost, without knowing what are to be the design limitations of the institution, is purely speculative. The honourable member for Arnhem has postulated that, perhaps because arts and science are the courses which are most subscribed to by Territory students at interstate institutions, these would be the faculties that would be the first cabs off the rank in the proposed Northern Territory university. But even if you have 2 faculties, you would still need to undertake considerable public works for such an institution, particularly in view of the fact that the minister is thinking in terms of residential colleges and so on. Even a small institution on the same scale as the James Cook University or the Griffith University in Queensland would cost something in the region of what the Casuarina Hospital has recently cost us.

We are seeking to provide a railway between Tarcoola and Darwin. I would say that the project costs that are to be expended on the production of this institution would be much better spent in continuing to campaign for the railway. Once we have this magnificent institution, we will then have to spend large amounts of money on keeping it going. The Chief Minister would know quite well, because I think he does hob-nob with academics, that there has indeed been a disturbing trend in funding to tertiary institutions.

We have a statutory body known as the Australian Universities Commission. That commission has been remarkably silent about this proposal to establish a university in the Northern Territory. However, that is the selfsame organisation which funds Australian universities. I understand this is done on a triennial basis. So far, nothing has been said about how this institution is to be funded, let alone any discussion by the Australian Universities Commission. We know that the Australian Universities Commission has been making its views quite well and vigorously known among other institutions. I will indicate some of the trends that are emerging. Firstly, triennial cutbacks have occurred in the last 2 periods of funding. These cutbacks have led to reductions in staff despite the fact that Australian university enrolments rose by 1.5% but staff numbers were cut by 0.5%. Clearly, the money just simply is not there.

Further to that, some universities have been forced to amalgamate their courses. Where there were previously 2 universities in the same centre which were offering similar courses, these courses are being discontinued with the object of consolidating the courses. Rather than continuing this wide choice of courses which have all sorts of delicate nuances in emphasis, universities have been told that these courses, particularly in fields such as public administration, must amalgamate and that there are just too few students subscribing to the courses to sustain the number of courses that are being offered.

Another factor that has emerged is the cutback in funds for external studies by some of the universities. Last year, some of my constituents who tried to avail themselves of external studies from other universities approached me concerning the proposed cutbacks in the services offered by the Departments of External Studies at the Universities of Queensland and of Armidale. The universities are simply saying that they cannot sustain the same level of service.

We have heard nothing very much about costs. The Territory people know nothing about what this institution will cost them. However, I can say that no person who is qualified to undertake a university course is denied a place. Of course, Territory students, like all other students, are required to give alternative choices. This is simply because, as a result of cutbacks, universities are limiting the number of places that are available, particularly in what they call 'high-cost courses'. What are the high-cost courses? The high-cost courses, and this term is used as an index to give some indication on the cost for a full-time student in these faculties, cover such fields as medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, agricultural science and architecture. All universities class these courses as high-cost courses and they must restrict the student numbers. These are also areas in which the Territory is deficient; these are the areas in which we must recruit graduates from down south.

The Chief Minister says that one of the reasons why secondary education is different from tertiary education in respect of sending students down south is that secondary students are less mobile and that tertiary students will not return to the Territory. I put it to the Chief Minister that, if a student wished to participate in a course in veterinary science, medicine, dentistry,

architecture or agricultural science, he would still have to go down south because there is no possibility that these courses will be provided by a Territory university. They are far too expensive. It costs 4 times as much to service a student in any of those faculties than it does to service a student in arts, science, law or economics.

The Chief Minister also said that the intention of his government is to keep as many young people here as possible. We applaud that motive but will the establishment of a Territory university achieve that? I suggest to him that it will not. If students are going to participate in arts and science courses which are to be offered by the Territory university, they will not find jobs, and that is the only thing that will keep our young people here: the promise and the expectation of a job. There are any number of arts and science graduates unemployed in the southern states and I see no reason why we should expect that graduates of the Territory university will somehow miraculously find themselves in a job. I suggest to the Chief Minister that what we ought to be doing is to train people in those areas where we are currently deficient: the trades and technical areas. As I mentioned before, in the professional areas of veterinary science and so on, we will always have to recruit from down south and we will always have to send our Territory students to southern universities because I can assure honourable members that there is no chance at all that these courses can be economically provided up here. My contention is that the select committee ought to examine the question of the areas of education in which we are deficient. Those appear to me to be the trades and technical areas.

It is a sad thing that, whilst we are talking about this elitist institution, the government at the same time is cutting back on the trade and technical training that the Darwin Community College is presently offering. I have constituents who are in the advanced stages of the welding course. As the honourable member for Arnhem mentioned, this is a highly-specialised skill which is in short supply. Ever since jobs became available in the Jabiru district, welders have been in tremendous demand. But, at the same time, the Darwin Community College is proposing to terminate its welding course. Nobody denies that the community college should determine its own fate but the sad thing about this situation is that those students who are in the advanced stages of the course have had no arrangements made for them to complete the course. There is no phasing-out period; there is no decision to not accept new students but still allow present students to complete their courses. There is none of this - just a complete termination without any arrangements being made for the future of these people.

Mr Speaker, the reason advanced of course is cost - the very argument that I am expanding on here at length. So we cannot afford to train welders although we have such a shortage of them and such a great demand for their services but apparently we can afford to train armies of graduates in arts and science. It is a completely ridiculous situation. The honourable member for Arnhem canvassed a number of areas which the opposition feels should be boosted before it could think of having a Territory university. I believe that is an area which the select committee would address itself to.

The Minister for Education apparently did not understand the difference between the member's motion of amendment and that for the defeat of the bill. It amazes me because he is the Leader of the House. If he had wanted to defeat this bill, I am sure the member for Arnhem, knowing full well the Standing Orders, would have moved that the bill be read this day 6 months. All we are asking for is that this proposal come under parliamentary scrutiny, not just with respect to the setting up of an interim senate - let us use the

grandiose phrase since we are talking about a grandiose institution - but so that, before a university is established in 1982, the cost implications are explained to the people of the Northern Territory.

I think the Chief Minister is being uncharacteristically simple if he says that, because his government was returned, the Territory population is in favour of a university. His party ran on a multitude of issues and I challenge the Chief Minister to tell me what proportion of the vote was due entirely to his proposal to establish a university.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I address myself to the motion as moved by the honourable member for Arnhem. It is quite clear that the Chief Minister - for reasons probably known only to himself - one day in his life decided that Darwin would have a university in 1982 and made the announcement. He is now bent on ensuring that there will be a university opening in 1982. But I think one must remember what the Minister for Education said when he introduced his University (Interim Arrangements) Bill: 'This bill is designed to create the necessary administrative machinery whereby government decisions can be taken and arranged in important areas on the basis of proper planning and research and after adequate consultation with the community and with all responsible bodies including those of the Commonwealth'.

I would like to address my remarks in the present debate, which is for a select committee, to the admirable desire of the Minister for Education for community input into this idea which came from the Chief Minister and not from the Minister for Education. However, given the context of the Chief Minister's remarks, it seems that any community input which does not come from members of the Country Liberal Party is suspect and not to be entertained. That is an unworthy thought and an unworthy suspicion. I am not a member of the Australian Labor Party and neither am I a member of the Country Liberal Party or any other political party. Nor do I see myself so becoming in the near future. But I have had many people approach me who are very worried about the proposal to introduce a university at such short notice and at such prime cost. Members of the public who are not politically motivated - and, personally, I do not find anything wrong with political motivation - people who operate in the rather skilled area of education, students and graduates from various fields have all expressed their concern. I am expressing my concern that the Chief Minister seems to think that the breadth of opposition to his proposals is some kind of political plot. Well, it is not. If the Minister for Education is true to his words in his second-reading speech, he might find himself somewhat disagreeably surprised by the amount of community input he receives regarding the establishment of a university in 1982 in the Northern Territory.

At the last sittings of the Legislative Assembly, I rose and criticised members of the opposition for an attitude which they had taken but, in this instance, I think that the proposal being put forward by the member for Arnhem is entirely proper and I base that feeling on the points made known to me very forcibly by members of the community of the Northern Territory. The cost at the moment, as the member for Sanderson said, is incalculable and yet the Chief Minister put forward a simplistic theory when he said that the people voted for it. Mr Speaker, that is entirely too simplistic. People of the Northern Territory voted on a wide range of issues and broad party policies. Like the member for Sanderson, I would defy the Chief Minister to explain to the members of this Assembly what proportion of the votes were cast in favour of the university. He may be interested to know that some of the people who have approached me voicing their concern in this matter are members of the Country Liberal Party. They might pay for their membership and attend party meetings but that does not bind them morally and financially to support every

utterance of the Chief Minister. It certainly is a one-person party at the moment.

I rise to indicate my support for the proposal of the honourable member for Arnhem and my suspicions as to the worthiness of the project proceeding at this time. I do so in the full knowledge that, as the Chief Minister has decided it will go ahead, he will not care how many people voice reasonable opinions. If they are in conflict with his own, they will have no value. That is a great pity. The parliament of the Northern Territory does not consist of the Country Liberal Party alone. It consists of a variety of people, all of whom, in taking the oath of office, swore to work for the good order and peace of the people of the Northern Territory. In this debate, I see a prime example of the way in which the present executive government is destined to work: 'We have decreed it is good and therefore it is good. You will vote for it and you will enjoy it'. Well, Mr Speaker, I believe a significant proportion of the people of the Northern Territory are not inclined either to vote for or enjoy this particular proposal. I think that, in his heart, the Minister for Education realises as much when he at least pays lip-service to community involvement and community input. Like other members, I have not yet heard any reply to the statements made by the member for Arnhem regarding the relative cost of the establishment of this university at this time and the other pressing needs of the people of the Northern Territory in education matters.

Before we have tertiary education, we must have primary and secondary education. Primary education in the Northern Territory, by and large, does pretty well. The primary schools in the Northern Territory are a credit to the Territory, the educational authorities and, so be it, to the government of the day. The secondary educational facilities wax and wane like the moon, Mr Speaker. In Darwin, we have several high schools all of which perform in a reasonable manner. We also have high schools in Alice Springs but the isolated members of the Northern Territory community are not serviced so well.

The Chief Minister spoke about the desire of parents to send their children to the colleges of their choice - Geelong Grammar, Wesley, Scots etc. I know the Melbourne ones better than any others. Of course, that is a fact of life. Some parents will always take that option. For some people living in isolated communities, it is not an option but rather the only course they have to follow. That is the point the Chief Minister either lost or refused to recognise.

In the debate preceding the assumption of a degree of self-government for the Northern Territory, I spoke of my concern at the ability of the Northern Territory to service people living in isolated areas in the fields of education and health services. What glib assurances were given to me, Mr Speaker! 'Of course, we have made special arrangements and of course that will be okay'. I am still waiting to see the fruits of those special arrangements because they are demonstrably not okay. I believe that other speakers and myself will canvass these issues in a later debate. The point at issue at present - the spending of the Northern Territory taxpayer's dollar to the best advantage - would seem to indicate that people would not be best served at the moment or in 1982 by the establishment of a very expensive tertiary education facility.

The honourable member for Sanderson spoke of the capital costs of the establishment and she touched on the running costs. Any member of this Assembly who has not made inquiries about and been apprised of the running costs of universities is a fool or naive. I cannot imagine that the people of the Northern Territory can adequately cater for a tertiary facility of any

standing in the eyes of the rest of the Australian community and still adequately cater for secondary facilities which, at the moment, are falling into disrepair and are causing concern to many parents in the Northern Territory.

The honourable member for Arnhem alluded to my rather scathing remark when I brought to the attention of the Assembly the present Planning Vice-Chancellor's remarks on the desirability of moving Territory students interstate. In his reply, the Chief Minister said that the member for Arnhem was 'casting aspersions on his character' or words to that effect. I did not hear any aspersions cast. I do not think anyone doubts the credibility or the articulate fervour with which the Planning Vice-Chancellor approaches his position but there are those of us with a memory and with the ability to read who know his past statements and who find it somewhat incongruous that, given his deep feelings on the matter, he is now in charge of perpetuating a system which, a few months ago, he stated he disliked and which he felt was not in the best interests of students. Perhaps the Minister for Education in his reply will be able to give us some understanding of how circumstances have changed so that it is now not only desirable but apparently necessary in the interests of all the people in the Northern Territory and not elsewhere despite the fact that the taxpayer's dollar is finite and that we are obliged to use that dollar to the best advantage of all the people of the Northern Territory and not a select few.

Following the debate on this amendment of the honourable member for Arnhem, I shall bring forward a few statements regarding the bill presented. But I do put to the Minister for Education what I know to be a fact: the opposition to the establishment of the university in this undetermined form at this time is not politically motivated and does not come from some radical group in the community; it comes from a large number of people who have studied the proposals and the press releases and who have the gravest reservations about the viability of the whole project.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, we have heard 2 arguments in support of the university from members opposite. Might I say that the Country Liberal Party so endorses the concept of a university that not one member opposite has decided to speak in support of it, not one. That shows the great mandate and feeling of support that the Country Liberal Party has for the university. We have had 2 arguments in support of the university and neither of them is an educational argument. The first is the folksy philosophy of the Chief Minister that we want to keep our kids here from the cradle to the grave even though he is considering sending his kids elsewhere. Nonetheless, he believes that we ought to keep our kids here right throughout their education.

The second argument is simply that the government said in February or March this year that it wished to have a university established by 1982. There was an election in June and the people supported the Country Liberal Party so therefore we will have a university by 1982. At no stage, Mr Speaker, has there been an educational argument from members opposite as to why we should have a university. There have been very rational and cogent arguments put by the members for Arnhem and Sanderson relating to the educational priorities in the Northern Territory and our cost priorities. None of those arguments has been addressed by the members opposite except for some snide remarks from his seat by the Minister for Education. Even the Treasurer, who has to fork out the money, does not believe that he has to answer the argument put forward by the member for Sanderson.

The people are asking about the need for the university and how many

people will be using it. The member for Sanderson said that, nationally, a little over 1% of the community uses a university. Will that apply here? Do we have any figures here? No. We want to know what courses will be provided by the university but, apart from little comments such as, 'It will be attuned to the Territory's needs', we have heard nothing specific from the government on the nature of the courses or how much the university will cost. We do not know how much land will be taken up in the new area of Palmerston. We do not know how much it will cost to establish the buildings, to service the land and to provide the other infrastructure that goes with a university. We do not know what will happen to the Darwin Community College and the whole concept of community colleges in the Northern Territory, a unique concept in Australia. We do not know what will happen. Judging from the way the government's press releases run, it may be that that concept will be destroyed. We do not know; we have not been told by the government.

Those are the sorts of questions which a select committee of this parliament would be able to answer. Apart from it being a bright idea to have a university and a silly idea to have it by 1982, the committee could determine whether or not the people of the Northern Territory require it and what direction they want it to take. I would have thought that that kind of parliamentary scrutiny would be considered to be an excellent idea, an idea that would have been supported by members on both sides. It is not a political proposition; I believe it is a proposition that would encourage discussion within the community about what sort of university we would like. That is why the amendment from the member for Arnhem is a most proper suggestion: we should appoint a select committee, and obviously it would have a majority of government members on it, to inquire into the sorts of unanswered questions which we have heard about today. By passing the bill right now, we will accept that there will be an interim university. It will not have any parliamentary scrutiny but will be run by the unit which has been established by the government to do so. There will be no guidelines from this parliament and yet we will be establishing the prime centre of learning and research in the Northern Territory. I believe there are many unanswered questions and that is why we want a select committee to inquire into those very matters.

I would simply ask the Minister for Education to state the educational arguments for establishing a university by 1982 in the light of the factors which the member for Arnhem spoke about: the sorts of priorities which we do want for our kids and why a university and its attendant costs ought to be jumping ahead of the priorities for kids who are receiving their primary and secondary education at the moment and for kids in isolated areas. At no stage, not even in his second-reading speech, did the minister attempt to justify the university on educational grounds. He simply said that it will happen in 1982.

All the members of the Australian Labor Party believe that a university is an appropriate institution for the Northern Territory. We are not criticising the establishment of a university. However, what this government wants to do is to establish it by 1982 and without any kind of scrutiny by this parliament. We will not be told how much it will cost nor what sort of courses will be involved. That is an impossible situation for anybody to be voting on what will certainly turn out to be a massive allocation of funds. As the member for Sanderson said, we would be prepared to pay the costs if we knew that, in the line-up of priorities, the university came out ahead. It has been pointed out that we have a college which is catering for the sorts of courses which would be taught by this university. It is not as though there will be any new courses unless the minister can tell us otherwise.

I believe that it would be helpful if the government could attend to the matter of examining the priorities of education in the Northern Territory and

where a university fits into those priorities, not just in its own mind but in the minds of the people of the Northern Territory. I am quite sure that very few people indeed will want to use a university. Certainly, the community college has widespread appeal because it goes beyond a university, but here we are establishing a university. It would be interesting to know just how many people will want to use it.

I come back to the amendment moved by the member for Arnhem. We would like to see proper scrutiny and proper consideration given to the establishment of a university. We do not want to be hamstrung with preconceived ideas as each of the inquiries into this matter has been so far. The Chief Minister mentioned Mr Walker. Well he did not come up here to inquire into whether or not we should have a university; he was told we will have one by 1982. That is an absurdity and yet we are being faced with exactly the same sort of fait accompli here in this parliament. A select committee would allow this parliament to play its proper role; that is, to look at the need for a university, what courses it would have, the cost and what would happen to the other tertiary institutions that we have at the moment. We would then be able to come to a much better appraisal of what the needs of a university in the Northern Territory were.

Mr ROBERTSON (Minister for Education): Mr Speaker, if I take a little bit of time getting going it is because I am somewhat confused as to what I should be speaking to. If one were to assume that the opposition had failed to read the legislation when it was debating the establishment of the university, then in light of what has been said one would only be able to reach one conclusion and that is that the opposition is totally opposed to the establishment of a university in the Northern Territory.

Mr B. Collins: Your words, not ours.

Mr ROBERTSON: No, we will get to that in a moment and see if we can establish what the attitude of the Australian Labor Party is to a university in the Northern Territory. Indeed, as usual, the right wing of the Labor Party does not know what the left wing is doing. We will get to that as well in a moment. It would seem to me that no one opposition member - particularly the Leader of the Opposition who spoke about lack of scrutiny, about decisions that have already been made and about faits accomplis - has read the bill before us. Let us look at what the bill does and I will deal with both this bill before us and the amendment and then try to tie the two together as to motivation and attitude.

The bill itself quite clearly establishes an interim planning authority with an interim senate with certain powers. Let us look at it. We have definitions. 'Authority' means a 'university planning authority'. 'Interim senate' means the 'university interim senate'. 'Planning Vice-Chancellor' has a meaning. Then we go on to expand the functions of the interim senate. This is interesting stuff, Mr Speaker. It is a shame our wise friends opposite are either illiterate or lazy. They clearly have not read it. It sets out in part IV the meetings, procedures and functions of the interim senate, the powers of the interim senate, the establishment of the authority, the composition of the authority and the appointment of a Planning Vice-Chancellor. This is not legislation to set up a university; it is a piece of legislation designed to set up a body which is empowered on behalf of this parliament and the people of the Northern Territory to inquire into and virtually report back to the Assembly when a university bill comes before us at the proper time.

Mr Speaker, let us look at the functions of the authority. Those functions are to formulate plans for the development of the university in the Territory

and to prepare estimates of the number of students likely to attend the university - the very things the opposition quite reasonably requires. Of course, it wants to do it by a band of amateurs with, no doubt, the honourable member for Arnhem playing a golden gleaming light on this select committee. With his great lack of rapport with academics - great admission - he is going to inquire into a university. We are told by his very wise colleague that he does not talk to academics. What an incredibly foolish thing for the honourable member for Sanderson to say. Yet he is the bloke who we are to assume will be a leading light in this all-wise select committee. For heaven's sake, Mr Speaker, this is a game for experts to report back to us on so that we can debate it at the proper time when we have established the university.

'Estimates of students of the university and the courses for which they are likely to enrol': that is the very sort of information that the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe - he probably would be the other member of the opposition's functionaries on the select committee - the committee would be in a better position to advise on than a planning senate comprised of academics and leading authorities in this area from around Australia drawn together by this government to properly do the job. The opposition said, 'Oh, we are concerned to do it correctly'. It expects the people of the Northern Territory to believe this ploy. What utter nonsense. It is something that it dreamt up this morning in the absence of anything better to do. The very wording of the amendment indicates that complete lack of thought - the knee-jerk reaction which has caused this debate. We will look at that presently.

Great reasons were pointed out to us by the Leader of the Opposition and wise probing questions were presented to us by the Shadow Minister for Education - I guess someone has to be the Shadow Minister for Education because they are all shadow ministers, such are their numbers - as to why we should not go ahead with this planning bill at this stage. Of course, they were all half-truths or completely lacking in truth. We heard twisted and out-of-context quotations and attempts to denigrate a man. I am surprised that the honourable member for Nightcliff took such a kindly view of the type of approach used by the honourable member for Arnhem in this particular exercise. Let us look at what this man usually does; a very good example of the type of thing this Assembly has come to expect from him. What we are told is that Dr Eedle has a philosophical objection to the university on the ground that he stated that students of Northern Territory institutions should go south to see how the other 85% live. The member pointed out that this was stated in a paper delivered to the Royal Society for the Arts in London in April 1979. The man has grave difficulties with fact. For a start, he told us that Dr Eedle delivered it as head of the Department of Education of the Northern Territory. Wrong again, Mr Speaker. He said it was in a paper delivered to the Royal Society. Wrong again, Mr Speaker.

Mr B. Collins: I have the paper.

Mr ROBERTSON: So have I. In fact, it was stated in answer to a question, Mr Speaker.

We are told that this is a philosophical objection. Of course, in the classic member for Arnhem style, it is taken out of context. He forgot to tell us that, in the paper itself, Dr Eedle lamented what he called the 'marked brain drain' of competent young Territorians to southern cities. If he has the particular paper and if he can count that far, I suggest he look at page 295. He will find the reference there. This remark was in answer to a question in an academic forum. It was not contained in a paper. The person who asked the question, and this is very significant, was Professor O'Connell

who happened to be on the panel of assessment for the Bachelor of Education program. This was the sort of thing that academics do backwards and forwards in forum sessions.

Mr B. Collins: Well, you would know all about that.

Mr ROBERTSON: Of course I do. It happens to be so patently clear yet the honourable member deliberately twisted it in his attempt to yet again knock a proposal put forward by this government and accepted by the people. It is one of many proposals such as pensioner concessions, motor-cycle registration rebates and water rebates. The 2 principal issues we went to the people on were that we would assist the Northern Territory in obtaining a railway, which we have succeeded in doing, and that we would continue to push for a university and establish one by 1982. We will get on to the funding if we have time. Of course, we have had this red herring dragged across the trail constantly this afternoon about where the money will come from. We all know how the Tertiary Education Commission works and we all know there is a distinction between technical and further education, and college of advanced education or university funding. The opposition knows that. However, in order to scare people and confuse and cloud issues, the opposition absolutely and flatly denies it. We are told by the opposition that, as a matter of priority, the Labor Party would build a university. That is exactly what the honourable member said. He started his speech with the words, 'As a priority of the Labor Party' and finished it off with the words, 'As a priority of the Labor Party'.

What do we have by way of an amendment? Do they ask that the bill stand adjourned and the matter referred to a select committee of this parliament to report back with proposed amendments to the legislation? That is what one would expect given its claim that it is not trying to defeat the legislation. The amendment is that the bill should be withdrawn. Either the opposition is stupid or the matter was concocted this morning and was ill-considered. The plain fact is, if we withdraw the legislation, it will drop off the Notice Paper and be defeated.

Mr B. Collins: We are talking about the university, not the bill. Why don't you listen?

Mr ROBERTSON: Yes, exactly, and what he was saying in respect to the university was that the Australian Labor Party opposes it. The honourable member for Arnhem is not alone in this particular exercise. Indeed, I dare say he has been talking to his erstwhile, knows-it-all-about-education colleague the honourable Senator Ted Robertson who spends most of his time in Canberra - I am sorry, he is not honourable.

Mr B. Collins: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr B. Collins: Mr Speaker, I object to the withdrawal of the word 'honourable' in connection with Senator Robertson. I realise that perhaps he is doing it strictly in a parliamentary sense but the inference, although clever and cute, was clear. I object to it and I ask the honourable minister to withdraw it?

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, of course I do. However, chickens who will insist on putting their heads on chopping blocks should expect worse than headaches.

Mr Speaker, let us look at what Senator Robertson ...

Mrs LAWRIE: A point of order, Mr Speaker! In the interests of the Hansard reporting, I believe that the minister said: 'Of course, he is not honourable' and I would ask, Mr Speaker, that you request the honourable member to withdraw the inference that the gentleman is not an honourable person?

Mr SPEAKER: After the honourable member for Arnhem made his statement requesting withdrawal, the minister said: 'Of course I do'. I took that to mean that of course he did withdraw the statement and I am quite satisfied that there is no point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, might I say that, without any hesitation, I would not cast any aspersion on the good senator except in a political context and except in the context of his supporting these people opposite in their attempts to torpedo this proposal.

Let us look at what the good senator said on this subject on 28 August 1980 in the Senate. In reference to the university, he used the words: 'an unnecessary and certainly unwarranted monument'. This is even better: 'Such a university must be second rate because it would be able to attract only second-rate brains either of the students or teachers despite what our Planning Vice-Chancellor has to say'. What a shocking insult to every student in the Northern Territory who would contemplate not only going to this university but to any other university anywhere in the country. Second-rate brains, according to the Labor Party, are what we get in the Northern Territory. I think there is an element of second-rate brains in this place this afternoon and they are all over there.

What were some of the other magnificent reasons why we should not have a university? 'The government has told the Darwin Community College that it has to withdraw welding courses'.

Mr B. Collins: That was not said.

Mr ROBERTSON: It was. I wrote the words down. It was corrected to some extent by the honourable member for Sanderson who indicated that the community college may determine its own future. Once again, like everything else the member for Arnhem said this morning, it is untrue. I checked it this morning. It is a shame that the opposition never checks anything. The Darwin Community College has not cut back and will not cut back the welding program. According to the latest information obtained from the principal this morning, not only will the certificate course run at the 1980 level, it is hoped to improve upon that level. As was indicated earlier by the honourable member for Nightcliff, there are finite limits to the funds. She is furiously nodding and I hope she is not like the chook which has just laid its head on the chopping block.

Having dealt with what Senator Ted Robertson and obviously the member for Arnhem, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Sanderson think of the idea of having a university in the Northern Territory, I must indicate what a shame it is that they do not communicate with one another. I assume there are left and right wing problems. Their view is clearly not shared by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who was reported in the Australian on 23 July 1980: 'Mr Neville Perkins, Deputy Leader of the Territory's Opposition and member for Alice Springs' - I bet he told them that; he cannot even get that right - 'said that, while he strongly supported a university for the Northern Territory, he thought it would be more appropriately based in Alice Springs'. I love his parochial sense. The quotation continues: 'We need to offer tertiary education in the Territory to stop the annual exodus of students to other states'.

Let us have a look at the position in relation to the comments made here

today about student numbers. It was quite accurately pointed out that in Australia about 1% of the population goes to university and approximately 1% goes to colleges of advanced education. The fact is that about half of 1% of the Northern Territory's young people are in attendance at universities in southern states right now. Six hundred is the estimate and I understand that this is accurate. It is very interesting when you start to analyse why that happens. We have the lowest number in the 17 to 22 age group in Australia. Why is it that, when we have the youngest population in this country by a long way ...

Mr B. Collins: You tell us, Jim.

Mr ROBERTSON: I certainly intend to. I wonder if it might have something to do with the fact that we do not have a university. I wonder if it might not have something to do with the fact that, by the time the students reach university age, their parents are questioning the wisdom of continuing on here. There is little doubt that there can be few other answers to the question.

Mr B. Collins: You are out of touch.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I do not mind interjections but I will not stand any more running commentary. I hope that makes the matter clear to the whole Assembly.

Mr ROBERTSON: I will try to repeat the point with a little more clarity. We have the youngest population in the country and yet, in a critical university age group, we have the lowest. What we do have is equivalent to the national average of students doing college of advanced education subjects. It is interesting that 1% of our population is made up of people who are doing CAE functions in the south and courses available at the Dariwn Community College.

The honourable member for Arnhem, all-wise and all-knowing, told us this morning that all you have to do if you want a BA and Diploma of Education is to go to the community college and enrol. We heard another speaker from the Labor Party say a Bachelor of Arts course was offered at the college. Once again, this is tragically but predictably wrong. The fact is that the matter has been before an accreditation committee for 18 months and we are hopeful of a breakthrough. To suggest that it is available now is quite wrong; it does not exist.

Where else do we find support for what the government is doing? We find it in the executive of the Darwin Community College Staff Association. I will read into Hansard what they have to say: 'We support the Northern Territory government's initiative which will be of immense benefit to Territorians and will improve the life and the culture of the Northern Territory. We also believe that the proposed name will be applauded by Territorians'. The latter is a matter on which I have mixed feelings.

We have seen every possible tactic used to defeat and to pour cold water on the government's proposal to establish a university in the Northern Territory. We have been told about massive recurrent costs in running universities. There are massive recurrent costs in running universities. They are expensive but we also know that they come from having separate studies. Certainly, we would not propose to the universities around Australia that the funds for our university would come from that pool. It is a matter of ongoing negotiations with the Commonwealth. I believe our planning authority and ministers can deal with that far better than a select committee. In fact, a select committee

of this Assembly would be seen as dilly-dallying tactics.

Mr Speaker, the recurrent costs for a university in the Northern Territory by 1982 are estimated to be in the order of \$5.5m increasing to \$7.5m by 1985. These are our preliminary figures. The capital cost is expected to be about \$13.5m between 1983 and 1988. It may be of interest to honourable members to know how terribly expensive universities are if they are run on a modest scale and without the numbers we are talking about - 1,000 to 2,000 students. The James Cook University's recurrent expenditure each year is about \$13m. The Darwin Community College's recurrent expenditure is \$9.2m. That gives you some idea of the proportional relationship between the two.

Mr Speaker, I think I have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Assembly that the opposition's ploy is none other than to get people like the member for Arnhem on the select committee and then for him to attempt to torpedo, to the best of his ability, this program which has the very clear mandate of the Northern Territory people. I indicate that the government will not be supporting the amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I am extremely offended by the allusions of both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Education that I cast, in any way, personal aspersions upon the Planning Vice-Chancellor. I merely criticised the government for the manner of his appointment. I have a good relationship with that gentleman, Sir, which I value. I made it clear after I made that statement that what I was saying was in no way a personal reflection on that gentleman.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, I ask the minister if he will explain, in dealing with clause 3 which relates to the establishment of the interim senate, why we have a senate established under clause 3 consisting of the Vice-Chancellor and not less than 5 other people yet later on we have an authority established which consists of 1 person who is that same Vice-Chancellor. This would seem to give undue power to 1 person. Would the minister explain why the senate was not constituted as the authority instead of 1 person?

Mr ROBERTSON: The authority for the purposes of the bill would be a person identical to the chief executive officer of a statutory authority or department. He is the accountable officer who merely affixes a seal on the instructions of the senate and may hold property and so on in a very similar manner to the chief executive officer of a department. His functions would not impinge upon the rights of the senate.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, whilst I appreciate the intent of the minister's reply, it still does seem to be a somewhat cumbersome procedure as spelt out in the bill. I am not sure that the bill carries into force his intent. In clause 4, we see that that senate shall have certain obligations rather than powers. Now we are talking about the functions of the interim senate which are to consider and advise the minister and the authority and to make recommendations. With the best will in the world, it still seems somewhat incongruous to me that we have the Vice-Chancellor and not less than 5 other people making recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor because the authority as specified in the bill is in fact the Vice-Chancellor or, in his absence, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. I am not raising these points lightly nor am I trying to prolong proceedings. It does have an aura of incongruity about it and this has been brought to my attention by a variety of people.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I fully accept that the member for Nightcliff is doing this with the best possible intent. I do not think I am in a position to give satisfactory answers to this because the honourable member does raise some quite pertinent points. I would suggest that, by leave, the committee is happy to report progress at this stage.

Progress reported; report adopted.

FAMILY PROVISION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 19)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I would like to commend the government for this legislation because it will overcome an inequity which has existed in the Territory. I believe, having seen the problem, that the government has chosen the correct answer to it.

The problem is that, currently, de facto spouses do not as of right receive an entitlement from their deceased spouses' estates. What the bill will do is to provide for the de facto spouse so that the de facto spouse will have the same entitlement as a married person to a deceased spouse's estate. That can be most important for the maintenance of that person and, without this particular provision in the Family Provision Act, such people would otherwise miss out.

We recognise that there are many people in de facto relationships in the Northern Territory, probably a greater percentage than elsewhere. This sort of situation must be taken care of. It is then a question of whether or not the government has chosen the correct course. The Chief Minister indicated a number of options. One was to look at how long the relationship had been in existence. Of course, that can be unfair simply because we would have to pick an arbitrary period of time. Secondly, we could look at whether or not there are any children involved. That is an absurd criterion these days because people quite happily choose whether or not to have children. Having children does not of itself, according to today's standards anyway, give any kind of blessing or otherwise to a relationship. The final option, and this is the line which the government has chosen to take, is to look at whether there was a relationship between the 2 people at the time of death and whether the person who dies was maintaining the other person as provided already by the Family Provision Act. That can be found in section 7(7): 'For the purpose of this section, a person shall not be regarded as having been

maintained by the deceased person immediately before his death unless the deceased person was, at that time, with an agreement in writing or otherwise, maintaining that other person or making a contribution to the maintenance of that other person being a contribution that, in all of the circumstances, can be regarded as other than a nominal contribution'.

It seems to me that that is without question the most practical, sensible and acceptable way of determining whether or not a de facto relationship existed. The government, by introducing this amendment, will bring a great deal of relief to the people in the Northern Territory who would otherwise be hurt quite greatly by the death of a de facto spouse. The opposition welcomes the proposed legislation.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): In rising to speak to this bill, I think that the government's view and my own personal view is that the bill recognises the actuality of the marital situation these days all over Australia. I do not think the bill will make the climate for people's behaviour; it will I think recognise situations as they are. De facto relationships have much going for them. They may not be acceptable to many people who still have conservative values but I think de facto relationships can be as lasting as conservative relationships.

I have one reservation about recognising de facto relationships by legislation. While we must have legislation that the people want, nevertheless de facto relationships mean that 2 people are living together and in many cases they have children. Sometimes those children are brought up in a happy, stable family atmosphere which is no different to that in an ordinary conservative married relationship. I do not have any figures to bear out what I am saying. I just think that I might be right from my observations and from what people have told me in my electorate. Recently, I spoke in the Law Reform Commission on the Privacy of the Individual. What concerned me and several people in my electorate was the fact that submissions were put forward in this report that children from the ages 12 to 16 should have complete rights of privacy in medical matters and also educational matters. Whilst recognising that in certain situations children are ill-treated, nevertheless, in a situation like that, it does place a lot of responsibility on the child to make what amounts to adult decisions. If these recommendations become law, it would further weaken the conservative, stable relationships of married family life whereby people - I do not say they should stay together for the sake of the children only - often before a relationship is broken up, give more thought to the relationship. Perhaps people should stay together in those situations if they can possibly do so without mental and moral damage to themselves and their children. I only say that in passing. Basically I am in favour of this bill, as I said, because it recognises the situation as it exists in our society. That concludes my remarks.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I am happy to support this bill. I reject some of the notions that have just been put forward by the member for Tiwi who seems to think that conservatism and stability are synonymous. I have never heard so much rot in all my life. If one reads the reports on the Family Law Act and a few other things, one sees the hollowness of her statements. She did not back them up with any statistics. The honourable member for Tiwi also said, in a condescending manner, that in certain circumstances people in de facto relationships could approach the happy, stable nature of formal marriages. Well, happiness and stability are not necessarily related to matrimony.

The Chief Minister, in introducing this bill - and I am not going to canvass the privacy matters - stated in closing: 'The government believes

this bill will meet a genuine social need in the Territory. Its provisions are progressive but sensitive. The government recognises, however, that some people may feel that a proper balance between the duty owed by de facto partners to each other and protecting the institution of marriage has not been struck or could be achieved in other ways. The government would welcome comment from other members before the next sittings ... so that necessary amendments will be introduced'. Mr Speaker, the reason I rose to my feet is that I am the first person to criticise the Chief Minister, who is the Country Liberal Party government, when he does the wrong thing. The Chief Minister was doing what I only wish he would do more often; that is, soliciting opinions from a variety of people representing a variety of communities as to whether or not this was the best way for his government to proceed so that in 4 years time some fanatic could not get up and say: 'They destroyed the stability of marriage'.

Quite deliberately, I say that I think that this is one of the better pieces of legislation to come forward from the government and it is to be commended. Having read this bill and the Chief Minister's second-reading speech giving the reasons for his choosing this form in the legislation, might I say I too agree, and I believe the vast majority of the people of the Northern Territory agree, with the form in which it has been presented. If his government is to be criticised for this bill in the future, the people levelling the criticism can criticise me right along with it because I think it is remarkable for its sensitivity and its practicality.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I rise to support this bill. I think the Chief Minister remarked earlier that he had not had any requests for amendment. I suspect that is because most people who know about this bill are of the opinion that it is an extremely enlightened piece of legislation.

This bill is quite properly called the Family Provision Amendment Bill and, speaking on behalf of those very many people in my electorate who have entered into stable and happy de facto relationships, I can say that there are many other areas in which the government, through its policy decisions, has chosen to recognise the family situation in which these people live. I heartily commend the progressively enlightened approach that has been taken to very many issues including that of the provision of housing. Over the years, the policy has been changed to allow the recognition of de facto relationships whereas only 6 or 7 years ago people had to show that they were married in order to be eligible for public housing and certainly for public service housing. By policy directives over the years, a number of these provisions have been relaxed and I would suggest that these do lead to a happier life-style for those people who choose to participate in de facto relationships.

In the last Assembly, we had the passage of the Status of Children Act which is again a recognition of de facto relationships. At that time, we on this side of the House commended the government for that move because it recognised the large number of people who choose to live in this form of family union. I have had some feedback on this particular bill and that is one of the reasons why I decided to speak on it. There has been no person in my electorate who has claimed that this particular move will lead to further breakdown in the institution of marriage. This came as something of a surprise to me because I do have in my electorate the headquarters of the Christian Democrats Party. As we know, this party's virtual sole platform is upholding and strengthening what it is pleased to refer to as family life. I think that, when people enter into a mutual arrangement to live together, this should not be an unhappy or unsavoury relationship. There are far more evil influences that tend to act upon the destruction of family life than the

simple act of mutually living together. Some of these could be things like child abuse, wife bashing, neglect of children through alcoholism or any number of other influences that tend to break up family life.

I did not receive any representations from these people and I certainly did not solicit them. I received one or two comments that somehow or other these relationships ought to be recognised only after a certain passage of time. There should be some minimum time in which people live in this type of relationship before it would be recognised. I accept the approach that has been adopted in this bill. It is an arbitrary approach and recognises that many genuine and caring relationships are formed which have no relationship to any minimum qualifying period as it were. I think most people tend to think that somehow or other these things ought to be recognised by some sort of penal servitude and that this would enable them to be eligible to make a claim under this particular bill. This approach has been used in other places and it can cause a degree of hardship and can be very unfair upon people who do not qualify under this time clause. I accept the approach that has been adopted in this bill and I look forward to many more enlightened pieces of legislation which would encourage stable family and home relationships whether or not they are inside marriage.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 15)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): The opposition supports this bill. By agreement of all the state premiers, excluding Western Australia, the Queen's Birthday will be observed on the same day around Australia and that is the second Monday in June. We are pleased that the Queen will still have 2 birthdays in each year: one for the whole of Australia excluding Western Australia and another one for Western Australia. Whatever reason Western Australia had, I commend the Northern Territory for agreeing with the bulk of the country that we all ought to observe the Queen's birthday on the one date. The opposition supports that principle especially with regard to the Queen's Birthday weekend.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 7)

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 8)

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 10)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I commend these bills. The main thrust of them is to provide an inducement for employers to be less negligent towards their employees. This is proposed to be done by increasing the

penalties for breaches of the particular acts which we refer to as the industrial safety acts.

We have had a few instances in the past where employees have died in the course of their work and the Coroner has reported quite correctly that, had simple measures been taken by the employer or had the employer been less negligent, the death would never have come about. A recent case concerned the killing of a worker after a trench had collapsed. In that particular case, the shoring was defective and, in some places along the trench, non-existent.

Mr Speaker, as we proceed with increases in the construction sector and in the industrial-manufacturing sector, these situations will become less and less tolerable. I think that it is not before time that the minister has introduced these bills which will have the effect of substantially increasing the penalties for negligent employers. We commend these bills for that reason and hope that we will not find that even these sums that are provided for will be regarded as being too low by employers. In considering a matter such as severe injury or death on the job, it is a dilemma to decide whether or not even a fine of \$5,000 is adequate. There are, no doubt, some employers who would not consider these amounts to be enough to cause them to have more regard to safety on the job. Nevertheless, it behoves this Assembly to have some regard for the safety of workers and to try to compel employers to be less negligent.

I am sorry to say that, wherever monetary penalties have been used, particularly in regard to large companies - and this has been determined by observations in other fields of activity - no matter how high the fine is employers tend to behave exactly the same as they would with lesser fines. I hope this is not the case in the Northern Territory and, if it turns out that way, we will just have to find other ways of ensuring that employers act correctly towards their employees. We commend these bills.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): I thank the honourable member for her comments and I too would just reiterate that I guess we will always have to deal with people who want to find some way of getting around the law for their own gain. More often than not this is at the expense, in some form or another, of other people. When this results in a physical harm, then I think there is all the more reason for us to try and head it off. I would just foreshadow too that I have some amendments to this legislation. I am not sure that they have been circulated and I intend to propose that we take the committee stage at a later time.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

Committee stage to be later taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEELE (Primary Production and Tourism): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): I wish to touch upon 2 matters this afternoon.

Yesterday I received a photocopy of a letter which I understand has been submitted to a newspaper to be published in the Northern Territory. After reading the photocopy of this letter I decided that, because of my own personal views on the subject and the opposition's views on the subject, it should be read into the Hansard.

Early in the life of this Assembly there was a fairly traumatic series of

events connected with Sadadeen High School in Alice Springs involving the principal of that school. Now that that gentleman has left the Territory - and I must say he was a sad and very disillusioned man after being bushed in the northern suburbs of Darwin for the last 12 months - I feel free to say that, on a personal level, although I did not have a lot to do with John Mollison, and being a person who moves continually among professional educators in the Northern Territory, I greatly admired and respected him. He was a man with over 30 years' experience in teaching. Many of those years were spent as principal of various schools and in senior positions in education departments both in Australia and overseas. However, my personal opinion of the man is not what I am going to talk about this afternoon. He was a man who had a lot to contribute to the Northern Territory's education service. Experience at that level cannot be lightly cast aside.

Mr Mollison was put into some difficulties when courses at the high school were altered without, as the parents saw it, adequate consultation with the people involved; that is, the families affected by this change. He was put into the very unfortunate position of being responsible to those parents. I must say, and this is probably something the minister is aware of, John Mollison was greatly admired and respected by both the staff and the parents of children who were attending Sadadeen. I can say that because those sentiments were expressed by both the parents and the staff publicly at the time. I believe he was treated shabbily. That is no revelation; I said so at the time.

The letter is headed 'Reflections on Retirement' and I simply read it into Hansard. I stress again that I was not given the original of this letter. It was given as a letter to a newspaper and I received a photocopy of it.

My teaching career began in 1940. I was an original member of Dad's Army at the time of Dunkirk. It was ended with 5½ years in the CTS, in many ways the most interesting part of it because I have been in 4 different positions in 2 new systems. I certainly enjoyed my work in the ACT and I have enjoyed aspects of my jobs in the Northern Territory.

Why then am I leaving it with so much relief. There are many answers to this question but I have been trying to go to the root of them. I believe that the crux of the matter is that education here is dominated by politics and that the political system is unjust, dishonest and lacking in compassion. When power appears to be used nakedly for personal profit, when a minister gives a promise and breaks it shamelessly with no thought of resignation, it is not surprising that society is sick. Education cannot escape being bound up with society so education in the Northern Territory is sick. Within the department, what are the symptoms? The list is long: politics considered more than students, lip-service to community involvement with no real commitment to it - indeed, a distrust of it - discussion involving long hours of work by many people to produce informed advice while final decisions are then taken in secret and with partial information by a few people of senior positions of all too little ability or experience, important influences on Aboriginal education exerted by people of notoriously racist views.

One dangerous development must be obvious to all who are interested and it is particularly striking to me because it is only just over 2 years since I left the ACT. There, the new dispensation emphasised school autonomy from the start. In fact, the freedom given was too much for many teachers trained in New South Wales. However, that

measure of independence has now been fully accepted and is treasured.

In the Northern Territory I have seen an opposite movement in my short service in Alice Springs and Darwin beginning with the NT Education Department's takeover from Canberra on 1 July 1979. The new structure was designed, it seemed, to put more barriers between the school principal and the secretary. The new role of the regional superintendent accentuates that trend. A bureaucratic hierarchical system needs far more efficiency in its senior officers, if it is to function well, than the Education Department has at its disposal. And in any case, such a concept should be regarded as out of date. Good schools today need principals who are trusted to get on with the job of running their schools with the aid of staff whom they are ready to trust in their turn. What is wanted then? The NT requires senior officers who are ready to listen, to learn and to work far harder at communication than at present. It requires principals who will stand together for principles and who will support their staff and so have staff support. It certainly requires a stronger NT Teachers Federation which will help teachers to help each other to improve Northern Territory education for students. In the long run, it is only the teachers who can do this.

John Mollison.

I make it clear to the Assembly that this is John Mollison's letter and not mine but I felt that it is a letter which, particularly in view of the fact that it will be published in the Northern Territory, should be read into Hansard.

The other matter upon which I wish to dwell concerns the comments made at the declaration of the polls yesterday by the newly-elected member for the House of Representatives. Mr Speaker, I say with all honesty that I read those comments with some degree of sadness and a great deal of resignation because it does appear that, even when they win, they cannot help themselves. As far as I see it, the word 'gratuitous' could quite easily be applied to those sentiments. The man has just won the seat and had spoken only a short time ago about his concern for the lack of support in Aboriginal communities and his great desire - this was publicly stated by the gentleman - to reconcile those differences and work for improved relations. He wins the seat, 3 years in the House of Representatives are in front of him and what does he do? He buckets people at the declaration of the polls. His words sounded as though they came from a man who had lost the seat, not won it.

Mr Speaker, yesterday it was reported:

The Territory's new federal member, Mr Tambling, criticised the use of the community advisers and educators as poll officers at Aboriginal communities at last month's federal election. He said their presence produced varying degrees of intimidation and paternalism to illiterate and unsophisticated voters. Abnormal voting patterns and inconsistent informal percentages illustrated this point. He went on to say that he did not accuse the community advisers and educators of voting manipulation but believed many NT Aborigines vote to meet the expectations and political bias of the advisers who live and work with them rather than reflect a freely-formed opinion on political policies. He said: 'The important considerations for a federal election is putting Australia first, the Territory second ...

I wonder if that is an emphasis that would be agreed to by people on the opposite side of the Assembly.

... and ethnic and cultural priorities third. This is obvious in urban-centre voting but, sadly, not adopted in Aboriginal communities'.

That is because they do not support the CLP. The defeated Labor candidate said quite justifiably at the time of the declaration of the polls - and I understand that he was somewhat taken aback by the honourable gentleman's comments - that those comments have never been made in the past by the former successful CLP member, Mr Calder, when he won seats such as Arnhem.

The interesting thing about those comments as far as I am concerned - I am certainly a person who is in very close touch with his electorate - is that Mr Tambling is very obviously a gentleman who is totally out of touch with Aboriginal communities.

They certainly do not know him but they certainly are interested in politics. I have said on previous occasions that in no urban community in the Northern Territory is there a degree of interest shown in the political systems of the Northern Territory and in elections which can even touch that degree of interest shown by Aboriginal communities. In my own electorate, quite spontaneously, community after community held public meetings to discuss policies, political parties and elections.

When this honourable gentleman makes a keynote address to the CLP in which he talks about governments not being frightened to say no to Aboriginals - and I am not arguing at the moment with the sentiments he expressed - when he says that it is about time somebody stood up and took a stand against land rights and free-spending policies of the ALP in regard to Aboriginals and when those remarks are faithfully recorded on the front page of the press, you can expect Aboriginal people, like everyone else in the community, to make up their minds to vote for the person that they think will benefit them the most. I would suggest that that is the way that most people vote. They were somewhat taken aback by those comments. The comments were not accidental; they were uttered quite deliberately in this tightrope walk that we have in the Northern Territory of alienating a few Aboriginals in order to get on side a larger number of whites. The remarks were quite deliberate and they were reported faithfully. Predictably enough, they were not welcomed by Aboriginal people.

Now, this same man is accusing community advisers and educators of manipulation simply by their presence and by their own political bias. Many of the community advisers whom I know, and I know a number of them, are quite opposed to the Labor Party. In the light of these remarks, I was very interested to note that, at the very polling booth at which I was present on polling day, the scrutineer for the CLP - Mr Tambling's scrutineer - was a Uniting Church community adviser. He is a gentleman whom I happen to like very much and respect but he happens to be a supporter of the CLP.

When Mr Tambling visited another Aboriginal community on a Sunday, he attended church with Senator Kilgariff and immediately after church he held a political meeting outside the church. The Chief Minister knows full well that many communities, in my electorate particularly, are deeply religious. In fact, there has been a religious revival in Arnhem Land. I tell Mr Tambling now that many people were offended by that action. In fact, Senator Kilgariff was so embarrassed by it that he publicly said at the beginning of the meeting that, as he had just attended church, he did not really think that he should talk about politics. These are basic reasons why Mr Tambling lost the vote.

He also arrived at another community on a Sunday - and I had no intention

of relating these stories at all until I read this yesterday - and there was no one there. They were out with the community adviser who had voluntarily given up his day off to collect evidence for an extremely important court case that was to occur a few days after the elections. When the honourable gentleman was at the airport with Senator Kilgariff, he approached 3 people who happened to be standing at the airport. One of these is or was an enthusiastic supporter of the Country Liberal Party. He said to these 3 gentlemen whom he had never seen in his life before: 'Are you people locals?' When they replied that they were, he said: 'Well, I have to tell you that I am not very happy with the reception that I got here'. They were somewhat taken aback by this. One of them was a minister of the church. They asked him what was wrong and he accused the local community adviser - with no investigation on his part at all - of deliberately taking Aboriginal people out of the community on a Sunday so that he could not hold his meeting. I say again that one of the 3 people who related this story to me is a public supporter of the Country Liberal Party and he was very much affronted by the gratuitous condemnation of a hard-working bloke who had given up his Sunday off to help a group of Aboriginal people to collect evidence for a court case.

The last comment I want to make relates to the paragraph where Mr Tambling 'regrets' that Aboriginal people do not put Australia first, the Territory second and their ethnic origin third. These are sentiments which have been expressed - and I have them in print - on previous occasions by the Chief Minister. The problem is that Aboriginal people have only just recovered their identity. It is interesting that one of the most prominent Aboriginal publications is called 'Identity'. This is published by the Aboriginal Publications Board. For 200 years, they have lost their identity and, as a result of land rights, the political climate today and a little bit of enlightenment in the community, they have only just recently regained their identity as Aboriginal people. They have retrieved a little bit of self-pride and respect. It is hardly surprising that Aboriginal people want to consider themselves as Aboriginal people first and as Australians or Territorians second or third.

I am totally appalled that the new member for the Northern Territory, in making his very first public remarks after winning the seat, chose to unleash gratuitous insults to community advisers and schoolteachers right across the Northern Territory Aboriginal electorates. In most cases - and I know this from personal experience - these people very reluctantly gave up their free time to spend 12 very boring hours in a polling booth. In many cases they did the job because they were begged to do so by the Electoral Office.

The Chief Minister is well aware of the problems of staffing polling booths in these places where the majority of non-Aboriginal people in the community with the education and the time available to run a polling booth are community advisers, community workers or schoolteachers. I am very disappointed that the honourable member should choose, as his opening remarks as a successful candidate, a statement which could well have been made by a candidate who had lost the seat.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, I would like to comment on 2 things today. The first relates to the reply to a question that the Minister for Community Development gave me this morning. I asked what the people in the rural areas received in return for their rates. He told me that the people in Strath Road, Hidden Valley Road and Makagon Road had many things offered to them. He said they had street lighting and they even had streets. I would like to make it quite clear, and I have said this publicly before, that the people in my electorate only have gravel roads. If they had streets or footpaths or street lighting, they would wonder where they were. The gravel roads

in the Berrimah rural area are very small return for the rates they pay compared to what people in Darwin receive. I have touched on this before so I will not say any more.

I would like to speak about something that has been brought to my attention. I think it indicates a very unfair situation. I would not like to think that this is a biased or bigoted approach to this particular subject but I think it is a situation which has to be rectified. I am referring to street signs. There seems to be a proliferation of street signs along the Stuart Highway. I cannot speak about any other highways or streets because I do not travel up and down them very often but I do travel up and down the Stuart Highway from Batchelor to Darwin.

We have heard much about individual signs being erected on highways. We are told that they are a danger to the traffic, they have too much writing on them, they are the wrong colour or size or they are erected at the wrong places. Some of these remarks made by Transport and Works officers may be correct. I was at a rural roads conference in Alice Springs a couple of years ago and these remarks were made there. I agree that some of them may be correct.

If you note all the signs that have suddenly sprung up like mushrooms along the Stuart Highway, I think you will agree that it has nearly reached the stage where we have visual pollution. I agree that some signs are necessary when they relate to road safety, but the proliferation of these road signs has just about reached what I consider to be the safety limit and visual-pollution limit. It seems as though there is some frustrated Christmas tree decorator being let loose and that these signs are being sprinkled up and down the highway like hundreds and thousands and nearly in as many colours.

At the Howard Springs turn-off, there are 12 signs relating to what one should do on the road and what one should expect. There are 2 zig-zaggy signs, 2 caravan signs, 2 finger signs and 2 T-junction signs. Approaching the Howard Springs turn-off on the Howard Springs Road, there are 5 signs in all, making a grand total around the Howard Springs intersection of 17 road signs. I think there might even be a few more than that but I have been conservative. My estimate is 12 signs. I think, Mr Speaker, that in anybody's estimation of road safety, that would be a little much.

Another intersection that I know something about is the turn-off to the Yarrawonga road from the Stuart Highway. On the approach to town, there are 6 road signs and there are 4 in the other direction, making a total of 10 in all. There are 2 on a bus shelter, one just inside Yarrawonga road, making 13 in all at that T-intersection. The signs are similar to those at the Howard Springs turn-off. For those people who cannot read, they indicate that there is a caravan park. There are little blue and white caravans on the signs. These are in addition to the 2 private signs. I wonder what they will put up for the Yarrawonga Zoo. Perhaps it will be a goanna head or a dingo head or something like that.

The reason why I rose to speak about these signs is because a group of people in my electorate want one more sign put up on the Stuart Highway. These people only want one sign and for one purpose. They do not want to see 13 signs around the intersection. These people belong to the Howard Springs Church, an interdenominational church. They have been refused permission to erect a small finger sign - about 2 feet by about 5 inches - on the Stuart Highway pointing down Henning Road to their place of worship. They have been told they can put a sign up in the yard of the church but this is not really very good because once you are there you know the church is there. They were

told they could put one down Wells Creek Road. Once you are in Wells Creek Road, you would know where the church is because you would be looking at it. Despite the fact that there may be some members in the community who are not churchgoers, and I would number myself among those people, there are still many people who want to go to church. They find happiness in going to church and they obtain a lot of comfort and solace from it. There are many people who would like to go to church but they do not know where to go.

There are several caravan parks in this area and there are many people in those caravan parks. If this one small sign was erected, that would only make 2: one to point down Henning Road and one to point to the church. This would be a sharp contrast to the 17 around the Howard Springs turn-off and the 13 around the Yarrawonga turn-off. When these people applied to have the sign pointing to the church, they were told that it could only point up a road to which they had the only access. Nevertheless, we see a finger sign on the Stuart Highway pointing to the Howard Springs Supermarket. We also see a finger sign pointing to the Howard Springs Reserve which does not point up an exclusive road to the Howard Springs Reserve. We also see, pointing down the Yarrawonga Road, a sign going to Yarrawonga Zoo. Of course, this road is not for the exclusive use of Yarrawonga Zoo. Both the member for Arnhem and I go up that road sometimes. On the Arnhem Highway, there is another sign pointing up the Fred's Pass Road. This relates to horse riding. Horse riding is not the exclusive occupation of the people who live up Fred's Pass Road.

What I am coming to, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that there are anomalies in the decisions made by officers of the Department of Transport and Works. I would like to conclude by saying that I do not think this Howard Springs Church is any less important than the Howard Springs Supermarket or the Howard Springs Reserve which are permitted to have signs. I do not think it is any less important than the riding school in Fred's Pass Road. Finally, and I do not say this in a facetious way, there is a sign pointing to the rubbish dump. I do not really think that the Howard Springs Church is less important than the rubbish dump.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, I rise in this adjournment debate to speak on a matter which, undoubtedly, will cause headaches to the gentlemen in Hansard.

It is in regard to giving the original Aboriginal names to several communities in the Northern Territory. A mess seems to have been made of this. I would be the first to admit that, by the giving of a name 'Ngkurr' to Roper River, it is virtually impossible for many Europeans to spell it correctly. As a result, it has become 'Nukur'. That is fair enough; let it stay. We are never going to change that and it is not so far from correct anyhow.

In my electorate, there are 2 places which have been incorrectly named and one of them at least has been gazetted just recently. I believe that it could be changed. The first one to which I refer is the Aboriginal name of Wave Hill. That was called 'Kalkarindji' which rhymes with 'Gurindji', the local tribe that inhabits that area. However, when they spelt it, instead of spelling the final syllable with a 'dji' they spelt it with a 'gi' so that it was originally called 'Kalkaringi'. To make matters worse, it now appears on the map as 'Kalkarung' and I do not think we can fix that one; it is there forever. In a recent government gazette, Port Keats has been given its original Aboriginal name. The name for that place is 'Waderr' and I have heard the Chief Minister pronounce that name correctly on a couple of occasions. In the gazette, it comes out spelt 'Wadeye'. The local council have elected to spell it as 'Waderr'. I think that perhaps 'Wadair' would be easier but,

in their wisdom, they have decided on a spelling of 'Waderr'. As I have said, in the gazette it comes out as 'Wadeye' and that is nothing like 'Waderr'. I would ask that, rather than perpetuate the error, steps be taken to have that place either regazetted or the spelling corrected in a future gazette. I think it would be a relatively easy thing to do.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): I am a member of an organisation known as the Northern Territory Council of Social Services. I am proud to be a member of that organisation which I believe has done a good deal of good work in the Northern Territory. I am sure it will continue to do so. For the benefit of members who may not be aware of what that fine organisation does, what its aims are and what it has achieved in the last few years, I would like to provide some information. I have the constitution of NTCOSS in front of me. Its objects read as follows:

The primary objects of NTCOSS are:

(1) to act as the co-ordinating body between statutory and voluntary organisations in the field of social welfare in the Northern Territory.

That is something that any of us who have been involved in that area realise is the most important. There are large numbers of bodies working in the welfare field in the Northern Territory. The former Minister for Community Development will know that one could go to a different meeting every night of the week in Darwin alone if one had the energy and the time to do so. The need for co-ordination is very important.

(2) to promote and assist the development of all aspects of social welfare by assisting the work of statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in relieving or in pursuing any objects which are or may thereafter be deemed to be charitable and if carried on for other than the purpose of profit or gain for the individual members of the council;

(3) to promote and carry out, or assist in promoting and carrying out, surveys related to needs of people in the field of social welfare and to arrange for forwarding to the proper authorities and organisations the relevant facts regarding such cases and causes of distress as it appears to be within the power of those authorities and organisations to alleviate;

(4) to promote, assist or carry out special projects to transfer skills to consumers of social services and other persons in need aimed at eliminating poverty and distress;

(5) to develop an informed public opinion on matters relating to social welfare by arranging or providing for, or assisting to arrange or provide for, the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures or seminars calculated directly or indirectly to further the objects of the council;

(6) to provide an advisory service on matters of social welfare for statutory authorities and voluntary organisations;

(7) to cooperate with the appropriate national committees concerned with co-ordination of social welfare in Australia;

(8) to provide and organise cooperation in the achievement of the above purposes and, to that end, bring together in committee and conference representatives of the authorities and organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above purposes or any of them;

(9) to do all such other acts or things as may be conducive to the attainment of the objects set out above or any of them.

Mr Speaker, that hardly sounds like a revolutionary or even a radical organisation. As I said, I am proud to be a member of it. I believe that it has in many ways achieved already many of the aims that it set out to achieve and it will continue to do so. For example, it has been involved in setting up such organisations in our community as the Darwin Drug and Alcohol Dependence Foundation, Crisis Line and the Darwin Disaster Welfare Council. Being aware of the need to expand its activities into the rest of the Territory rather more than perhaps it has in the past, it has recently appointed to its council a number of members including representatives from Katherine and from Nhulunbuy. Recently, when it was involved, at the request of the Department of Community Development, in organising the celebration of Children's Week in the Northern Territory, it brought up a well-known and respected speaker from Victoria and ensured that she travelled to all the 5 major centres in the Northern Territory: Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy. It is aware of the need to provide services throughout the Northern Territory and not just in Darwin although that is where it has mainly been operating.

NTCOSS has both individual and organisational members. The individual members, in addition to myself, include the Lord Mayor, Mr Cecil Black, the former Lord Mayor, Dr Ella Stack, the honourable Senator Ted Robertson who we all agreed is a very honourable man indeed, Mr Bill Pretty from Nhulunbuy, Mr Jack Hunt and other people in the community. Its organisational members include the Aboriginal Womens Resource Centre, the Aboriginal Advisory and Development Services of the Uniting Church, Brown's Mart, the Childbirth Education Council, Christ Church Cathedral, the Corporation of the City of Darwin, Crisis Line, Darwin Family Centres, Dawn House, the Department of Community Development itself, the Environment Council, the Family Planning Association, the Handicapped Persons Association of the Northern Territory, the Department of Health, the Council of the Ageing, Sommerville Homes, the Scouts Association, the YWCA, the YMCA and many other very active, very respected and enthusiastic members.

It is hard to believe that this organisation, which has such admirable objectives and such a responsible membership, can suddenly turn into one that is so disastrous that the government cannot afford to spare the fairly small amount of \$25,000 in this financial year to ensure that it can continue its operation. The activities that have been planned for this year - and I hope that they can continue as planned - include the provision of about \$8,000 for a data bank on welfare resources in the Northern Territory. A collation of these resources has not taken place for a number of years and is very much needed. Other activities planned for the year 1980-81 include a self-help program for low-income groups. Once again, this is a very desirable activity indeed. Yet the agency has requested only something like \$25,000 for this financial year plus the additional sum for the data bank research.

The funding request compares very favourably, I believe, with the past generosity shown by this government in other years to other organisations. In answer to a question on notice last year, I found out that the Darwin Motor Sports Complex received the grand sum of \$201,000. From reading the newspaper, I understand that they may be asking for more. The Alice Springs Youth Centre - to choose an isolated example - received \$66,000 last year. That is a worth-while organisation which is doing special work in one particular area - \$66,000 was available for them. There are many more. The sum of \$27,500 was given last year to Keep Australia Beautiful Council in Darwin. I choose these organisations at random, Mr Deputy Speaker. You would appreciate that there are a large number of organisations which are funded by the government and which require government assistance in the Northern Territory. It

is really quite inexplicable why, for some reason at this particular point in time, the honourable minister finds himself unable to find \$25,000 to fund NTCOSS.

The only reason that people can assume is that that organisation has dared, on occasions, to be critical of action or lack of action by his government. I would say that is a very useful and worth-while activity by such an association. It is an organisation of people who are eminently qualified to give reasoned advice to the government and which the government would be well-advised to heed, instead of having a tantrum, throwing its hands up in the air and saying, 'We will not give you any money because you have criticised us for not acting sufficiently quickly on the lack of public housing' - or for some other reason.

I hope that all members of the government and all members of this Assembly will have another look at the situation. I am not prepared to accept that this is the final say on the matter and that money will not be available to this organisation. I am sure it will keep going and I hope the government will see its way clear to enter into negotiations with representatives of NTCOSS to ensure that conditions can be reached whereby this valuable community organisation can continue to operate and continue to support the community and support the government in carrying out its objects.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10am.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 24)

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy) (by leave): I move that the adoption of the report and the resolution of the Assembly on the third reading of the Electricity Commission Amendment Bill 1980 (Serial 24) on Tuesday 18 November 1980 be rescinded.

As a result of a fault of my own and a point picked up by the Leader of the Opposition, we inadvertently inserted 2 clause 5s. This motion will enable us to correct that tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT OF AUDITOR-GENERAL 1979-80

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the table the report of the Auditor-General on the Treasurer's annual financial statement for the year ended 30 June 1980 and on other activities.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that this Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges Act) 1977, authorise the publication of the report of the Auditor-General. I move also that the report be printed.

If I might just make a few brief remarks in relation to this matter. I do not recall - and yet it is quite possible that I have done so - that I have in the past moved that the Auditor-General's Report be printed. It is certainly a correct course of action; the report must be printed. I am a little bit at a loss as to the correct procedures to be followed here. I want to make certain points clear to the Assembly. The views I am about to express are my own and they relate primarily to the relationship between the legislature and the executive as it concerns the matters presently before the Assembly. I have discussed these views with the Solicitor-General and the Crown Solicitor and they support my views.

By way of background, sections 57 and 58 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act of the Northern Territory provide simply that the Auditor-General shall audit the Treasurer's statement and prepare and sign a report to the Assembly on that audit. Section 58 provides that the Auditor-General shall cause a signed copy of his report under section 57 to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. I have not seen this report myself. No copy was provided to me by the Auditor-General although I am the minister responsible. I am now in a position where I must stand before the Assembly and move that the Assembly take note of a paper the contents of which I have no knowledge.

To have to take this course of action causes me some difficulty. I am asked here, as leader of the government and the executive of the government, to support or indicate to the Assembly that I do support a paper which I have never seen. I do not quibble with sections 57 and 58 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. They essentially require, and I think properly so, that copies of the Auditor-General's Report be made available to the Assembly. As I said, that is the proper course of action. What I do quibble with is this: the Auditor-General cannot table a document in the Assembly, and the act recognises this when it says that 'he shall cause a copy to be tabled'. The only persons who can table a copy are members of the Assembly. I would have thought it proper, Mr Speaker, and in the true Westminster tradition, to adopt an appropriate convention of making a copy available to the minister of the

government responsible for the Auditor-General for tabling it in the Assembly.

These are my views on this matter. It seems to me to be a breach of convention that the minister who is responsible to this Assembly for the activities of the Auditor-General was not provided with a copy of this report prior to having to stand in this Assembly before you, Mr Speaker, and other members to speak to the report. This would seem to be in breach of the principle of ministerial responsibility which is the cornerstone of the Westminster system of government. The proper course of action would have been for me to have been provided with a copy. I have been unable to have my officers contact the Auditor-General to make these views known to him.

Having said all that, I must make the appropriate motion in respect of the paper but I wish to indicate to the Assembly that my motion is qualified by the remarks that I have made.

Motion agreed to.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): 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.

NORTHERN TERRITORY OMBUDSMAN - ANNUAL REPORT 1979-80

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I lay on the table the second annual report, from 1 July 1979 to 30 June 1980, of the Northern Territory Ombudsman. 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.

REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL DETERMINATION

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I table the report of the Remuneration Tribunal pursuant to the Legislative Assembly (Remuneration, Allowances and Entitlements) Act 1978 dated 28 October 1980. 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.

NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE COMMITTEE

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): I move that during the present session of the Assembly a committee to be known as the New Parliament House Committee, comprising Mr Speaker, Mr Perron, Mr Dondas, Mrs O'Neil and Mrs Lawrie, be appointed; that the committee be directed to prepare a brief upon which architectural drawings can be prepared for a new Parliament House on the present site of the Legislative Assembly and adjoining roads and Crown land; that the committee arrange for the conducting of a competition to attract architectural proposals for a new Parliament House and publicly exhibit entries received; that the committee report and make recommendations to the Assembly on these matters from time to time; that the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly and to adjourn from place to place.

Mr Speaker, in speaking to that motion I firstly apologise to members

nominated to the committee with whom I have not consulted. Obviously, I should have consulted them and I am feeling fairly guilty about that. The members nominated in this motion are the members who were on a previous committee dealing with the siting of Parliament House. I have acted on the assumption that their interest would be ongoing and that it would be appropriate for them to join us on the committee. However, I am prepared to receive some words of condemnation in that regard.

The subject of the siting of a new Parliament House for the Northern Territory has been an issue for many years in the Territory. It extends right back to the time when the East Point Reserve was originally set aside by legislation with the view to preserving the site as a possible site for a Parliament House. Since that time, we have had other sites proposed both publicly and in this Assembly. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission looked at the question as well and issued various reports on the subject. More recently, the Legislative Assembly debated the suitability of the present site and a committee looked at aspects of that site for a new Parliament House.

My motion proposes that we look at the area in broader terms than the strict definition of the site of the present precincts. Members will note that the motion includes the present site of the Legislative Assembly and the adjacent roads and Crown land. I think that they are an important aspect in this question. The present site is possibly large enough for a bare building, although that is debatable, but the requirements for a Parliament House, its surrounds, its security, its landscaping and parking facilities will obviously require more than the strict boundaries of the present site of this Assembly. We are a little fortunate inasmuch as the surrounding area is owned by the Crown. There is no private land involved and I think that the committee, in receiving advice, can take a fairly broad view of the area when looking at designs for a Parliament House.

I believe we should move now. The procedures involved in calling together persons to advise the committee, in preparing architectural designs, in exhibiting them publicly and in the subsequent selection of a suitable design and planning the construction of the building will take quite a few years. The Territory is moving very fast, the population is growing rapidly and I believe that, as time goes by, the Assembly will increase in numbers. We will need a new Parliament House before too many years have passed. Many would argue that we needed a new Parliament House some years ago. Having regard to the time involved, it is a possibility that the Assembly may have to consider holding sessions in another building, either for space reasons or for the very reason that this site is liable to be taken over in a construction phase that will last longer than we could reasonably adjourn.

The motion has been designed to narrow the committee's task down to a series of events rather than to allow the debate to go on continuously. We have not really made as much progress as perhaps we should have. This motion has been deliberately designed to recommend a competition, the public display of submissions and subsequent reporting to this Assembly. This was done quite deliberately to get the show on the road. I commend the motion to honourable members.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I did not take umbrage at the Treasurer's failure to contact me although I was agreeably surprised to hear yesterday that I was included in this august body. I was a member of the committee in the previous Assembly.

It would probably be futile and idle to argue against the siting of the Parliament House. I appreciate that this present site does not have the full

support of all members of this Assembly. It does not have mine but to attempt to reopen that argument when the government has clearly indicated that it wishes it to be sited on this site would, in essence, delay it 4 years by which time we would have elected a new set of people who would again have to decide on the site.

Mr Robertson: It is the same government.

Mrs LAWRIE: It may not necessarily be the same government or the same people.

Having voiced my reservations about this site previously, I am giving an indication now that I still think this site is not as practical nor as aesthetically pleasing as one of the other options: Myilly Point, Flagstaff House. Might I say that, having made a decision, it is timely that, at this first full session of the Assembly, we move to do something constructive about a new Parliament House for the people of the Northern Territory. The Treasurer has said that perhaps it is overdue. I certainly believe that it is overdue. The precincts sufficed in a fairly haphazard way until Cyclone Tracy struck and she perhaps wisely demolished most of this building giving us the opportunity to really become serious about a Parliament House befitting the Territory's emerging status. The present precincts are hopelessly inadequate. They are overcrowded and they work neither in the best interests of the staff nor the members who serve the people of the Territory.

I am extremely pleased to see the emphasis on this motion on a public competition to attract architectural proposals for a new Parliament House. I spoke twice in the previous Assembly about my feeling that this was a necessity. It will give architects all around Australia, and in fact overseas, the opportunity to be engaged in planning not only a contemporary parliament but one which has to suffice for perhaps the next 80 or 100 years.

The task of the committee therefore is certainly not frivolous; it is one of the most important tasks which can be entrusted to a group of parliamentarians. By our actions and decisions, this parliament will be judged well into the future. Our committee can only recommend back to this parliament as a whole as to what would be necessary and desirable, and that is as it should be. Certainly, in a matter of this importance, the whole parliament must be involved from time to time through the reporting back of this committee. I make this statement because I am pleased to be on the committee even though I have certain reservations about its siting. However, that is a fait accompli and has to be faced. I acknowledge the responsibility which this committee has, not only to this parliament but to future generations.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Like the member for Nightcliff, I have spoken in the debate on the siting of this new Parliament House and I also accept that the siting is a fait accompli. However, I cannot let the opportunity pass without once again placing on record my great disappointment that the siting decision made by a government which claims to look to the future is so incredibly short-sighted. The reason I say that, and I intend to speak on this later during this sittings, is that, a short time ago, I was afforded the privilege of attending a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference in Zambia. Whilst I was in Africa, I took the opportunity of going to Zimbabwe and Kenya to meet the ministers of government in both those places and to have meetings with politicians of all kinds in those 3 countries.

It was the first time in my life that I have ever been overseas and, because I was a member of the Assembly, I was extremely interested in looking at the parliaments in those 3 places. I was fortunate in being given the

opportunity by the Speakers of those 3 Houses to have a very good look at the parliaments in those 3 countries.

The Parliament House in Lusaka is a truly magnificent building with a truly magnificent chamber. Although it is a very small chamber, it is most beautifully appointed. Because of their siting, principally, the parliament houses in these 3 countries have become not only major tourist attractions but also virtually state monuments and places of great pride for the peoples of the countries involved. I intend, Mr Speaker, to bore the Assembly with detailed accounts of these places in adjournment debates in this sittings. The Chamber in the Lusaka parliament is most beautiful and I was able to take some photographs of it with the permission of the Speaker. I intend to show these to honourable members later. It has quite a startling feature - although this is something about which I have philosophical reservations - in that the Speaker's chair in the Chamber has a magnificent set of ivory tusks on each side of the table and, of course ...

Mr Robertson: It might have died of natural causes.

Mr B. COLLINS: I doubt it very much.

On the right side of the Speaker's chair is a stuffed lion. On the left side of the Speaker's chair is a stuffed leopard. I thought this was a very good idea, Mr Speaker. I would be quite happy to provide the Assembly with a list of suggestions for some of the things which could be stuffed and mounted for the new Chamber.

Parliament House is a truly beautiful building. It is set in a very large area of landscaped grounds as also are the parliament houses in Keyna and in Zimbabwe. Obviously the parliaments have been designed by far-sighted people with an eye to the future and with an eye to creating something of truly state pride. That is exactly what those institutions have become as well as having great value as tourist attractions.

I cannot let this debate finish, Mr Speaker, without, once again, placing on record my great disappointment that a government, which so often states that it is far-sighted, has been so incredibly short-sighted in a decision for the siting of this Parliament House which, as you are well aware, Mr Speaker, will probably have to last the Territory for perhaps the next 100 years.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I would indicate to members that I accept my nomination to membership of this committee and I look forward to working on it. I would also indicate my reservations about the site. It has significant constraints in size because of its proximity to the law courts and for other reasons. I will not go into those again but I believe that our 2 new members should be aware that these constraints exist and that members did consider a number of other sites in the Darwin area during the course of the Second Assembly.

I note that, in his motion, the Treasurer has anticipated the problems of the limitations of the site and has ensured that the committee can consider using adjacent areas of Crown land and road areas. I would anticipate that members would be looking at extending the new building towards the cliffs on that side of the building. Along with the honourable member for Nightcliff, I would also indicate my pleasure that the government supports the idea of an architectural competition for the design of this building. That is an excellent proposal and it is one that has been carried out in other places.

Since we last sat, I have had the pleasure of representing this Assembly

at the workshop of the Australian Study of Parliament Group in Canberra. This took place shortly after the design of the new federal Parliament House had been announced following an architectural competition. I saw the models of that proposed building and I was certainly most impressed. The competition produced an outstanding design and, while our building in the Northern Territory will clearly not be so grand, nevertheless this indicates what can be done. No doubt other members will have the opportunity to see those plans to gain some idea of the options available to us.

I also thank the member for Arnhem for his suggestions on how the building should be decorated. I imagine that, in accordance with clause 5 of this motion, he can anticipate that the committee will call on him to give further suggestions.

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): In rising to support the motion, there is no doubt that most of the people who have discussed the motion this morning are not in favour of the site. I think most people know my feelings regarding the site as well. I voted for it. I believe the members of the committee will discharge their duties in an admirable way and that, because the dissension about the siting of the new Parliament House has been such an awkward topic over the last 6 or 7 years, the committee, by holding an architectural design competition, will ensure that we will have a Parliament House of which we can all be proud.

The honourable member for Arnhem said that we are short-sighted. That is not quite the truth. Blocks 1,2 and 3 will eventually become redundant and will be demolished. This will provide a much greater area than we have now. We have a beautiful harbour and we can build out onto the cliff. I believe that the committee has a responsibility to ensure that we do obtain a building that is aesthetically pleasing, not only to the people of the Northern Territory and Australia but also to other Commonwealth countries.

Like other members, I believe the new Parliament House is overdue. We have heard that the Clerk is constantly battling to find funds to maintain and upgrade present facilities. I believe that, as we move towards further constitutional development in the Northern Territory, the size of this Assembly will increase. As it increases, we will require further facilities. We may have more out-of-town members. We may decide to provide accommodation and other facilities. We might be able to provide squash courts and a swimming pool as is the case in the Queensland Parliament House. I believe that we are in a position to provide the facilities that members of parliament - not that they are entitled to them - should be able to enjoy during the course of their duties as parliamentarians.

I have travelled and seen other parliaments. The Lok Sabha in New Delhi is a beautiful chamber. As members move around in the course of their parliamentary duties, they might take the time to have a look at the facilities and constructions provided for members in other parliaments.

I support the motion. I also am not quite sure why I am a member of this committee. It is an ongoing process and I believe that, in the Second Assembly, the committee discharged its duties in a proper manner. We met regularly. We discussed the problems with very little antagonism. Sometimes we agreed; sometimes we disagreed. Nevertheless, we did come to some mutual understanding regarding the various points that were under question and I believe that the new committee should be in a position, during the life of this Assembly at least, to make recommendations as to what the future Parliament House of the Northern Territory should be.

Motion agreed to.

LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 42)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The operation of the Liquor Act 1978, which those honourable members then present will remember was debated in great detail in this Assembly, has shown the need for additional amendments, mainly of an administrative and machinery nature. This bill clarifies the rights or obligations of the Liquor Commission and the licensees under certain situations and clears up a few defects within the legislation.

A slight amendment to section 5 will make it clear that the holders of special licences to sell liquor are not exempt from liquor licensing fees. Another provision will protect the interests of the owners of licensed premises where the licensee chooses to surrender his licence.

An anomaly in the existing act allows only the chairman to administer an oath at a hearing even though another member of the commission may be presiding. Anomalies in section 121 of the act, relating to the exclusion from premises of persons who are intoxicated or disorderly etc, have been corrected. Further operation of the act in the declaration of dry areas has shown the need to give the commission the power to revoke part of a declaration once made or to otherwise vary it in accordance with community wishes without having to go through all the formal procedures laid down under part VIII of the act.

Finally, a new clause will empower the commission to issue duplicate licences for premises, where they have been lost, upon the payment of a nominal fee of \$2.

The legislative draftsman is currently completing work on several other amendments of a machinery nature not completed when this bill was printed. In the government's view these are non-controversial and I will seek to introduce them in the committee stage. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

NURSING AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 34)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The Nurses and Midwives Registration Ordinance first came into effect in 1929. The ordinance provided for the establishment of a board to register nurses and to regulate the nursing profession. Since then, the board has been under the chairmanship of the senior medical officer of the Department of Health. Indeed, all of the Health Department's boards have been under the chairmanship of the Chief Medical Officer. With the increased volume of business carried out by the boards, this is no longer reasonable and, in addition, steps need to be taken to put boards under the control of each appropriate profession. It is therefore intended in this bill to put the Nurses Board under the chairmanship of the senior nursing officer of the department. To do this, the bill changes the composition of the board by removing the Chief Medical Officer as

chairman and also as a member of the board and replacing him with the senior nursing officer of the Northern Territory Department of Health.

The consequent vacancy in membership will be filled by the appointment of the Matron of Alice Springs Hospital. These changes will mean that the only member of the board, other than nurses, will be the Medical Superintendent of Casuarina Hospital.

The opportunity is also taken in this bill to introduce a number of minor drafting amendments to clarify the provisions of the act. I believe that this bill introduces important changes which will be welcomed by the nursing profession and I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CHIROPRACTIC BILL (Serial 37)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill provides for the registration of chiropractors and for certain restrictions on the activities of these people. The need to regulate the practice of chiropractic in the Northern Territory has been under consideration for some time and, in fact, chiropractors themselves have been seeking some sort of control for many years. There have been previous legislative attempts made to deal with the matter but these were deferred pending the results of the Commonwealth Inquiry into Chiropractic and this report was presented in 1977. This report recommended among other things that a form of control such as registration of chiropractors was desirable. As a consequence, this bill has been prepared, taking into account the recommendations made by the Commonwealth inquiry and including provision for the establishment of a chiropractic board which will consist of 3 members appointed by the minister. These members will be a lawyer from the Department of Law who will be chairman, a medical practitioner from the Department of Health and a chiropractor practising in the Northern Territory. The first chiropractor member is required to obtain registration within 6 months of the commencement of the act.

This bill requires registered chiropractors to obtain a licence to practise each year. These licences are subject to such conditions as the board may wish to apply. This will enable the board to review the practice of each chiropractor and to ensure that standards are maintained. The board will be empowered to register chiropractors and issue annual licences to practise and will also be authorised to make rules relating to a code of ethics, professional conduct, confidentiality of patient records and clinical standards of practice including the equipment used and the layout and construction of the premises. It will also be empowered to take disciplinary action against chiropractors where there are instances of malpractice, and adequate protection in any such inquiries is provided for registered practitioners.

Honourable members will appreciate the care that has been taken to ensure the rights of chiropractors and the general public are preserved. The miscellaneous sections of the bill contain a number of important restrictions. For example, a chiropractor may not practise certain procedures such as surgery nor may he administer anaesthetics. The bill prohibits an unregistered person from practising chiropractic. Similarly, no one but a registered chiropractor may use that title. On the other hand, a chiropractor is prohibited from

using the title of 'doctor' in any way in connection with his practice. It is important that an unqualified person be prevented from describing himself as a chiropractor and, similarly, it is important that the chiropractor be prevented from implying that he is a registered medical practitioner.

This legislation meets the needs of chiropractors and at the same time provides safeguards for the general public. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

POWERS OF ATTORNEY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 22)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill seeks to clarify the existing powers of those persons holding the power of attorney. The intention of the principal act was that persons holding that power would register dealings in land either with the central registry or would be allowed to register them under the existing provisions of the Real Property Act. The legislation before us simply clarifies this fact that those 2 entitlements are there; that is, either registration with a central registry or under the Real Property Act. The advice given to the Attorney-General is that there may be some doubt as to whether or not the previous entitlement of registry under the Real Property Act is retained and this piece of legislation makes it absolutely clear that either of those options is available to the person holding that power. The opposition supports that clarification.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Attorney-General) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the motion that the bill be read a third time be moved forthwith.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

JABIRU TOWN DEVELOPMENT BILL (Serial 29)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): The opposition supports this bill. It attends to matters which were inadvertently left out in our original deliberations in the setting up of the Jabiru Town Development Authority. One of the matters attended to is to give the authority the same protection for its officers and servants as would normally apply to the municipal authority. Members of the Assembly will realise that, to all intents and purposes, the Jabiru Town Development Authority is acting in much the same way as a municipal authority would act under the Local Government Act. One of the proposals in clause 4 is simply to give immunity from personal liability to any officer or servant in the performance of his duty as a servant of the authority. It is a provision that we find quite regularly with respect to municipal officers during their hours of duty.

This bill also attends to the matter of contracts. Two aspects of contracts are dealt with. The first is to allow new mining companies which do not at the moment have a permit to mine, but for which approval will be forthcoming, to enter into contracts with the authority. The other aspect of contracts is the question of the authority's ability to enter into a contract on its own behalf

as the participating body. I think it is as well to clarify the situation with respect to contracts because we have also a clause which permits the authority to provide what is defined as 'utility services'. Although the general contract-making power was not clear, I think with respect to the provision of these utility services, we do need some clarity about the ability of this authority to enter into contracts. I notice that one of the services which can be provided by this new amendment is electricity. I wonder whether or not the Jabiru Town Development Authority had entered into a contract with the Electricity Commission for the provision of electricity to consumers in Jabiru. I would hate to see some disgruntled consumer of electricity completely frustrate the power of the authority to act simply as a result of some omission on our part. We support the objectives of this bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the motion that the bill be read a third time be moved forthwith.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL (Serial 11)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): The opposition supports the continuing revision of the law of the Northern Territory with regard to stylistic and mechanical changes. This particular piece of legislation again updates many of our statutes. It is not possible to be able to investigate thoroughly every matter that is amended and, if honourable members looked through it, they would see that in many cases the amendments are obvious. For example, 'Northern Territory Supreme Court Act' is changed to 'Supreme Court Act' and so on. When bills of this kind are presented, I examine random amendments to ensure that they have been correctly handled. The ones that I checked are correct. I notice that the Chief Minister has circulated an amendment schedule which obviously picks up a number of other matters. The opposition supports this continuing revision to clarify references.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

See Minutes for amendments to schedule 1 agreed to without debate.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 14)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I rise, Mr Speaker, to indicate that the opposition supports the bill. The bill enables a number of things to happen. First, it will enable the Housing Commission to sell those units which had previously been rental stock but, up to this time, had not been available for purchase by the tenants. Secondly, the legislation will enable approved tenants to purchase commission-owned units apart from detached and single residential units. In other words, it will enable tenants to purchase flats or units which they are renting from the commission under a unit title arrangement or what is commonly known as strata title.

At this stage, I would like to raise a question with the Minister for Lands and Housing. He might be able to enlighten us on this particular matter either during this debate or at a later stage. I would like to know what particular flats and townhouses will be offered in Alice Springs and Darwin for purchase by the existing tenants. It is important that the existing tenants have an early indication as to which units will be offered for sale. It is also important that there be an adequate procedure for consultation on the dwellings in which they are currently placed. Indeed, there is probably a great need for ongoing consultation in that respect in order that any fears or apprehensions which existing tenants may have can be erased or explained by the government.

Thirdly, the legislation enables advances of money to be made under the Territory Home Loans Scheme to a person for the purchase of a dwelling, that is a flat, unit or house, and the repair, modification or exchange of a dwelling owned by that person.

Over all, it would appear that the bill is designed to enhance the concept of owner-occupancy of commission dwellings in the Territory. I indicate, Mr Speaker, that I have no particular quarrel with that concept because I believe that the concept of owner-occupancy of homes and other dwellings in the Territory must be encouraged if we are to have a stable population and stable growth in the Territory.

The bill does a number of other incidental things to the 3 major areas which I have mentioned. In the schedule, there are a number of definitions of 'unit' which relate to the Unit Titles Act. It will also enable the regulations of the Home Trustee to be amended or repealed under this legislation.

It is important that I dwell on a number of matters which are raised by this bill. I want to point out that the bill is consistent with the policy adopted by the opposition in this Assembly, the policy of the Australian Labor Party. One of the objectives of our policy is to enable existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings to purchase homes of varying construction and design in line with their preferences in lifestyle. Indeed, there would be many people in our community - for example, single people and couples - who prefer flats or units rather than houses. This is because the unit design would be entirely adequate for their needs and purposes. The opposition has held the opinion for a long time that the rental stock of the government ought to be available for purchase in the Northern Territory.

The Labor Party believes that housing is a basic necessity of life and that all Territorians must have an equal opportunity of obtaining adequate housing at a price within their means. I will be saying a bit more about that later when I raise the question of a particular price which is being demanded for flats and units controlled by the Housing Commission. Secondly, we believe that it ought to be the intention of the government to make housing stock available for purchase on an easy access basis. The availability of the public housing stock for purchase provided for in this legislation is in line with ALP policy. The ability to purchase a wider range of housing styles may increase home purchases and therefore add to the stability of the Territory population. Owner-occupation is an incentive for growth and stability in the Territory.

The opposition hopes that the legislation will result in the release of rental stock to the market. It would appear that the legislation will enable a greater freedom of choice in housing design for tenants and others who wish to purchase government housing stock. The opposition sees the amendments as being consistent with its own policies on housing. However, I would like to

issue a note of caution that the housing shortage crisis in the Territory will not be mitigated in the short term by offering existing rental stock for sale. As long as people seek housing within the context of a constrained supply situation, potential home owners will not be encouraged to take up residence. Whether or not the government housing stock is made available on an increased level for rental or for purchase through the building programs, this bill will ideally have the effect of increasing the supply of homes for purchase. As I have indicated, I would see this arrangement as enhancing the stability of the population of the Territory.

In early October this year, a letter was sent out to tenants under the signature of the Chairman of the Northern Territory Housing Commission. He was endeavouring to ascertain the interest on the part of existing tenants in purchasing flats or townhouses from the Housing Commission. The detailed letter was sent to the existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings in Alice Springs and in Darwin. I understand that this particular arrangement will not apply to Katherine and Tennant Creek at the moment.

There were a number of other matters raised apart from the question of whether existing tenants were interested in the purchase of Housing Commission flats and townhouses. The people involved are existing tenants, pensioners and maybe single couples. I think we need to bear that in mind. The scheme is for the sale of unit title dwellings to existing tenants of units in suitable complexes and to existing tenants of other accommodation controlled by the commission. As I indicated earlier, it would be important for the sponsor of the bill to indicate what particular flats or townhouses in the Darwin and Alice Springs areas will be offered for sale. I would be interested to hear what he has to say on that particular question. I would imagine that a great many Housing Commission tenants would have been in receipt of this letter.

I must draw to the attention of the Assembly that, in Alice Springs, as a result of this letter and other concerns which have been raised by the legislation, we have seen the formation of a residents association at South Court which is one of the blocks of Housing Commission flats which exist in the Gap area of Alice Springs. It also is concerned about a number of consequences that may result from the legislation. I think that I ought to dwell at this stage on those particular consequences that may arise. On 22 October this year, the Residents Association of South Court wrote to the Minister for Lands and Housing and expressed a number of major concerns. In the first place, the association asked the minister if the tenants and especially the pensioners will be forced to vacate their flats if they do not wish to purchase. I believe that is a very legitimate concern. In his second-reading speech, the Minister for Lands and Housing said that the existing tenants who do not wish to avail themselves of the offer will be transferred to other accommodation of equal or higher standard. That is obviously a clear statement on the part of the minister as to what will happen to those existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings who are not interested in purchasing the units or the townhouses which may be offered. Indeed, in that particular category, pensioners may be involved.

It is interesting to note that, in a report in the Centralian Advocate of 6 November, there appears conflicting statements in respect of what would happen to the existing tenants of those dwellings. It was reported in the Advocate that the people who are unable to buy or who do not want to buy will not lose their commission flats. I would think that that is not the same as what the minister said in his second-reading speech. No one could interpret that report in the Advocate to mean that, if those existing tenants do not wish to purchase the unit or the townhouse which they occupy, then they would not

be allowed to keep that particular commission flat or unit. At least that is the interpretation which is being placed on that report in the Advocate by the existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings in Alice Springs, notwithstanding the Residents Association of South Court. As I have indicated, there is a contrast between what the minister has said and what has been reported in the Advocate and I would ask him to clarify the situation and to indicate the policy of the government.

* The second major question which was raised by the Residents Association of South Court is in relation to the \$42,000 and \$43,000 figures which were stipulated in the letter from the Chairman of the Housing Commission. In that particular letter, the Chairman of the Housing Commission indicated that the prices are currently ranging from \$42,000 to \$43,000 per unit. Quite legitimately, the existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings in Alice Springs, in this case at the South Court blocks, are raising the question of how the actual price range was arrived at. I think that there ought to be some indication from the government in order that those people may have a better understanding of the situation.

The Residents Association of South Court also asked the minister if there was any truth in the rumour that, if the tenants did not wish to purchase the units, the entire block of those units would be sold to a private developer. Certainly, it would be appropriate for the minister to comment on that particular question and give us some indication of the true position. Are the fears which have resulted from those rumours well based or not?

Mr Speaker, I believe that, in conjunction with a letter which was sent out by the Chairman of the Housing Commission to ascertain the interest of those existing tenants occupying Housing Commission buildings, there was also a questionnaire which raised a number of questions about the interest of existing tenants in the possible purchase of the units they were occupying if they were made available. Other questions were related to whether, if the existing tenants were not interested in the purchase of that particular unit, they would be interested in the purchase of another available unit. There were a number of questions raised which would obviously assist the commission in ascertaining the level of interest in this particular scheme.

I understand the questionnaire was circulated to every Housing Commission tenant in Darwin and Alice Springs and, as I have indicated, there are apparently no dwellings in the Katherine and Tennant Creek areas that the commission considered appropriate for sale under the strata title system. In Darwin, for example, from what I can glean from the information available, it would appear that there are 295 flats and units which would be available for sale under this scheme if approved by the government. In Alice Springs, on a comparison basis, it would appear that there are 108 flats and units available for sale. I understand the Housing Commission is in the process of compiling the information obtained from that particular survey to determine just what the level of interest of existing tenants is. It will be interesting indeed to see just what the response is to this particular proposal.

Finally, I feel it is important that I ought to allude to what I believe are a number of important questions. Hopefully, the minister will be able to give some indication in the debate as to what is the situation. For example, it is important to note the progress and the results of that questionnaire and to know whether it will be made available to the Assembly, and more importantly, to existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings. It is important that we have a firm indication from the minister on what will happen to the existing tenants - for example, pensioners - if they do not wish to purchase units which are offered for sale and in which they are currently residing. I believe that

every care ought to be taken to ensure that, under this particular scheme, there is a minimum of interference with existing tenants. If an elderly pensioner was informed suddenly, as a result of his not wanting to purchase the unit he occupied, that he had to move to alternative accommodation - which the minister says will be equal to or better than the present accommodation - I can imagine his shock and dismay. Indeed, I would hope that that is not the kind of thing that would result from this particular scheme because we ought to ensure that there is a minimum of disruption to the lifestyle, the security and the quiet enjoyment those pensioners have in these Housing Commission units.

Therefore, I believe that there ought to be sufficient consultation with existing residents who ought to be given enough notice of what decision has been taken by the government in respect of the sale of a particular property. Indeed, they ought to know in advance what units will in fact be offered for sale and if in fact their particular unit would be affected. That has to be complemented by ongoing consultation to help reduce any fears or apprehensions that may be raised by the implementation of this legislation.

The opposition is certainly in agreement with the major purposes of this legislation. We see no incompatibility with our own policy on housing in the Territory. However, I hope that the concerns I have raised will be taken up by the minister responsible and that he can inform this Assembly and existing tenants of Housing Commission dwellings what the true situation will be. We support the bill and we look forward to an adequate response from the minister and also to the results of the survey.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I would like to say a few words in response to some matters raised by the honourable member for MacDonnell. I was involved fairly closely with the subject until the recent change of portfolios and, no doubt, the Minister for Lands and Housing will correct any aspects on which I might be wrong. The honourable member for MacDonnell wanted some clarification - and I am sure the minister will be able to give it to him - over which blocks will be for sale.

As I understand it, the letter which has gone out to people is really part of the evolution of a scheme that the government has adopted to enable people in Housing Commission accommodation to purchase townhouses and other buildings suitable for strata titling. It would be unreasonable to expect specific details at this stage of which blocks will be sold and which blocks will not be sold. The first criterion which will govern which blocks can be strata titled will be a physical one. It will involve those buildings that are designed in such a way that they can be reasonably strata titled. There are certain requirements in the Strata Titles Act which have a bearing on this matter. That in itself will identify some buildings suitable for strata titling.

The second criterion depends to some degree on the applicants. The minister has made an earlier statement that persons who do not wish to buy their flat or unit would be transferred to another. I do not believe this government is in a position to carry a tenant out of his flat and place him in another flat if he has strong objections to moving even though the government has made reasonable attempts to try to rehouse him. To a large degree, the success or otherwise of this scheme will depend upon the answers provided to the commission as a result of the circular.

Where a building is physically suitable for strata titling and all tenants in that building are happy to purchase their units, that will be a very simple situation and will be to the advantage of those tenants because they should have the right to buy a permanent piece of real estate for themselves and

settle in the Territory. Where one or more tenants in a building identified as suitable for strata titling do not wish to buy, the commission will seek from those people information as to whether they might be attracted to living in another area. The commission may be able to provide a newer style of building which it may be constructing. It will discuss with those tenants who are reluctant to purchase whether they might not be encouraged to move to a new place. I see nothing wrong with this at all. However, I do not see the government resorting to physical eviction. It is unfortunate that, in those circumstances, it is liable to lead to the rest of the tenants in the building being disadvantaged in that they may not be able to go ahead with their purchase. No doubt, there will be a degree of pressure on some people in those circumstances.

I would oppose strongly a system whereby the commission entered into an arrangement whereby it was a tenant in common with other tenants in a strata title building. One could argue that the commission could hold a half dozen flats in its own name and continue to rent those to the tenants, but the complexities involved would be immense. Being involved in many of these situations throughout the Territory with varying degrees of ownership would create an awful bureaucratic problem. I would be opposed to that situation evolving.

The member for MacDonnell also mentioned that the tenants would like to know how the price was calculated. I believe there is only one way to calculate the price of units to be offered to tenants: the market value. There are other calculations that bear on these matters. One can argue about replacement costs, which could be much higher than the market value, or the historical cost which would be classed below market value. I believe that, when the government or an authority of the government seeks to sell items, it should do so, as a general rule, at the going rate at that time. I cannot see how that could be unfair to the tenant. The tenant is able to resell anything he purchases at a subsequent time and pocket any profit. If the Housing Commission makes some profit in this process because the units may have been constructed some years ago at a considerably cheaper price, the funds would go into providing further housing for other people in the Northern Territory. It cannot be seen that any particular person is profiteering at the expense of tenants.

It would be unfair to consider a criterion other than the market value. The one time the government gets into trouble selling at market value is where market replacement costs vastly exceed market value. Whilst that situation has arisen in Darwin with some of the houses constructed post cyclone, as a general rule that does not apply. That is fortunate because you can find yourself in a sinking pond as a government in that situation. I do not think that will apply as costs and market prices are rising all the time. I do not think the scheme will get into trouble in that regard.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks in this debate. Like the former speaker, I had responsibility for housing matters in the previous parliament and I have an ongoing interest.

The proposal is one that I think members on both sides of the Assembly support. We certainly support the notion that dwellings other than single detached dwellings ought to be available for sale from the public housing stock. However, I have a few concerns in relation to remarks made by the former speaker. Firstly, we must understand what it is about owner-occupancy which is so attractive. I think it goes beyond simply saying that every household likes to have its own bit of dirt. The fact is that, in the Australian states and certainly in the Territory, owner-occupants have an enormous financial advantage over renters. That has been the case since the last war and this is

why governments of all colours in the federal parliament have taken steps to encourage owner-occupancy and have tried to reduce the number of people who are permanent renters. I must say that there will always be a sector of the population which will be renters either through preference or, more likely, because they happen to be in the income bracket where they could never afford housing. They may be of advanced years and consider that to take out a lengthy mortgage for the purchase of a house is not an economic proposition.

I think that it would be unreasonable to say that we are aiming for every household to be in the category of owner-occupancy rather than renter-occupancy. In fact, there are some reasons why this should not occur. The financial advantage is the reason why most people would prefer to be owner-occupants and, when we look at the number of mechanisms that were provided to households to become owner-occupants, we find that this is the desired form of tenure for people in the low-to-middle income bracket. From time to time, the federal government has offered a lump-sum payment in the form of a home savings grant to people buying their first house. The level of this grant has waxed and waned over the years and, at one stage, it was even suspended for a while. Nevertheless, we do have that particular device available now and this particular payment of some thousands of dollars is only available to owner-occupants. Renters, of course, would never be able to avail themselves of it unless they became owner-occupants.

In these inflationary times, we also have the phenomenon whereby owner-occupants are certainly advantaged compared to renters. The advantage derives from the fact that, whilst mortgage repayments tend to be relatively stable over a time, rent tends to be adjusted by landlords to reflect changes in the general price level. Again, although house repayments may rise over a time, they certainly rise much less than rental payments. Certainly, since the last world war, Australian governments have never invoked the imputed tax which would normally be payable if a person were an owner. Owner-occupants have been exempted from payment of a tax on imputed rent. I do not think any government in Australia would ever introduce such a tax. I think all owner-occupants are quite safe in that respect. These are the reasons why people in the lower income brackets ought to be advised to move from the status of renters to that of owner-occupants. From that point of view, we certainly commend this bill. What it does is make available a form of housing which was not available to buyers before. It is a form of housing that has only been available to renters; that is, flats, home units and townhouses.

I am concerned with the administration of the scheme. I would ask the honourable the Minister for Lands and Housing to think about that. The former speaker said that when he was minister he did not favour a system of mixed tenant and owner-occupants in the same block of units which was to be strata titled. Apart from the administrative problems that arise from such a mixture, there are no really good reasons why we cannot have such a mixture of tenants and owner-occupants.

Mr Speaker, the former Minister for Lands and Housing said that, if there arose a case where it was decided to strata title or unit title the units and sell them off and one or more of the tenants decided not to purchase, then that would be the end of it for all those who decided that they would like to be purchasers. This is one of the problems with insisting that all units be sold or all units be tenanted. It is not just a simple matter of saying that all tenants should be able to avail themselves of the opportunity to purchase because some people will never be in the category of purchasers; they will always be renters. I would not like to see these people moved in order to satisfy the desire to purchase on the part of the other tenants.

The honourable Treasurer said that people will not be physically moved and I accept his assurance that people will not be physically moved. On the other hand, he hinted that such persons would be subject to a degree of pressure from those who wanted to purchase and, quite frankly, I have witnessed situations like this. What it really amounts to is that these people, who for no fault of their own cannot afford to purchase, just become the subjects of organised harassment by other tenants to get them to either move of their own accord or to take up the opportunity to purchase.

Another matter that has to be taken into consideration is that it would be absolutely impossible to find that all families at the one time will want to purchase. People's decisions to purchase may be based on a number of factors, including income and family structure. In a block identified to be suitable for strata titling, one might find a family of advanced years whose children have left the nuclear household. On the other hand, one might find in the adjacent unit a young family that might want to purchase and have the financial resources to do so. For one to think that all these people would be able to purchase in the one transaction is a little unrealistic. People have all sorts of reasons. Even if they wanted to purchase, the timing may not be right for them. Are we going to find the Housing Commission saying to these people, 'Well, you have to transfer out of that block and, when you decide that you can avail yourself of the offer to purchase, we will find something for you to purchase', or will we find that these people will be forced out because some of their neighbours who wish to purchase will exert sufficient pressure on them to do so?

These factors may well frustrate the good intentions of this bill. We simply cannot say that everyone will be in an identical situation with respect to timing and ability to pay and able to avail himself of the opportunity to purchase. Whilst we applaud the intention of this bill to make available a wider range of housing units for sale, I feel that the minister ought to give some regard to how it is to be administered.

The former Minister for Lands and Housing said that he would not like to see the Housing Commission as a tenant in common with other people. There is no reason why this could not work in much the same way as it does for dozens of private landlords. In private schemes that have been strata titled, it is perfectly normal and reasonable to expect to find a mixture of residents, some of whom are renters and some of whom are owner-occupants. The landlord of the premises has to do certain things as a result of his obligations under the Unit Titles Act. There is no reason why the Housing Commission should not act in the same way. To say that this would be a bureaucratic nightmare is a little too harsh. In fact, whenever one has a public housing scheme to administer, one must have some bureaucratic structure. I do not see that it would be all that insuperable for the Housing Commission to be a tenant in common with other persons who might wish to be owner-occupants.

I have spoken a bit about the minister's statement that tenants who do not wish to purchase will be transferred to other accommodation of equal or higher standard. I might point out that, if the tenant were a private tenant, then this arrangement would not be available to the Housing Commission under the Tenancy Act. There are certain specified reasons for which a landlord can move a tenant and the inability to purchase the dwelling is not one of them. Of course, we know that the government has taken the precaution of keeping the Housing Commission outside the ambit of the Tenancy Act and there are some reasons for doing this which I do not propose to quarrel with here. Nonetheless, I think it would be fairer if tenants in public housing had much the same sorts of rights as those available to tenants who are covered by the Tenancy Act.

It is not a sufficient reason to move a person out of a residential unit simply because he does not wish to purchase. A landlord has to show that a tenant has a history of rental delinquency or has damaged the premises or something of that nature before he can be moved. I am careful not to use the word 'evicted', Mr Speaker, because I know that is not the intention of the minister.

I am also concerned that those people who cannot purchase will be moved to those properties which happen to be less desirable. Over the past few years, we have seen an enormous improvement in the quality of housing provided in the multi-unit developments by the Housing Commission. We have come from the 1950-style of development of Carinya and Kurringal to those very attractive townhouse units that are provided in Ludmilla and Nightcliff. Others are currently under construction in Wanguri. I must commend the Housing Commission. I think this is an extremely attractive multi-unit development that they are undertaking. When the opportunity to purchase is given, it can be reasonably expected that these are the sorts of units that people will wish to purchase. If it is the firm intention and completely irrevocable decision of the minister that tenants who cannot purchase will be transferred, my fear is that the tenants who wish to continue to be renters will be moved to less desirable premises and those which are never likely to be made available for sale.

In the Territory at the moment, we have a system whereby tenants are moved after they have lived 2 years in places like Kurringal. They are told that they will be transferred to more attractive accommodation as it becomes available in other areas of Darwin. I certainly would not like to see a situation whereby people who wish to be permanent renters will be locked into less desirable residential developments of the older style. I hope that it is not the minister's final word that there will not be any mixture of occupants. I assure him that, in private developments of this nature, a system of renters as well as owner-occupants works quite well. I commend that suggestion to him as I think that that will accentuate the intention of this bill and make the prospect of purchase a much more attractive one for those who have that ability.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): I rise in support of this bill. For a number of years now, there has been a lobby by people living in flats to have the Housing Act amended to enable the Housing Commission to sell its flats and townhouses. I am very pleased to see that the government has widened the scope of home ownership and has accepted the fact that many people are now moving back into the cities and taking up flats or townhouses as their style of living. There is a move right throughout Australia for people to come back into the city areas to live. The idea of allowing tenants to purchase their flats and townhouses is a good one and it is consistent with the government's policy of allowing everyone the opportunity to own his own home. Why should those who prefer to live in flats and townhouses pay rent for the rest of their lives?

There are a couple of points that I would like to raise, however, which touch on some concerns I have in relation to allowing the purchase of Housing Commission flats and townhouses and also a query that I have in regard to regulation-making powers. Some of the people I have contacted have been very concerned about the proposal. They feel that, when these flats and townhouses come on the market, there will be a rush and we will be left with no low-cost housing. The minister placed particular emphasis in his second-reading speech on 2 points. The first point was that only selected flats and townhouses would be sold and, secondly, that they would be sold to approved tenants only. I think that these are the controlling factors which will protect the community and ensure that we still maintain low-cost government housing.

There has also been concern that some Housing Commission flats in the

central business district could, on application, be rezoned for office purposes once they were sold. The Planning Authority probably would not allow this to happen, but it could. This may cause some complications for future development in the city area. It is generally felt that perhaps these flats and townhouses that are to be offered for sale should be in the dormitory areas. This would allow the major city area some flexibility in its future development. To the letter talked about by the member for MacDonnell, there was attached a list which described the flats or townhouses suitable for sale in Darwin. Perhaps he could obtain one of these lists for the Alice Springs area. The letter contained a questionnaire and a list of the proposed flats and townhouses for sale.

I have already mentioned that the trend is for people to return to the city areas to flat and townhouse accommodation. To make Darwin work, it is imperative that more accommodation be provided in the main city area and, whether we like it or not, that form of accommodation must be as dense as possible. That means flat-type accommodation. There are still a number of areas near the central business district where these flats could be built.

Whilst there are many townhouses being built around the Darwin area, there is one development potential that has not been touched on as yet. Companies that have built large office complexes or are in the process of building large office complexes should give consideration to using the top floors of these buildings for accommodation purposes. The views from the tops of these buildings are magnificent. The major cost has been in providing the main office block. The conversion for accommodation purposes would be a very small cost in comparison.

The only other point I would like to raise relates to regulation-making powers. If we look at clause 6 of the bill, under the heading 'Continuation of Existing Schemes', we see a principle established which I am not very happy with. The amendment is to omit part of subsection 33H (3) of the Housing Act and substituted the following: 'a reference in those regulations' - and here we are referring to the Housing Loans Act - 'to the Home Finance Trustee shall be read as including a reference to the Commission; and (b) those regulations may be amended or repealed by regulations made under this Act'. The authority for making regulations to the Housing Loans Act comes from a provision in the Housing Act. I realise that the Housing Loans Act, as it stands, is really only one section in that virtually all of the provisions of the old Housing Loans Act have now been incorporated in the Housing Act.

However, the principle of enabling the regulations of one act to be amended or repealed by the authority of another act should be avoided at all costs. I raise this point because I spend a great deal of my time consolidating legislation and cross-referencing. If we have to define sections which refer to legislation-making powers and if we also have to look at acts which surround the legislation that we are dealing with, then I believe it to be an impossible task. Unless a person is up to date with all the laws of the Territory, then I believe the task would be just about impossible. I realise that we are able to refer to the Crown Solicitor's office if we have a problem in this area.

Mr Speaker, I support the bill but I do query the principle of allowing regulations referring to one act to be amended or repealed by provisions in another act. I also look forward to the reprint of the Housing Act.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I also wish to speak briefly in support of this bill which will enable Housing Commission tenants who were previously not eligible for single dwellings, and therefore not able to purchase their dwellings, to have the opportunity to own the premises in which

they live. I think that is a very desirable thing.

Along with the member for Port Darwin, I also looked at the list of dwellings in Darwin that the Housing Commission is thinking of making available under this scheme and I find that they tend to be the most attractive, the newest and the most desirable of the Housing Commission units. Certainly, I agree with the member for Sanderson that the quality of the newest designs of Housing Commission townhouses is excellent. They compare very favourably with many built in the private sector and their cost of \$42,000 to \$43,000 is very competitive indeed. It will be a very desirable prospect for some Housing Commission tenants. Nevertheless, I also share her concern that the operation of the scheme should not disadvantage that quite large sector of Housing Commission tenants who will not be in a position to benefit from the scheme.

In Darwin, as in other areas of the Territory, there are some Housing Commission complexes which are recognised as being less desirable and less pleasant places in which to live. In my own electorate there are nearly 300 Housing Commission flats. I think I can claim the honour of having what is recognised as the least desirable place to live, namely, Kurringal. It has 224 units and, while many of the tenants have been there since it was opened, nevertheless many people do not find it a desirable place to live. It was designed in a way which would seem entirely unsuited to the Northern Territory. It is very crowded, there are a lot of people living in a small area and, while the flats themselves are quite pleasant, the living conditions are not always so. It is a fact that, for whatever reason, these less desirable places inevitably seem to get a larger percentage of the lowest income groups in them. I do not say that the Housing Commission does this deliberately but this is what eventually happens.

Nearly 70% of the tenants of Kurringal are in receipt of rental rebates. That means the Housing Commission acknowledges that, because they are pensioners or in receipt of social security benefits of one sort or another, they are unable to pay the full rent and so they have to pay less rent. As I said, 70% of the tenants at Kurringal are in this situation and therefore already those people who are less able to look after themselves and certainly will not be in a position to benefit from this scheme are being collected into the least desirable living areas. I think this is unfortunate and I sincerely hope that the government and the Housing Commission ensure that some of the nicer and newer townhouses and flats are still available for pensioners, single parents and others who may never be able to benefit from this home-purchase scheme.

I referred to the number of people already in these flats who probably will never have the benefit of owning their own home. One such group of people I have spoken of in the Assembly before - the single parents. The Housing Commission had the policy of transferring them from large complexes so that they would have a more suitable environment for young children to grow up in. As a result of increased pressure on its accommodation - and perhaps for other reasons - it has changed this policy. The Housing Commission now allocates a very limited number of townhouses to single parents in Darwin. I assume this policy also applies in Alice Springs. Certainly, in Darwin, there are a very limited number of townhouses which are available for single parents. There is a special list - they are segregated - just for single parents. They cannot move into a townhouse whenever one becomes available; they have to wait for a townhouse which is on the special list for single parents to become available. This rarely happens. While I appreciate the pressures that the Housing Commission is under in providing accommodation with the very grave shortage of low-cost accommodation in the Northern Territory, nevertheless, I think this has been a most unfortunate policy decision and it is certainly discriminating against this group of Northern Territory citizens who are raising young

Territorians of whom we should take the greatest care.

I very much hope that the implementation of this new policy, which I support, does not further disadvantage those who are already disadvantaged in our community. Concern has also been expressed to me by Housing Commission tenants that they should not be pressured to move from the flat or unit in which they reside in order to make it available to somebody else who wishes to purchase it. If somebody wishes to purchase a vacant dwelling, that is fine but people should not be pressured to move from a place just so that it will then be available for purchase.

I appreciate that it would be administratively much simpler for the Housing Commission if it could place rental tenants on one list and have a separate list for purchase. Nevertheless, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve that in the short term and, in the interim, I certainly hope that people are not disadvantaged. With those reservations, I support this bill. I am pleased that, as a result, some of my constituents may be able to purchase Housing Commission units and the Housing Commission is to be commended for the standard of dwelling which it is now erecting in the Northern Territory.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I support the concept of the proposed legislation. I think it may be a little ahead of its time and I fear for the administration of the bill if it is passed in its present form without certain assurances regarding the rights of present tenants. As other honourable members have said, a letter went out from the Housing Commission, quite properly given that the bill was introduced and is now a public document, asking those tenants to indicate whether, if the opportunity were available, they would wish to purchase the dwellings in which they presently reside. The result of that proper investigation was perhaps what neither the minister nor the commissioners of the Housing Commission expected.

For a large number of people, it would mean extreme distress. The honourable minister and his predecessor will be aware that a significant number of Housing Commission tenants are tenants of the commission because they do not have another option. They are grateful for what they have. Many of them are particularly grateful for the rental rebate scheme but any perceived threat to their quite vulnerable position excites in them almost a misery which sometimes is beyond the comprehension of those of us who are more affluent and more able to cope for ourselves. I am not suggesting that all Housing Commission tenants are in that category. I am reminding the Assembly, however, that the Northern Territory Housing Commission was originally established to assist in the housing of Territorians who were basically low-income earners and who could not adequately house themselves and their families by other means.

The letter pinpointed a variety of premises and asked, if the opportunity were available, would the tenant wish to purchase a dwelling in those premises. Coincidentally, those pinpointed were the most sought-after of the rental accommodation presently offering in Darwin. The honourable member for Fannie Bay has painted a true picture of the people residing in Kurringal. I do not see that Kurringal is necessarily bad or undesirable but I do know that a vast majority of the tenants in Kurringal look for a progression of tenancy. They look to the flats in Hudson Fysh Avenue, in Nightcliff and in Ludmilla. They see the townhouse development as something for which the government should be congratulated. The thought of not having this option of progression has caused extreme distress to people who do not have other options. They do not have the option of the open market, notwithstanding any comment from the Master Builders Association.

I listened with great interest to the honourable Treasurer's comments because he holds the purse strings of the Northern Territory and also has an intimate knowledge of the workings of the Housing Commission because he has only recently relinquished that portfolio. I cannot agree with him that the necessity of renting a desirable premises and the option to purchase are necessarily mutually exclusive. I appreciate his concern that such a position would be an administrative nightmare, but I cannot see how the alternative would be other than a worse nightmare: pressure put upon people to move out of what are demonstrably desirable commission tenancies and the removal of the option for people in less desirable premises to aspire to those better options.

The present minister and all members of this Assembly welcome the proposition that people can purchase by strata title Housing Commission accommodation and that anybody moved from his present accommodation by the Housing Commission will be offered at least equivalent accommodation. That is a statement to which we all subscribe but the practicalities are something else. I am well aware of the affection people gather very quickly not only for the premises in which they happen to reside - and this applies particularly to single parents - but also for the neighbours, the neighbourhood school etc. These are important considerations if people are to be removed from, say, the Narrows area or Ludmilla to some as yet undesignated area. Not only the flats but also the neighbourhood has to be considered. Because of this, I think that the intention of the government, admirable as it may be, may not be practically worth while because extreme distress will be caused to a variety of people, particularly by the shifting of tenants to a different locality. The premises offered may indeed be on a par but there will still be distress caused to the most vulnerable members of our community; that is, pensioners and men and women who are supporting parents whether or not they are on the supporting parents benefit or are actually working to support their children. They have little enough security in our society, which is a great pity, and the thought of having to move to a different locality has occasioned many of them to visit my office - and very few of them live in Nightcliff - expressing their dismay, not at the proposal that the more fortunate among them may be given the option of purchasing their premises but at the thought that those not in that fortunate position may be shifted. I have no time for the philosophy espoused by the Treasurer that personal pressure from tenants can achieve the same object. I find that quite abhorrent.

Mr Speaker, I cannot speak against the concept of commission tenants being able to purchase a variety of premises. Like the minister, I hope it will assist in stabilising a community which is relatively stable even now. My concern is for those more disadvantaged tenants of the Housing Commission who feel that, at least in the short term, the hope of purchase is far beyond their expectations and means and who see an avenue being closed to them, an avenue of betterment for themselves and their families: their removal from an area like Kurringal to what is normally considered a more salubrious environment. I share the concern of those people already in that environment who cannot purchase and who are horrified at the prospect of removal one way or another.

Given the restrictions on government funding which we have seen, I wonder how the government's philosophy will be translated into practical terms of providing alternative accommodation of an equivalent standard for those who may move. Housing in the Northern Territory is a matter of the utmost sensitivity and vulnerability. I ask the minister to pay particular attention to the views which have been expressed. No member has so far expressed opposition to the concept but a number of practical problems have been raised about which this Assembly needs to be assured before the bill is passed.

Mr STEELE (Primary Production and Tourism): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the amendment to the housing legislation. Certainly, it is something that I have supported for quite a considerable period. I believe that we should have been involved in this type of sale to tenants quite some time ago. In the minister's second-reading speech, I noted that he envisaged that flats and townhouses selected for sale would go to existing tenants. I took that to mean also that public servants, particularly those in my electorate, would be entitled to purchase those units in which they currently live. That was certainly one of the reasons why I supported this amendment quite some time ago. There are many units in Ludmilla.

I would take up the point raised by the opposition about the quality or otherwise of Kurringal. I would have thought that the Fannie Bay area was one of the most salubrious in the Northern Territory. Kurringal has 3 excellent sports clubs just down the road. It is only hundreds of yards from the beaches and it is only a very short walk to the racecourse. Why it should be considered anything other than excellent escapes me. Perhaps the local member could tell me. I have been to Kurringal; I had friends staying there for a short while and I used to call on them.

I note in the circular from the Housing Commission the range of accommodation that is being offered. I realise that it is only a survey but I would bet dollars to peanuts that there is no way in the world that they will ever sell units in Hudson Fysh Avenue. I am not opposed to the tenants in common arrangement with the Housing Commission; it would streamline the process if the Housing Commission could take a few units in small groupings of strata titles. When you look at a place like Hudson Fysh Avenue, obviously it would be almost impossible to sell the lot anyway. Parap stage 1 might be an area where it will sell every one of its units. Obviously, it can pre-sell some before the units are tenanted.

I would be very surprised if the price of \$42,000 to \$43,000 would measure up for a bedsitter or 1-bedroom flat on Progress Drive. To be quite honest, I think the price is outrageous. I think it should be a lot cheaper than that and give more people a crack at buying them.

Mr Robertson: It is \$35,5000 not \$43,000.

Mr STEELE: It does not say so on the circular. Obviously, the minister can tell us about that in his reply. The circular states that it is not the intention of the commission to retain any interest in the blocks of flats. I think it is probably a mistake to say that without due consideration of the circumstances. Obviously, in the Fenton Flats, the Runge Street flats, if there were 1 or 2 existing tenants who were not able to move for the time being, you would have to consider participation in a tenancy in common.

I do not believe that this is a bad move in any way at all. I believe that for all sorts of reasons, demographic and otherwise, it would stabilise the population, allow better statistics to be made available to service schools and other public facilities and put more accommodation on the real estate market. It would also release funds from the Housing Commission to go further into the building industry. Taken all round and considering all aspects, I think it is a darn fine piece of legislation.

Mr ROBERTSON (Lands and Housing): In speaking briefly in reply, I would like to thank honourable members for their contributions which have been extremely useful to me. I have no doubt that it will be even more useful when my officers and I read Hansard to ascertain the feelings expressed in this Assembly.

One of the principal issues canvassed by members was the question of transfer out of existing tenancy and whether there should be a joint tenancy arrangement by way of the method outlined by the honourable member for Nightcliff which applies in the private sector. In the private sector, it is very easy to do because the landlord usually owns only one block and therefore an agent can handle it quite conveniently. It may be extremely difficult for the Housing Commission to do the same thing. I would ask honourable members to bear in mind that, in order to carry out repeated additional functions, a government or statutory authority requires additional staff. The reality of additional staff is that additional revenue is required to pay them. Since the Housing Commission has a responsibility under the Housing Act to balance its books, that would mean additional rent.

Nonetheless, if we are to have a proposition where a person is merely offered alternative accommodation but has no compulsion to move, there will be absolutely no alternative than to go into joint tenancy if the scheme is to work at all. It is something of a catch 22 situation. After examination of this over the last few days and with the assistance of remarks made here today, I have come quite firmly to the conclusion that is the only way it can work. It may be possible to manoeuvre in groups of 4 flats in places such as South Court in Alice Springs.

To clarify this issue of transfer, I would like to preface my remarks by apologising to the Assembly for the wording which was used in the second-reading speech and of course I accept full responsibility for it but there were some words left out. The wording should have been 'offered transfer to other accommodation of equal' and not 'will be transferred'.

I have a letter to the Chairman of the South Court Residents Association. It is unfortunate that we have people talking about rumours and one must address himself to the source of these rumours and perhaps the motives behind them. I will just read out one paragraph of the letter:

If the Housing Commission were to decide to sell the South Court flat complex, the tenants who cannot afford to buy or who do not wish to purchase a flat would be offered other suitable alternative accommodation of a standard at least equal to or, if necessary, higher than their present entitlement. Should there be tenants in any one block who neither wish to transfer or purchase then that block would be retained by the commission as rental stock. There is absolutely no truth in the rumour that, if tenants do not wish to purchase, the entire block of flats will be sold to a developer.

Why is it necessary for a minister to respond to an absolutely absurd story like that? I wonder who peddles these stories? The first speaker on this issue uses a very clever method to peddle rumours. The honourable member for MacDonnell does it in 2 ways, both through press releases. What he does is write a letter to a minister saying that the member for MacDonnell has expressed concern about rumours - which no doubt he invents - which are circulating. Alternatively, he raises a series of questions in the Assembly in the morning and over lunch has a remarkable propensity to indicate to the press, by way of telex, that he has raised these serious unanswered concerns with the minister.

I accept entirely the member for Nightcliff's view when she talks of people being vulnerable. She does not refer to vulnerability in terms of being rejected but financial vulnerability. These people are vulnerable and are very easily worried. Considering his political party and what he espouses, I hope that the honourable member for MacDonnell has not done that deed once again

over lunch-time because it will hurt people very badly if it happens to be on the ABC news tonight. If he has, I would very strongly advise him, in these people's interest, to cancel or pull, as it is called, that press release. I am just speculating that, because the gentleman is so prone to doing this sort of thing, he might have done it again. I am not sure.

I would ask the Assembly to proceed with the bill. I accept the honourable member for Nightcliff's comment that the Assembly is entitled to know, as far as is possible, how legislation will be administered.

I accept the difficulty of bringing this legislation into effect. Everyone agrees that it is highly desirable especially as we have given a categorical undertaking to people that they will not be forced to transfer against their will. This will mean that, in almost 99% of our blocks, there will be someone wanting to remain for the very reasons the honourable member for Nightcliff validly mentioned: affinity with friends, location, convenience to a particular school, convenience to shopping centres and so on. If it is to work, the commission and I, as minister responsible, will have to examine the question of common or joint tenancies with the commission. I am afraid that is the reality of it.

The point raised by the honourable member for Port Darwin related to the effects of the amendment on section 33H(3) of the principal act. What has happened is that the Housing Loans Act was repealed by this section of the Housing Act which means that the regulations that govern the continuing operation of the Home Finance Trustee scheme would have been repealed with it. What this amendment did was to apply the regulations made under the Home Loans Act to the Housing Act in order that they may continue. In fact, this amendment is not granting a capacity to repeal regulations made under another act under this one because the other act has ceased to exist. It is simply maintaining the ability to vary the regulations or to make regulations pertaining to home loans schemes prior to 1 July 1978. All it does is maintain a reference to the Home Finance Trustee who has ceased to exist as being a reference to the commission. I hope that clarifies the matter for the honourable member. In the previous Assembly, the honourable member for Nightcliff spoke strongly about the cross-referencing of legislation and particularly on the effect of regulations. The other point is that all regulations come before this Assembly and are subject to scrutiny. However, I do accept the point of the honourable member for Port Darwin that, unless you have a battery of lawyers assisting you or you have nothing better to do, the regulations are extremely difficult to decipher.

Mr Speaker, I hope that I have covered the principal concerns contained in the discussion here today. I just cannot sit down without taking issue with the honourable member for Sanderson who so tirelessly advised us all that private home ownership was a policy of both sides of the political spectrum. She went on further to say that no government would contemplate an imputed rent for income tax purposes. Of course, we are all fully aware that, in 1974, a widely espoused policy of the Australian Labor Party was not only to do just that but to go one step further and impose a window tax on those of us who dare to look out of our homes. I commend the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

MAGISTRATES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 23)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this bill seeks to put on a proper basis the contractual arrangements between magistrates and the government given that magistrates are not public servants and given that we have a wide area in which to administer the laws of the Territory. The geography concerned requires those magistrates to travel and it is quite obvious that the person in charge of administering that area, the Chief Magistrate, has to be given certain powers in which to regulate the administration of justice and that each of the magistrates will have certain responsibilities under that.

Because of the geography, the different sorts of communities, the distances etc, it is hard for magistrates to exercise their authority with a degree of consistency. The Law Reform Commission has just brought down a very interesting and weighty tome about sentencing provisions in federal law. One of the points that it makes is the inconsistency in the sentences handed down by federal courts operating in different states and that this prompts feelings of discontent amongst people who have not received similar sentences to people in other states. Naturally, an attempt to come to grips with this sort of problem is worth while. It is for that reason that the opposition supports the intention of the bill but wishes to make a number of amendments which I believe are important and which will increase the efficacy of the legislation.

I made it clear that the magistrates must administer justice right around the Territory. For that purpose, the Chief Magistrate must be able to get his magistrates together and offer them experience in Darwin, Alice Springs, outback communities, Aboriginal communities, Nhulunbuy and so on. Territory residents will then receive the same fair treatment no matter where they live. That is not to say that circumstances in Borroloola, for example, are exactly the same as in Wave Hill. But it is to say that the judicial system ought to be administered fairly and consistently given the context of the offences. For that reason, the Chief Magistrate may feel that a discussion amongst his magistrates or experience in different courts would have a beneficial effect on the administration of justice. The provisions of the bill come to grips with this and we most certainly support it. That is not to say that magistrates are somehow different from anybody else. If they were public servants, they would find they would be in the same position, so far as servicing the Northern Territory, as firemen, prison officers and public servants of all manner who are required to provide their services throughout the Northern Territory. The magistrates ought not to be any different.

It is important that we make a number of points. First, it is most important that the independence of the judiciary is not in any way sullied. Therefore, the Chief Magistrate must be given the authority to deal with these matters without any interference whatever. Secondly, there must be a proper contractual arrangement between the magistrates to protect them from capriciousness on the part of the Chief Magistrate. I do not want this construed by anybody, least of all the Chief Magistrate, that I think that any actions that he has taken are capricious. I am not talking about the personalities involved at all. What I am saying is that people are known to behave in an extraordinary fashion. We could even say it of members of this parliament given the fine, upstanding people that we all are. We are prone, however, to act somewhat capriciously. In that event, magistrates have to be given the same sort of protection that ordinary people have.

The part which we would seek to amend to make the bill more effective is

the clause which deals with the removal of magistrates from office. We believe that, if a magistrate has failed to comply with a direction given to him by the Chief Magistrate under clause 13(2) or the Administrator is satisfied that the magistrate is incapable of carrying out his duties or incompetent to carry out his duties, these are reasonable grounds for dismissal. We find it then unreasonable to add clause 10(b)(iii) which says that the magistrate may be dismissed for any other reason that the Administrator believes is unsuited to the performance of his duties. It strikes me that that is very wide and it is hard to imagine just what is in mind. If there is something specific in mind, then it ought to be stated. I believe that the provisions laid down in clause 10 are sufficient without the very wide implications of paragraph 10(b)(iii).

In the committee stage, I will be seeking to have that particular paragraph removed. If there are reasons other than incompetency or incapacity, then they ought to be spelt out. It seems wrong that, just for any reason deemed unsuitable to the performance of his duties, a magistrate may be removed from office. One clear case might be that a magistrate might take a certain lenient view about sentencing. There is nothing illegal in that; he is complying with the law. But it may be that the government believes that such leniency is not on as far as it is concerned. It may say: 'Look, if the magistrate is not prepared to come forward with those sorts of penalties which we think are appropriate, then the magistrate will be removed'. I think that all members here would say that that is not on. Yet under the proposed paragraph 10(b)(iii), a government would be able to remove a magistrate. If the government does have something particular in mind, it ought to spell it out. Paragraph 10(b)(iii) is far too wide for any contractual relationship between an employer and an employee.

The other matter which arises immediately when looking at clause 10 is the wording of subclause 10(a): 'A magistrate appointed under section 4(3) shall not be removed from office unless he has failed to comply with a direction given by the Chief Magistrate under section 13(2)'. Again, that is perfectly proper except that we believe that the Chief Magistrate ought to have responsibility to give reasonable directions in that regard only. It may be that somebody will say: 'Well, quite obviously, if the Chief Magistrate gives a direction, it has to be a reasonable one'. If that is the case, then there will not be any objection to inserting our proposed clause 13(4) which simply says: 'In exercising these powers under subsection (2), the Chief Magistrate shall only give such directions as are reasonable'. There is nothing wrong with putting in the word 'reasonable' if it makes it clear. I believe it does and is related to the original point I made about protecting magistrates from capriciousness on the part of the Chief Magistrate.

The only other matter which I wish to refer to in this piece of legislation is clause 7. Magistrates will be bound by this new piece of legislation notwithstanding that, at the time of their appointment, their removal was subject to a vote of this parliament. The Chief Minister made the point that, when people are appointed as magistrates, they usually give up a lucrative practice down south to come to the Territory. They took up their appointment conditionally and one of those conditions was that their removal would be subject to a resolution of this Assembly. That gave them a secure period of tenure. We are unlikely to act capriciously; we are unlikely to manufacture reasons.

Mrs Lawrie: Is that something new?

Mr ISAACS: One lives in hope, doesn't one? It is most unlikely that that would occur. It does give a magistrate a much greater protection than the removal conditions which are in the new bill. The point is that existing

magistrates were appointed under given conditions. I do not think that it is appropriate to change those conditions in midstream of their employment unless they are in some way to the advantage of the magistrates. Now there are plenty of precedents for that. We all know that one of the conditions of the compulsory transfer of Commonwealth public servants to the Northern Territory Public Service was that their conditions would be assured. The Chief Minister has been at pains on many occasions to reiterate that particular point: 'Their conditions will not be changed to their detriment; they will only be changed either by agreement or to their advantage'.

There are other precedents. A referendum in 1977 put an age limit on federal court judges. By an overwhelming vote of the Australian people, it was decreed that federal court judges would retire at 70. Obviously, those people who were appointed prior to that decision and who had tenure for life retained that condition except on petition of the parliament. I believe that the same ought to apply with our magistrates. It may be that each of the magistrates is happy to see the new conditions as being to his advantage. I think that that probably is not the case.

In the committee stage, I will invite defeat of proposed clause 7. In the Interpretation Act, where an appointment is made under certain conditions, those conditions cannot be set aside notwithstanding the repeal or otherwise of the act under which the appointment was made. What our proposed clause 7 does is remove that. I believe that, in terms of the principle of the rights of appointment, that is totally wrong. Having said that, I believe that clause 7 is a bad clause in principle, it may be that each of the magistrates is happy that those new provisions are to his advantage. However, I would not have thought so.

It is important that we secure the rights of existing magistrates as a matter of principle: the conditions of appointment, unless changed to the advantage, ought not to be altered. In conclusion, I would like to say that the opposition welcomes a proper setting out of the conditions for new appointments as magistrates. We believe the terms relating to removal from office ought only to apply to those new appointments. I believe that the amendments which I have circulated will make this bill a very worth-while piece of legislation.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, sometimes what is said in the second-reading speech is equally as interesting as what is written in the bill. In the debate of Thursday 21 August, as reported in Hansard, the Chief Minister in speaking to this bill stated: 'It is the policy of this government, so far as it is possible, to take justice to the people and it will become increasingly necessary for magistrates to sit in outlying areas. Ultimately, it may be necessary or desirable to have resident magistrates in places such as Gove, Jabiru, Katherine and Tennant Creek. The government believes that there should be power to direct magistrates where they shall sit and believes that this power is properly exercisable by the Chief Magistrate'.

Might I say, Mr Speaker, that I think it is entirely logical and reasonable for the Chief Magistrate to be apportioning the duties of the magistrates as to where they shall sit and exercise their jurisdiction. It would be inconceivable for any other person to carry out this duty. Given the fact that magistrates are people who have commitments to home life and to other things, their extensive travel throughout the Territory to carry out the express desire of the government to bring justice to the people should be done with a minimum of fuss and bother to themselves. This would be in the interests of all concerned, including the defendants.

What I do want to make plain to the Chief Minister are my reservations with regard to having resident magistrates in small communities. Magistrates, like ombudsmen and judges, must be seen to be impartial, not only when they are sitting on the bench but, because of human nature, in all the facets of their lives. It is very difficult in a small community for a person holding a judicial position not to be seen at a social function enjoying the company of one or other of the sides of the judicial system. Quite simply, they will be seen talking to, playing snooker with, enjoying a drink with, either members of the police or members of the defence counsel. That is fine if it is ephemeral and if it is clearly recognised by the community that their right to enjoy a social occasion is not an indication of their attitude. It is much more difficult for a person in that position to live in a small community and to preserve his independence in a way which is understood by those on whom he sits in judgment.

I want to make it quite clear that I am casting no aspersions nor reflections on the way in which magistrates in the Territory or anywhere else in Australia carry out their duty. What I am aware of is the suspicion of communities that magistrates, officers of the ombudsman's office and judges, if they are seen talking to one section of the community, are therefore on that section's side. It is not an attitude to which I subscribe but I know that many relatively unsophisticated people - and I use the phrase 'relatively unsophisticated' in a legal sense - become suspicious. Until the populations of these smaller centres increase dramatically, I would hope that the Attorney-General and the Chief Magistrate will continue the present practice of visiting magistrates rather than look for resident magistrates. I think the pressure upon the resident magistrates to hold themselves on all occasions somewhat aloof from the populace would be detrimental to their well-being. I do not think that they should have to have that aloofness but, because of the quirks of human nature, it is seen in the smaller communities to be a necessity.

I listened carefully to the Leader of the Opposition when he outlined the reasons for his objections to some facets of this bill and indicated some of the amendments which will be brought forward. Certainly, his comments about preserving existing rights strikes a sympathetic chord with me because I am a good union lady. I was not so swayed by his argument for his proposal to amend section 10(b)(iii) which reads, 'for any other reason unsuited to the performance of his duties'. He mentioned the likelihood of a magistrate apportioning a sentence in a more lenient manner on a defendant found guilty than the government of the day would like. The obvious remedy for the government of the day is to increase the penalties. It is within the jurisdiction of this Assembly to increase penalties to give a clear indication to the court as to how the government of the day feels society should penalise people for having been found guilty of contravening some acts. I do not think that was a valid argument. I would raise that now so that, when the Leader of the Opposition introduces his proposed amendment, he may have some other argument to which I may pay heed.

Aside from the supposition that magistrates would be too lenient - I would like to think that sometimes they would be too harsh - and the proposal that existing rights should be maintained - and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I would subscribe to that - I support the bill. I hope that the Chief Minister will appreciate the comment I have made that it is extremely difficult for people in a judicial position to maintain their independence when living in a small community. It may result in their having very few people to whom they can talk freely without the fear of being seen, quite incorrectly, as being subject to bias by other members of the community.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): I am not going to canvass the same arguments that have been covered already by the Leader of the Opposition but I was very interested indeed that the one aspect of this bill which concerned me has just been canvassed by the honourable member for Nightcliff: the problem of being a resident magistrate in a small community. The reason I wanted to raise this point and endorse everything that the honourable member said is that I know personally a number of magistrates already in this position. On a number of occasions over the past few years, they have raised with me the problems that are caused to them in their private lives by sitting in judgment on people in a tiny community. One of those gentlemen is an Aboriginal magistrate and has been for a number of years.

The problems that are caused by this have been canvassed in this Assembly in connection with the possible implementation of Aboriginal law. It would be virtually impossible for Aboriginal justices of the peace or magistrates sitting in the communities in which they live not to have some of their relatives before them almost all of the time. I can remember that I was at a meeting where this was discussed and Mr Pauling made some very clear observations on this problem. In answer to a question by an Aboriginal person at this meeting, he said that, were he placed in a position of having a relative before him, he would discharge himself from the case. He could see the great problems that this would cause for Aboriginal magistrates sitting in judgment on people who invariably would be related to them.

Many years ago, I worked in Aboriginal communities under the old welfare system where there were superintendents in charge. I can remember this only too well and I know that there is a gentleman sitting in the public gallery who will know precisely whom I am talking about. In those days, superintendents were God's representatives on earth as far as the communities were concerned. They were de facto magistrates because they constantly had to sit in judgment on the people in those communities. Specifically, in this case, I am talking about the non-Aboriginal residents of the community. The permit system in those days was extremely rigid indeed. The ultimate power which that man had - and which to my certain knowledge was exercised on a great many occasions - was of removing a person's permit and thereby automatically costing him his job and forcing him to leave the community. In those days, any infringement of a moral nature or of a disciplinary nature was acted upon very swiftly. I can remember numerous occasions where people were called into the superintendent's office in the morning and left the same day on the plane. Arrangements were made to pack up their personal effects and send them on later. It was never questioned and it interests me a great deal to reflect on the extraordinary social changes that have occurred in these places in the last 4 or 5 years.

In the particular case that I can remember, the man was a superintendent of a very large community where I worked. He was a man of considerable standing and a man greatly admired and respected by everyone. He found in his first 12 months in this community - and he went there as a relatively young man - that he was getting into constant trouble because, if he took disciplinary action against an employee of the Forestry Branch, he would be accused at a later time - and in a small community these birds always come home to roost - that, because he had been at a teachers barbecue or because he had been at a progress association employees function a week or so before, he was favouring one group of people in the community against another. This problem became so bad that, in order to preserve his reputation for integrity and fairness, he became a virtual hermit. He was a single man and he became a hermit in his own home, a recluse in fact, and was not seen in the community after working hours. I suppose it was a matter of choice on his part. I suppose he could have left the community.

When I was reading this bill the other day, I recalled only too well the circumstances in which this man was placed as a result of being forced into a position where he had to sit in judgment on people with whom he was living and working every day of his life. I do not think it is too strong to say that it ruined his private life and eventually he left the community a very unhappy man. He was admired and respected greatly. One of the results that came from this behaviour on his part was that his decisions were never questioned because everyone said about him: 'Well, we know that he does not favour one group against the other, he does not go anywhere. He does not talk to anybody, he does not go to any parties or barbecues'.

I can see the very real problems that would be faced by magistrates being put in precisely the same position. I would endorse the fears that the member for Nightcliff has in this respect. The Chief Minister, as minister responsible for the police force, should know that the police have this same difficulty in small communities. Of course, they are in a position of not actually having to sit in judgment on people. They enforce the law and that causes them considerable difficulty. That is one of the occupational hazards of being a police officer in a small town. If you are a fairly gregarious person, it can have a distinctly inhibiting effect on your private life. I would hope that the Chief Minister, in the implementation of this bill, keeps those things in mind.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in reply I must say that I have listened very carefully to everything that has been said by the honourable Leader of the Opposition and the honourable members for Nightcliff and Arnhem. I regard this as a very serious piece of legislation and one where I should accede to the reasonable requests of any honourable member and grant any amendments which I think would be reasonable and enable the better implementation of the legislation. Mind you, I would say that the actual implementation of much of the legislation will largely be in the hands of the Chief Magistrate.

I cannot recall any occasion in Australia - I suppose there must be some but I cannot recall any - where a magistrate has been dismissed. In Victoria, to dismiss a magistrate I understand that they simply need only legally restate the petty sessions law list in a government gazette and omit the names of any magistrates that they do not want on it. That is the position in some parts of Australia but it just has not happened and I think it is a convention that the magisterial bench, and the judiciary of course, are independent of political interference.

The remarks of the honourable member for Arnhem were very interesting and related to very small communities. I would think they were philosophically interesting and it is difficult for me to make a great deal of comment on them. Any community in the Northern Territory, including Darwin and Alice Springs, is to my mind a small community and must be classified as such. It would not be proper for me to speak for the Chief Magistrate but the government will not be requiring the Chief Magistrate to direct any of the existing magistrates to take up residence in Katherine, Tennant Creek, Gove or any other Territory centre other than Darwin or Alice Springs without his approval.

Should we appoint a magistrate in Katherine, for instance, where there is pressure to appoint a magistrate at the present time, then that magistrate will be recruited specifically for that task. I think that we must bear this in mind when we are looking at this particular piece of legislation and the amendments proposed by the Leader of the Opposition. If I could accede to those amendments and believed that the legislation would work, then I would do so. Could I just instance a few examples? I hope that honourable members will

appreciate that one cannot be as frank in debates of this nature as one would like to be. I do not believe the legislation would work if there were not what virtually amounts to a catch-all clause at the end of the proposed new section 10(b). For instance, if a magistrate were to persistently - contrary to the directions of the Chief Magistrate - arrive at a major Territory centre after the close of business hours, insist on holding his court in the late hours of the night and into the early hours of the morning requiring the legal practitioners, witnesses and other persons interested in the litigation before the court to be there, time without number, then that magistrate is not incapable of carrying out his duties. He is not incompetent to carry out his duties; he is carrying out his duties. All the circumstances cannot be codified. That is the problem.

Imagine a magistrate appointed to a small town who persistently degrades the office and dignity of the magisterial bench by becoming intoxicated perhaps night after night in public places and is capable of carrying out his duties the next day. Where do we go? It is for this reason that I cannot see myself agreeing to the proposed amendment that proposes the deletion of the proposed new section 10(b)(iii).

I turn now to the other proposal that the Chief Magistrate only gives such directions as are reasonable. Well, what is reasonable? Of course, that is for a court to decide. The situation is that, when you are dealing with people like this, the Chief Magistrate no doubt will consider that what he is directing is reasonable and the magistrate who does not like to accept his directions says that he is acting in an unreasonable fashion so that you have that conflict straight away. All I can say is that it is possible for the government to change the Chief Magistrate if he appeared to be acting in an unreasonable fashion. He would still remain as a magistrate but he would cease to be the Chief Magistrate and I think that that is the best solution. It is a decision that I suppose has to be made on the circumstances at the time and on the facts that one can gauge. It is obviously a subjective decision. I think the best thing to do in those circumstances would be to change the Chief Magistrate because he may not be a person who is fitted properly for administrative duties and that is not infrequently the case. For that reason also, it is unnecessary to insert that particular subclause which I believe will only unnecessarily complicate the situation.

The government is responsible to the parliament and no government in its right mind would want to go around aimlessly dismissing people from the bench. I think history is on my side when I say that I cannot remember an instance of a magistrate being dismissed. Nevertheless, if the need arises, then I believe the bill as drafted best meets the situation. That brings me finally to the last amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition which invites defeat of the clause which concerns the existing appointees. All I can say to this is that I believe, if the bill is good, it should apply to the existing appointees. I do not believe that they would suffer any detriment. I believe that, in accepting appointment as magistrates, they undertake to act in a responsible fashion. If they act in a responsible fashion, then no one will have anything to fear. It certainly does not attack their conditions of employment in a monetary sense and I do not believe it is any substantive detriment to their existing position. If it is good enough to apply to future appointments, there is no reason why it should not apply to existing appointments.

A number of the existing appointments - at least 2 - were in fact public servants who were arbitrarily removed from the public service by the passage of the legislation back in 1976 and 1977. It was passed urgently by the then Legislative Assembly on the representations of the Commonwealth government

because some case in South Australia had decided that magistrates should not be part of the public service. I do not even know that I agree with that principle at all. The reasoning in the case, as I remember reading it years ago, seemed to me to be far-fetched. Those magistrates were all public servants and they were arbitrarily removed from the public service. There certainly are precedents for changing the actual conditions of appointments of magistrates once they have accepted appointments. If the bill is good and acceptable, then it certainly is as good for the existing incumbents as it is for any future ones.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr ISAACS: I move amendment 9.1.

This is to remove clause 10(b)(iii). Both the member for Nightcliff and the Chief Minister made comment on this. The member for Nightcliff said about my example of a magistrate who, in the eyes of the government, was handing down sentences which were too lenient that the parliament merely had to raise the level of penalty involved. Of course, that in no way requires the magistrate to increase his penalty accordingly. Certainly, it gives the court an idea of how seriously the government views the offence but I am quite sure the government will not increase the penalties just because one of the magistrates happens to be giving lenient sentences. There is still no compulsion on him to increase the penalty just because the ceiling has been increased. That will not overcome the situation.

The Chief Minister said that the government would simply appeal. I think the government would find itself saying: 'Well, why should we keep appealing and spending a lot of money and wasting a lot of time because the magistrate is being too lenient?' The point that the government may wish to then make is that the magistrate is being too lenient and must be removed. Frankly, I do not think that would be an appropriate attitude for the government to adopt.

The example I chose was in regard to being too lenient. The member for Nightcliff mentioned the other side of the coin - a magistrate being too harsh. Again, the problem would be the same. I do not believe that the government can use the catch-all clause to overcome that particular situation.

The Chief Minister says that we need that kind of catch-all because not every situation will be catered for. He mentioned 2 examples. One was where the magistrate held sessions at irregular hours. Obviously, if a magistrate did that, he would cause great hardship to everybody concerned. The Chief Magistrate would be able to give an instruction relating to the hours of holding the court. It would not be unreasonable to say that the court ought to be held during those hours which would not cause disruption. That is covered already by proposed section 10(a). If the magistrate decided that he would not comply with that request, he would be contravening the section which says that he has to comply with a direction of the Chief Magistrate. That is catered for. We still do not need proposed section 10(b)(iii).

The second example was where the magistrate was drinking at night but was carrying out his duties happily during the day. I fail to see what the Chief Minister is trying to tell me. Is he suggesting that the magistrate ought to

be removed? What offence has the magistrate committed? I would have thought there would be quite a few people in the community who drink, some of them to excess, and who also hold very influential and senior positions in the community both in the private and public sectors. If the magistrate's drinking, in the Chief Minister's own words, 'did not affect his administration of justice', we would have to come to the conclusion that the magistrate should be left there.

What I am saying is simply that the 2 examples given by the Chief Minister and the example given by the member for Nightcliff are covered in existing 10(a) and 10(b)(i) and (ii). We have not yet come to the incomprehensible one, the need for the catch-all phrase. For that reason, I believe that 10(b)(iii) is unnecessary. It is unnecessarily vague. I believe that it would act to the detriment of the rights of magistrates and therefore ought to be repealed.

Mrs LAWRIE: It is not often that I rise to get into halts with the Leader of the Opposition but some of the remarks he has just made lead me to fear his proposed amendment even more. The Leader of the Opposition said that, if a magistrate were under the influence of alcohol to a demonstrable degree at night yet could still perform his duties the next day, why should he face the risk of removal from his position because of the previous evening's activities?

I must be consistent, Mr Chairman. The reason that I would view such a person with a degree of apprehension is the same reason that I mentioned in my reservations about having resident magistrates in small communities. Part of the position of the judicial appointment, unfortunately, entails a code of behaviour carrying above and beyond the time in which the court is in session and which engenders in the community a respect for judicial impartiality. If we are to come down to issues like that, if a magistrate was seen inebriated on a variety of evenings in the company of, say, the local police sergeant, who may well be a good friend and a good drinking mate, it may engender in the community suspicion that the law is not quite as impartial as that community expects it to be. I am not saying that that is fair to the people concerned. What I am saying is that, if you cannot cope with having to behave publicly in a manner which is more exemplary than normal, you should not accept a position of a judicial nature because the trust placed in you by the community and our judicial system is such that it cannot and must not be seen in the eyes of the majority of people to be being betrayed.

The other statement related to the imposition of penalties which are harsh or lenient. The removal of 10(b)(iii) would not overcome the problem of the disparity in sentencing, not only around Australia but within a jurisdiction. I have attended Law Reform Commission hearings and Institute of Criminology hearings where everyone from judges through to the man in the street has expressed his concern at disparities in sentencing. What we must realise, of course, is that we must never judge the sentence passed down by the court on the basis of press reports. There are 19 members of this Assembly, all of whom have suffered from press reporting. It is too simplistic to criticise magistrates and judges for the sentences which they have handed down upon a defendant being found guilty unless one has sat in the court and heard the evidence presented to that court. With all due respect to my learned and esteemed colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, he has not convinced me by the arguments he put forward today that the amendment which he deems desirable will cure the ills he sees needing cure.

Mr ISAACS: We will not get very far on this but if the stage is reached where, as the member for Nightcliff suggests, a magistrate is acting in a way which is bringing his position into disrepute, I would have thought that that would be covered in 10(b)(i). That is the only other example that has been

brought forward. The Chief Minister has not brought any others forward. Quite obviously, there could be a suitable form of words to cover the sort of situation we are talking about. What concerns me is that 10(b)(iii) is so wide as to give the magistrate no rights whatever and it is that position which I am seeking to overcome. It is not a question of trying to get consistency of sentencing; that is not the intention of my amendment at all.

Mrs LAWRIE: I accept the honourable Leader of the Opposition's statement but, in that case, why did he not propose as a substitution in 10(b)(iii) 'impropriety or proceedings prejudicial to the office of magistrate'?

Amendment negatived.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mr ISAACS: I move amendment 9.2.

I did not hear the member for Nightcliff address herself to this particular question. I do not know what her views are. The Chief Minister said that, if we say that the Chief Magistrate shall only give directions that are reasonable, that will create the question as to what is reasonable. That is precisely the point. What we are seeking to do is to provide some protection for the magistrates. The Chief Magistrate obviously will be giving a direction which he thinks is reasonable. In these things there is no black and white. The Chief Magistrate may believe he has acted reasonably in giving a direction but perhaps the magistrate may think otherwise. It may be that, in the circumstances, the magistrate is right and it would be unreasonable to expect him to comply with a certain direction. In some instances, it may be that the Chief Magistrate is right. What we are seeking to do is to provide precisely what the Chief Minister says: let a court determine. It is most unlikely that it will occur frequently. If it does, let the court determine what was reasonable. It seems to me that that is a perfectly reasonable right that a magistrate should have. The Chief Minister said that it would unnecessarily complicate things. I do not think so. It would provide a magistrate with the appropriate avenue of redress if he believes that the Chief Magistrate has acted in an unfair or unreasonable way.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I can only reiterate what I said earlier. I believe that, were Executive Council to form the view that the Chief Magistrate was acting in an unreasonable fashion, it is quite open for it to change the status of the Chief Magistrate without materially affecting his circumstances or fortune. Can I offer this as a personal viewpoint: I do not believe that this is a proper matter to be the subject of litigation before the courts. The honourable Leader of the Opposition mentioned that it is a proper subject for determination or arbitration before the courts. I believe it is the sort of thing that would bring the courts themselves into disrepute. That is another reason why I oppose this amendment.

Mr ISAACS: The Chief Minister covers the situation where the government of the day happens to agree with an aggrieved magistrate. Obviously, he does not cover the situation where the government of the day does not agree with the Chief Magistrate. That is the purpose of giving the magistrate the right of an appropriate avenue of appeal if he feels aggrieved.

Amendment negatived.

Mrs LAWRIE: My remarks refer to proposed new section 13(2): 'The Chief Magistrate shall assign and apportion their duties to magistrates and justices and may for this purpose give such directions...'. I appreciate that the word 'justices' must be in there but I ask the Chief Minister to indicate if it is still his government's proposal, which I also support, that in all except the most urgent circumstances magistrates will be used for the determination of cases and not justices.

May I also state publicly at this time - I have spoken in private to other people - that it may be wise for the Chief Magistrate, perhaps at the urging of the Attorney-General, to remind all of the justices who are appointed in the Northern Territory not only of their duties but also of their obligations. I am a justice of the peace and it has come to my notice through large numbers of people coming to me - and I have only their word for this - that other justices are refusing to witness documents because it is a pest and a bore. If that is correct, I think that the other justices should resign their positions. Perhaps the justices are behaving in that manner out of ignorance not knowing that the act states that they do not have the right of refusal for some reason of caprice. To be a justice, one not only accepts the responsibility of additional authority in what one hopes will only be emergent circumstances but also an obligation to the public to service their needs when called upon in the administration of the Justices Act.

Mr EVERINGHAM: It is the policy of the government to see that, as far as possible and always to the wishes of the Chief Magistrate, offenders are only brought before stipendiary magistrates except in cases of urgency or in matters of bail.

On the second point, there was a policy that justices should only be appointed where they were required to sit on the bench. This government will not necessarily be requiring them to sit on the bench at all and, therefore, that policy has virtually had to go by the way. I would say that the appointment of justices at present is more or less based on their reputation, character and standing in the community if they can show a bona fide reason other than caprice of some sort for wishing to be a justice. It is usually pointed out to them that, if it is simply for the purpose of witnessing documents, an appointment as commissioner for oaths is just as good. When the honourable member for Nightcliff last raised the question of a seminar for justices, I recall sending a memorandum to the Department of Law on the subject. Unfortunately, I do not believe anything has eventuated. I will take the matter up again.

Clauses 5 and 6 agreed to.

Clause 7:

Mr ISAACS: I invite defeat of clause 7.

I am unimpressed with the argument put forward by the Chief Minister. He said that, if it is good enough for the new magistrates, it is good enough for the old ones. That is not an argument at all. The new conditions are, in the eyes of the magistrates, worse than their current conditions. I think that the principle that existing conditions ought to be retained is a fairly acceptable provision right across the spectrum. This government has accepted that ad nauseum with regard to Northern Territory public servants. Every time the matter rears its head in the newspapers, the Chief Minister is in there with a press release saying, 'How many more times do I have to tell you that existing rights will be maintained'. That is a well known principle to him. It is not a matter of saying: 'If it is good enough for the new ones, why

cannot the old ones cop it?' Obviously, he does not believe in that principle right across the board.

Let us look at what is happening to the conditions of magistrates. Under the old provisions, existing magistrates could only be removed by petition of the parliament. That would be a public arena. Members of the parliament are bound by matters of privilege but they are given other unfettered rights, which do not exist elsewhere, to say what they sincerely believe. In that case, given the public nature of the event, the magistrates would see themselves as having their rights very much protected. By the new legislation, it is simply a matter for the Administrator, acting on the advice of the executive, to say that magistrate X is for some reason unsuited to the performance of his duties and therefore has been dismissed. It is very much to the detriment of the magistrate in terms of the public nature of his defence.

The Chief Minister says that the magistrate will not suffer any detriment but I believe that, in that particular matter, he will suffer a great detriment. This is especially true in the example given by the Chief Minister. I accept that it was just an example that came to mind and that he was not referring to anything which has happened. I believe that the rights of every magistrate who has been appointed under certain conditions ought to be retained. Part of those conditions was that the dismissal of the magistrate was subject to a petition of this parliament and the matter of his or her dismissal would be a matter for public airing. The magistrates could rely upon the fact that members of both sides of the parliament can act and say things which they know are covered by privilege. That being so, I believe the magistrate would see the former provisions as being superior to those proposed. It is not to be a public matter but a matter to be determined by the Administrator acting on the advice of the Executive Council.

I do not want to take this too far; it is a most unusual thing for a magistrate to be dismissed. The Chief Minister says that he does not know of any occasion when it has happened. I do not either and I did not see anybody jumping to his feet to tell the Chief Minister that he was wrong. He probably is right. In the course of these sorts of things, discussions are held, negotiations take place and some suitable accommodation is reached. But, if it comes right down to the crunch, I believe that a magistrate who has been appointed under certain conditions ought not to have those conditions changed in midstream to his detriment. If they are changed to his detriment, we ought to oppose that as a matter of principle. For that reason, we seek the defeat of clause 7.

Mr EVERINGHAM: The only thing I can say in response to the Leader of the Opposition, apart from reiterating what I said before, is that he has based his argument on the premise that this is a change in conditions to the detriment of the existing magistrates. I say that it is not. Looked at from the viewpoint of the professional man, if a petition were introduced in this Assembly for the dismissal of a magistrate, whether it succeeded or not there would be a tremendous airing of dirty linen. That magistrate's reputation would be such that I very much doubt whether he could survive on the bench in the Northern Territory whether the petition succeeded or not. In a professional sense, it would be far better for the magistrate to be quietly sacked by the Executive Council.

Again, the Leader of the Opposition assumed that the Executive Council acts rashly, capriciously and arbitrarily. If he were quietly sacked by the Executive Council, he would at least have a chance of getting a job somewhere else which I do not think he would have after a nice airing of all the dirty linen

in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. If one were going to bring forward a petition such as this, one would have to be armed with a fair arsenal of brown stuff.

Mr ISAACS: The Chief Minister does not do his argument justice by that kind of language. There is a federal court judge at the moment whom the current government would prefer not to hold a judicial appointment. It is up to the government, if it wants to get rid of this person, to do just as the Chief Minister said. I do not think there would be any bones about what the federal government would want to do with this particular federal judge yet it will not do it.

The Chief Minister talks pretty freely about bringing out the dirty linen. People do stop at that. It may work out to be a matter of negotiation. The arguments he has put forward come down to a subjective question of whether or not the magistrates see this as a change to their detriment. The Chief Minister says it is not and I believe that it is. I guess that matter can be sorted out fairly simply.

Mr Everingham: Have the courts determine what is reasonable.

Mr ISAACS: If the Chief Minister wants to be flippant about it, he can be. When he spoke in reply, he said that he regarded the bill as important. I hope he maintains that view.

There is one way of determining whether or not the magistrates believe that this is a change to their detriment: ask them. I believe that, given the existing provisions and their rights, it would be a change to their detriment. The defeat of clause 7 will ensure that a well-enshrined principle of maintaining conditions for those in current appointment would be retained. I think that is important.

Mr EVERINGHAM: The honourable Leader of the Opposition has made a point regarding a federal judge. I will distinguish that case from the case of magistrates quite clearly. The person concerned is a federal judge and there are constitutional provisions that affect his appointment. I know of no place in those parts of the British Commonwealth which follow the Westminster system where the judges are removed from office other than by an address through the parliament. With regard to magistrates, the question is quite different and varies from place to place and, in Australia, from state to state. To compare the situation of a judge appointed under the constitution of Australia with magistrates appointed under a recent act of the Northern Territory is not, in my view, a fair comparison at all.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I would like to support the Attorney-General in this debate. The key question is one of detriment. Is it detrimental or is it not? I share the Attorney-General's view, and I think that is the correct title under this piece of legislation, that it is quite the contrary to detriment. Let us look at what happens. I will not recanvass in depth what the Chief Minister mentioned about airing the dirty linen in this place. Let us look at the superior role of the parliament compared to what happens in the Executive Council. It is quite obvious that the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee will be very much aware that a magistrate is being dismissed in the highly unlikely event of that occurring. It is then open to that committee to call for the papers and to examine whether or not the reasonable powers and functions were exceeded and whether or not people were unjustly treated by the executive in referring those matters back here for debate. I am quite certain that actions of the Executive Council can be

debated in this place on a motion of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee.

It would be far better from a magistrate's point of view to have the thing queried as to whether or not it ought to be brought out into the public forum. For that reason, I believe that this piece of legislation is superior to the previous provisions.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, I said before that sometimes what is stated in a second-reading speech is more interesting than the contents of the bill. I find that what has been said by the Leader of the House is absolutely fascinating to a member of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee. He has put forward the proposition that, if we feel the magistrate is being dealt with unjustly or capriciously, we have the power to send for papers and to bring it to the attention of the Assembly. That is a dramatically different approach to the one which the Leader of the House took when the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee in the previous Assembly - and its powers have not altered - sought to make comment upon regulations under the Prisons Act which we felt were unfair or capricious. The Leader of the House stated at the time that the only part the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee had was to determine whether or not the regulations made were ultra vires. He has departed significantly from that position and I am delighted to hear it. He is now putting forward the proposition, which has my total approval, that the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee has a far wider role. It is the guardian of justice and truth in the interpretation and carrying out of the functions of bodies under the acts.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, I would simply like to point out to the Leader of the House that I hope he realises that, by attending the farewell for the Administrator tonight, he will be missing tonight's episode of 'Rumpole of the Bailey', which I am sure will be of great detriment to him.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 7 agreed to.

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

Bill passed remaining stage without debate.

NT OMBUDSMAN - PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL REPORT 1979-80

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act 1977, authorises the publication of the Report of the Ombudsman for the period 1 July 1979 to 30 June 1980 and, secondly, that the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL (Serial 25)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the appropriation for the financial year 1980-81 of \$639m is around 2.3 times greater than the major private sector contributor to the Northern Territory economy, the mining industry.

The public sector is so dominant in the Territory economy, it is natural that the electorate wishes to be assured that the resources available to the government will be used as effectively as possible. I therefore commence my reply to the 1980-81 budget by again calling on the government to establish a public accounts committee.

I remind the Treasurer of the comments he made in this parliament on Thursday 24 May 1979 when, in response to a motion put by the opposition to establish a public expenditure committee, he said: 'I can foresee that the time will come when this Assembly will appreciate the need for a post-operative review of public accounts, a review that can be best undertaken systematically by a standing committee. I believe that the time will be ripe for the establishment of such a committee early in the life of the next parliament after we have been returned to office. By then, the transfer of executive powers for effective self-government will have been completed and the legislative machinery and financial administration would have been completely established and tested by experience. It would then be an appropriate time for a review of the performance of the departments and instrumentalities of government in the field of financial provisions of legislation and a review of the principles of the public accountability and their implementation. An appropriate committee to undertake that type of review will be established by this government at an appropriate time'.

I repeat my request to the Treasurer - and perhaps he can answer this in his summing up - that we ought to have a public accounts committee in this parliament. The government had, through this budget, an opportunity to do something constructive about the problems facing thousands of ordinary Territorians - such things as their ability to find work, their ability to find accommodation, their ability to educate their children and their ability to seek assistance when they are in difficulty through the provision of effective social welfare services. As I and many members of the opposition have said before, the government did not take up this challenge. I have said it before: this budget gives insufficient priorities to the known problems facing the people of the Territory. It is an anti-people budget.

The government cannot claim that it does not know that we have the highest unemployment rate in the country. It cannot claim to be unaware of the chronic housing situation. Even the Northern Territory News belatedly found out that that was the case. The fact that these crucial areas have not been given proper attention in the budget indicates only one thing: the government does not care about the problems being faced in the community. Its view is that those who cannot swim can sink. No one could quite believe that these vital human areas would once again be ignored by the government but they are wrong. The budget gives clear warning that life in the Territory is to be based on survival of the fittest.

I turn the to subject of unemployment. In last year's budget, the Treasurer stated that government outlays on capital works have a real impact on employment and on the maintenance of economic growth. He is right. He announced that the cash expenditure against the 1979-80 capital works program would be \$90.6m out of a total appropriation of \$516m. In other words, 17.6% of the total appropriation would be channelled into capital works. In the budget before us, the Treasurer again says: 'A major factor in sustaining economic growth in the Territory is the government's capital works program'. However, this year he has failed to back his claim with funds. The Treasurer has only been able to make a provision of \$91.8m for this year's capital works program. The result is that only 14% of the total appropriation will be channelled into capital works this year compared with 17.5% last year. The

1980-81 budget does not continue and expand on the pattern of its predecessors in this regard. Recurring expenditure is taking a much larger share of the cake this financial year. The vitally important investment component has been pushed back.

A part of the reason for the diminished contributions to public investment expenditure is to be found in the Commonwealth allocation to the Territory. Despite the Territory government's constant crowing about its financial agreement with the Commonwealth, the general purpose payments for capital funds from Canberra this year have dropped by 4.1% in real terms. When you consider the general purpose payments comprise 70% of total Commonwealth capital funding to the Territory, the consequences for us are obvious. We are now in the third year of self-government. We still have a long way to go to develop even the most basic infrastructure from which a degree of economic self-sufficiency may develop and yet Commonwealth funding for this infrastructure is up a miserable 2.5% in real terms on last year. It must be obvious to all that we do not have the mature economy of the states yet we are now subject to the same capital funding growth rates as they are because of tight-fisted federal policies.

I realise that the government's capital works program is not the be all and end all of investment in the Territory but, as the Treasurer has gone to great lengths to point out in the last 2 budget sessions, it is a vital factor as far as economic growth and employment are concerned. In the 2 years to the end of August, the level of unemployment in the Territory has increased from 4,722 to 5,514, a growth of nearly 17% in unemployment. This indicates the lack of impact achieved by this government. The 1980-81 budget will do little to improve the situation.

I am sure the Treasurer will attempt to counter the unemployment situation by claiming that the government has created thousands of jobs. He will attempt to gloss over the fact that more than 10% of the Territory workforce is unemployed. This is 16.7% higher than at the time of the first self-government budget. It remains the highest in the country - a disgrace.

Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to the government's job-creation claims. During the last election, it claimed that 50 jobs a week were allegedly created since self-government. I believe these growth figures are highly questionable. The Treasurer is citing Bureau of Statistics Civilian Employee Bulletins. He ought to be aware that this publication was withdrawn in April this year because it was proving to be so inaccurate. If he is not quoting from that particular document, I would be interested in what alternative data he is able to draw on. No doubt at some stage of the debate, the Treasurer will point to the amended payroll tax legislation as an employment-creating initiative. The truth is that, this year, the Treasurer is only fiddling with the payroll tax structure. In August 1979, it is true that the Treasurer offered significant payroll tax concessions by increasing the threshold significantly after which the tax is liable to be paid. This year, however, the Treasurer announced a reduction amounting to 10% in payroll tax. What he does not say is that the payroll tax is not applied in a static situation. As wages rise and wage bills grow, payroll tax revenue just grows right along with it. The employers who have just been given a concession then pass the new threshold and become liable to payroll tax. Employers already paying the tax find their payrolls are up and they have to pay more tax. In fact, with such an inbuilt growth mechanism, the government has an ideal revenue source automatically locked into inflation. As a consequence of this, the Treasurer is able to fiddle with the rate of tax knowing full well that inflation will catch up in the long term to any revenue shortfall he may incur in the short term. This

proposition is illustrated by this year's first quarter accounts issued by the Treasury. Payroll tax revenues amounted to \$5.3m, a 47% rise on the same quarter of the previous year. So much for the government's payroll tax concessions.

In the Territory payroll tax revenue represents more than 75% of state taxation revenue. If the Territory government was able to abolish payroll tax totally, an aim of the Treasurer, then there would certainly be some impact on employment. The tax does distort the unit costs of labour versus capital in favour of the latter. But let's not get carried away with pie-in-the-sky ideas. The abolition of the tax, as the Treasurer knows, would be extremely difficult. In 1980-81, payroll tax will net the Territory government \$21.9m. The removal of the tax in terms of the government's own commitments would obviously require the imposition of an alternative tax to meet the revenue shortfall unless the federal government is to meet it. In terms of its dealings with the states and the Northern Territory, we are talking about an amount of money in excess of \$2 billion, a proposition the federal government is hardly likely to take up. While the Treasurer attempts to make political mileage out of marginal adjustments in payroll tax rates, in reality he is doing little to improve the prospects of the Territory's unemployed or industry's ability to increase its workforce.

Last year, I expressed concern about the level of road funding. I said it had grown too fast too soon, not because of any opposition to improving the Territory's roads, far from it, but because of concern that the capacity of the construction industry would be built up to unsustainable levels. It seems the point I was making was not missed by the Treasurer. But, instead of acknowledging the problem he was creating for the industry, he chose to accuse me of being against road construction. He ignored the fact that a similar situation happened in the Australian Capital Territory in the mid-1970s. The construction industry boom crashed when spending could not be sustained. Of course, the Labor Party agrees totally that good roads are vital for Territory development as are the other areas of infrastructure. Because public funds account for more than 95% of all civil engineering activity, government spending must show some consistency if the industry is to remain on a stable footing.

Last year, I also suggested that the government had structured its road spending in such a way that massive funds would be required from its own resources if the program was to be maintained. It seems I hit the nail on the head. For 1980-81, the Commonwealth roads grant for the Territory is \$21.1m. This represents no real growth over the figure of \$19m for last year. But the Territory has decided not to spend more of its own funds to sustain the program. We saw the allocation for new road construction increase by 37% last year on 1978-79 prices but then fall by 11.3% for this financial year. I wonder how the construction industry feels about this feast and famine spending pattern.

The allocation for the public works division of the Department of Transport and Works also shows a decline of 9.5% in real terms from last year. The Treasurer claimed last year that the government's past pattern of expenditure had raised private investor confidence in the Territory to unparalleled heights. What he should have said was that his government's past pattern of expenditure had raised the construction industry's capacity to unsustainable heights. It follows that the real decline in capital works spending we are experiencing must inevitably have a negative effect on future employment levels.

I turn to housing, Mr Speaker, which is another area of vital importance

to the Territory. It is crucial in human terms because everyone needs accommodation. It is crucial in development terms because, if we cannot house people, we cannot grow. The government is to be condemned in the strongest possible terms because it is allowing another budget to pass by without addressing itself to the chronic housing problems which affect every community in the Territory. Where in the budget are the funds needed to improve the emergency housing system? What is being done to get people off Darwin's beaches, out of the backs of cars and into acceptable accommodation? Why hasn't a decision been announced by the government on what is to be done about the nurses' accommodation wing at the Darwin Hospital? It is sitting there empty and useless. Why, in the government's housing program, is the question of basic, low-cost accommodation once again ignored?

The housing situation in the Territory is scandalous. The government knows it and the people know it. As I said before, even the Northern Territory News knows it. Once again, it has been consigned to the 'too hard' basket. The government will say that home ownership is the way to solve the Territory's housing problems. They will point, with pride, to what they describe as the best home ownership scheme in Australia. As speakers have mentioned in a previous debate, we support the virtues of home ownership; it is an Australian expectation and a fully justified one when we consider how wealthy the country is. Nor would I argue with the need for an effective government home loans scheme. What I would debate is the declining ability of many low-income Territorians to become home owners in one of the most expensive housing markets in the country and the obvious deficiencies in the ability of the Home Loans Scheme to help this group of people to become home owners.

In his budget speech last year, the Treasurer said: 'The new scheme is primarily directed towards low-income earners although persons on middle and high incomes will be able to participate in the scheme'. We had no quarrel with either of those aims. However, in this year's budget, the Treasurer acknowledged that demands for loans through the scheme were very strong. He also cautioned that the scheme was not designed to replace the private bank sector. By saying this, the Treasurer pointed to some of the deficiencies which are becoming apparent in the scheme.

Statistics from the Housing Commission show that, up to the end of March this year, 342 loans had been approved under the new scheme but the figures also show that the lowest income earners, those below \$260 a week, received only about 40% of the loans granted. In contrast, people with incomes above the \$260 per week and on up through the middle and upper income groups received approximately 60% of the loans. The government may say that it is no fault of theirs but this is the situation. If any credence is to be given to the Treasurer's claim last year that the scheme 'is primarily directed towards low income earners', then it is obvious that it is not achieving what it was designed to achieve.

The Treasurer and the Chief Minister cannot legitimately accuse the banks of not pulling their weight on home loan finance when the government is offering loans to people earning average incomes at an interest rate of 4½% below the rates being offered by the banks. Territorians would have to be crazy to take a bank loan on those terms. Of course, they are not crazy. People, as a matter of common sense, will go to the best deal, the cheapest loan. If it appears to be the case that low-income earners are not getting adequate access to loans, then it is the responsibility of the government to establish the reasons and, if necessary, to improve on the situation.

As the government well knows and as the Territory community well knows,

the Labor Party has been pushing the idea of a Territory bank for some time. Instead of hammering private banks and criticising private banks which are bound by national objectives and controlled by federal legislation, the Territory government would be better off beating the banks at their own game. The creation of a Territory bank with a bias for Territory needs would overcome exactly those deficiencies which the Territory government has at last identified in the policies of the national banks. A Territory bank would be subject to Territory law. It would not have to pursue national objectives or follow those national objectives or follow those national laws. It could have a charter to serve the Territory and the Territory alone. It is time the Treasurer stopped claiming that the creation of a Territory bank would drive private enterprise out of the Territory and describing the idea as blatant socialism. There is not much blatant socialism in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia or Victoria yet they all have state banks.

I turn to education. In the 1979-80 budget, the Minister for Education described his department as having an ongoing program. He said that any changes in the education system must be gradual and planned. He said that any dramatic changes would not only lead to confusion amongst parents and students but also amongst the professional staff. These are very sensible sentiments. What a pity the minister forgot them so quickly! In April this year, the minister said, referring to that infamous Dhupuma College: 'The college will be rebuilt on its present site in two stages with detailed planning for this reconstruction to commence immediately'. That was a ministerial statement in this Assembly and what happened? Not reconstruction, as promised by the minister, but total destruction of Dhupuma College only a few months later. There is no question that the minister misled the Assembly. There was no notice to students, parents or teachers. It was the type of action the minister himself has so strongly condemned because, as he said, it would lead to confusion. He was right: it led to confusion. It seems that the word of the honourable minister is worth nothing; he swears to one thing in the parliament and then does the opposite.

In his budget speech, the Treasurer announced that, in 1980-81, the Department of Education would receive increased funding in the order of 15% or \$9.6m over 1979-80. On the face of it, that is a reasonable sum to cover increased costs and expanded needs. However, like many things in the budget, it is not as good as it looks. The total vote for educational services shows an increase of 14.7% or 3.7% in real terms. Look at the administration expenses for the northern directorate: a money increase of only 3.2% has occurred, a drop of 7.8% in real terms. In the southern directorate, administration funding shows a growth of 4.9% in money terms or a real decrease of 6.1%.

Let us take a closer look at the northern directorate. By the time the allocation reaches the schools, it turns into a 14.4% decrease in money terms or about a 25% cut in real terms. Where are the increased funds going? Why aren't they reaching the schools for the benefit of the children of the Northern Territory? The government surely must realise that the key to the Territory's future is to be found in these children. The provision of a good basic education is an important part of their development and a vital element in the development of the Territory. What can we say about a government and a minister who cuts funding for the administration of schools by up to 25%, a savage cut made again without consultation with the affected parties? The provision of basic education services appears to have become the government's and the minister's lowest priority.

I turn to welfare. For some people, the Territory can be a harsh place

in which to live. The climate is severe and the cost of living is exorbitant. Just as the government has responsibility in the areas of employment, education and housing, it also has responsibility for the welfare of the community. The 1980-81 budget falls well short in this area as well. In the area of community development, the Treasurer reports an increase of 33% on the 1979 allocation but a large part of this increase is due to the transfer of funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to the Department of Community Development and the local government component of the town management and public utility program. These transfers represent an increase of nearly \$6m to the Department of Community Development from the \$11.2m growth.

In the area of direct grants and subsidies, the minister stated that just over \$1m has been allocated. I would ask the minister, not necessarily in his reply but in some other fashion, to itemise in detail the specific grants allocated, as occurred with the Department of Health, in order that a comprehensive assessment can be made.

In the area of annual grants-in-aid, the minister stated that applications for grants exceeded funds available. That is not an unusual situation. From my own investigation, however, it appears that the number of grants approved presents a significant decrease. Applications from 31 organisations were approved in 1979-80 whereas in 1980-81 it appears there may be only 20. I understand that only one Aboriginal organisation received funding - the Bamyili Community Council. This undoubtedly reflects the reliance placed on newspaper advertising to alert the potential applicants to the grants available. As we know, several invaluable organisations have been refused funding. NTCOSS, despite its excellent record of achievement in the welfare areas since 1972, has not been granted a very moderate amount of \$25,000 out of a budget in excess of \$600m. It has been grossly penalised and maligned by the minister who regards the conscientious endeavours of the organisation in identifying and highlighting the urgent needs of the disadvantaged in our community as constant sniping. NTCOSS pays the penalty for endeavouring to criticise the NT government on its most vulnerable front. I wonder if, for consistency, the Treasurer will demand that the Department of Community Development and the Department of Health pull out of NTCOSS as we heard yesterday afternoon from the member for Fannie Bay that they were members of this dreadful organisation.

Once again, the Marriage Guidance Council of the Northern Territory has been refused any government funding. As a result of inadequate funding, this organisation has to charge the highest fees in Australia in order to cover the costs of its operations. It is unable to expand its services outside Darwin which leaves other major centres in the Northern Territory unserved. State governments in Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia provide financial assistance to marriage guidance councils. It is a shame that the Northern Territory cannot do likewise.

In the area of operational subsidies, organisations are struggling financially on the funding provided by the government. For instance, the Darwin Youth Refuge, whose activities the minister has applauded, is currently operating at a loss of \$1000 per month. It has received no increase in its budget allocation since it began operating in January 1979 and requests for salary increases have been rejected. The 4 youth workers, who work extremely long hours including regular overnight duty, each receive a pitiful \$11,500 gross per year, including district allowance. This is below the base-grade salary of a youth worker in the public service.

Thus, in the area of grants alone, there is a critical need for increased

funding. I might add that there is also a critical need in future to avoid the inordinate delay in deciding allocations to organisations. The final date of submissions to the government was over 8 months ago and organisations have only just been notified whether they were successful or not.

The minister stated that expenditure for approved organisations under the Health Department's grants-in-aid scheme is almost \$4.1m which represents a very marginal increase on last year's expenditure. The funding allocations for organisations assisting women and children in crisis totals only \$18,000, a reduction of \$164,000 on last year. Sadly, this indicates a deteriorating government commitment in an area which requires urgent improvement. As a result of unfounded and arbitrary government intervention earlier this year, the Darwin Womens Centre, the Alice Springs Womens Centre and the Rape Crisis Centre were forced to cease their operations. The Darwin Womens Shelter is now the only centre in Darwin that can offer specific relief to women and children suffering intolerable domestic situations. A concerned group in Katherine submitted an application this year to establish a women's refuge but, predictably, they were refused funding. The Territory government's paltry attitude is contradicted by the federal government. The level of Commonwealth funds available for womens refuges this year has increased to \$3.9m. It is curious that the Northern Territory does not reflect this increase as do the states. Throughout Australia, there are 95 refuges in receipt of funding. Of this number, the Territory can boast only one, despite a clearly demonstrated need for more.

In his policy speech for the last Assembly election, the Chief Minister promised that pensioners who are Territory residents will be eligible to apply for a refund of 50% of the return economy class airfare from their home centre to any Australian capital every 2 years. A press statement released soon after by the then Minister for Community Development restated the reference to the pensioner airfare rebate scheme. The minister also gave a cost estimate for the scheme of some \$350,000 for a full year. The minister did make one qualification. He said that pensioners entitled to a fare concession from another source would not be entitled to the Territory benefit as well. He made no mention of the commencement date of 1 July 1982. I suggest that both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Community Development deliberately misled the Territory's elderly people for the sake of a miserable \$350,000. The then minister provided several very good reasons why such a scheme should be implemented, but now his successor says, 'Yes, but not for 2 years'. Disgraceful! I call on the Treasurer to provide to the Assembly a copy of any public statement on pensioner airfare rebates made by a member of his government before the election which contained the words '2 year qualifying period' or any reference to the commencement date of 1 July 1982. If he cannot, and I believe he cannot, the benefits should be introduced immediately.

In April this year, the Chief Minister announced a 5-year plan for the development of essential services in Aboriginal communities. He put the program's priorities as the provision of water, sewerage and power. In pursuit of these objectives, the Chief Minister stated: 'It is important that the development of a 5-year plan be undertaken with the needs and the priorities as they see them'. He said that a high level task force consisting of the secretaries of key departments would be established, a committee at the top executive level of the public service. At a meeting of this committee in September this year, members generally agreed that the priorities that were enunciated in the Chief Minister's April statement had significantly altered. The members said that this had happened and I quote from the task force minutes: 'As a consequence of political decisions with an emphasis on the upgrading of airstrips to Metroliner standard ... This had an important effect on the

program'. Indeed, a senior officer from the Health Department then asked that it be noted that he preferred the use of the word 'detrimental' rather than 'important'.

In this Assembly in August this year, the Chief Minister said that there had been very little feedback from Aboriginal communities. I asked the Chief Minister on what grounds or on what advice has he shifted his bias in the direction of the Aboriginal essential services program away from essential services, as enunciated by him, towards totally unessential Metroliner standard airstrips. I also asked the Chief Minister exactly what feedback he has received from the Aboriginal communities with regard to this particular matter. If the feedback from these people is minimal, as the Chief Minister claims, what has he done to attempt to rectify the problem? The Chief Minister now appears to be distorting the program for his own purposes and his top public servants have confirmed this. The simple facts of the matter are that the Chief Minister has decided to use a significant percentage of this year's funding for the essential services program to help Northern Airlines out of its bad commercial decision to buy the Metroliners.

In 1978-79, the opposition expressed concern when the Advance to the Treasurer was 0.7% of the total appropriation for that year. I complained in the last budget debate that the appropriation for the Advance to the Treasurer had jumped to 2.5% of the total appropriation. This year, the Advance to the Treasurer has fallen back somewhat to 1.8% of the total appropriation. While I believe that it is still too high, I look forward to the Treasurer explaining why he has been able to cut back the level of the advance. In September 1979, the Treasurer said that his advance was essential to cover unexpected and unpredictable costs. He expressed concern as to the ability of his government to cover higher than expected inflation rates, national wage increases, sudden oil price increases and shortfalls in revenue estimates and emergencies such as bushfires, floods, rescues. That is what the Treasurer's advance is all about: things like increased air charges or grader hire for the Bush Fires Council. If you don't have a reserve, he said, the only alternative is to go back to the original appropriations and chop them to pieces.

The Treasurer's approach was interesting given that the Financial Administration and Audit Act has within it special provisions to allow for the transfer of funds between appropriations if the need should arise. The Treasurer has made great use of this indeed. It provides for the transfer of funds between divisions, subject to approval by the Administrator. Transfers between subdivisions are permitted subject to the Treasurer's approval and funds can be transferred between specific items, subject to approval of the appropriate minister. If there is a disaster, the facility exists already to provide the funds.

The Labor Party's concern with the Treasurer's Advance is that such funds can be put to use for the purposes other than urgent or unforeseen circumstances. The Senate Standing Committee on Public Accounts has said that it has exactly the same concern. The committee has pointed out that such a system could make it possible for a government to fund an entirely new program so that, when a parliament is approached for an appropriation, it is presented with a fait accompli. According to the Territory Financial Administration and Audit Act, the Treasurer only has to lay before the Legislative Assembly a statement setting out the particulars of all expenditure from the Treasurer's Advance at the end of each financial year.

The Senate committee has suggested that this potential for abusing the

advance can be overcome by an early and more explicit disclosure of the use of the advance. I was amazed when the Treasurer said last year in the budget debate: 'There may be a good idea that the government may wish to adopt during the year and, without the Treasurer's Advance, it would have to wait until the end of the financial year to get the money'. The Treasurer identifies himself as exactly the person referred to by the Senate committee. He does not want to use the method for the transfer of funds within the appropriations described in the act because it would allow the Assembly to scrutinise the government's expenditure patterns through the requirement that copies of such orders must be tabled within 6 sitting days.

Last year, I made reference to the situations found in other states, specifically New South Wales, where the Treasurer's Advance was significantly lower than in the 1979-80 Territory budget. The Treasurer replied by saying that was all very well for New South Wales and that, if things really got tough, they could scrape the bottom of the barrel by running around to all their statutory authorities and digging into the reserves. He continued: 'We don't have such openings'. In fact, he has. As the Treasurer is aware, there are 2 groups of trust accounts. The first are class A accounts which are those necessary in respect of some activities administered directly by the parliaments or some other units of administration. The other group involves class B accounts which are established to record the cash transactions of prescribed statutory corporations.

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

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I move for an extension of time for the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ISAACS: In the case of a class A trust account, the Treasurer may, if he is satisfied that there is available credit balance in excess of that reasonably required for the purpose of the account, direct that the whole or part of that excess be transferred from that trust account to the consolidated funds. There is currently \$23.3m in class A trust accounts. If the Treasurer feels that this large amount is essential, I am sure that the Assembly would find the reasons very interesting. If he cannot justify these large class A trust account balances, then he has even less justification for maintaining such a large Treasurer's Advance.

In presenting the budget, the Treasurer made reference to health, education, housing, the Northern Territory Development Corporation and the Tourist Commission. He also mentioned agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and energy. He failed to mention the Chief Minister's Department. However, I will ensure that the Chief Minister is not left out. After all, the appropriation to the Chief Minister's Department is \$17.8m which is more than the combined sum appropriated for primary production and tourism together. The appropriation for the Chief Minister represents an increase of 131% over the 1979-80 figure although this increase is largely accounted for by the Jabiru Town Authority. Last year, I expressed concern about the level of increase in administration costs to the Chief Minister's Office of Information. It showed an increase of 270% over the previous year. In 1980-81 there has been another substantial increase from \$221,000 to \$390,000. Unfortunately, a breakdown of administration costs of the Office of Information is not provided in the 1980-81 explanations. I am sure that the Chief Minister will be able to give a detailed breakdown of spending to make the reasons for this second massive increase quite clear. It will be interesting to see whether the 76%

increase to the Office of Information will go to the Government Directory, the NT Digest, NT Quarterly, Who's What Where and the mining investment book as it did last year. If it does not go to those areas, then exactly where will the money go?

The reason that I express interest in this department and in particular this section, harks back to the responsibility of the government to use public resources as effectively as possible and to avoid duplication. On reading through the budget explanations, I notice the NT Tourist Commission has had some \$700,000 allocated to it for its national promotion campaign. Everyone would agree that the Tourist Commission has a vital role to play in promoting the Territory not only in Australia but also overseas. Hopefully, we are developing a skilled group of people to sell the Territory to Territorians, Australians and overseas visitors.

Another important promotion is that of the Territory as a place for investment, as a place to start new industry. The Northern Territory Development Corporation has been voted considerable funds to do just that in 1980-81. According to the budget, the publicity allocation to the corporation is \$330,000 with a further \$153,000 to continue to promote the Territory through trade missions, small business services and trade fairs, both inside and outside Australia. I note also that, within the Housing Commission budget, there is an appropriate allocation for printing of some \$110,000, including an allocation for the printing of commission publications. There is also a provision of \$5,000 for straight advertising. Within the Health Department, \$115,000 has been made available for publications in the hospitals division and another \$190,000 in the health services division for official publications. One other example: the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission will spend \$28,000 on a public awareness program and a further \$149,000 on the printing of official publications, information papers and booklets. It would seem therefore that added provision has been made within departments and authorities to ensure that adequate publicity is given to their activities. I look forward to the Chief Minister's explanation of the role of the Office of Information and his justification for a further very large increase in funding. Perhaps the Chief Minister could also inform the Assembly about the cost and the purpose of the NT Schools Project Kit which was distributed recently.

Finally, I turn to the sales tax rebate scheme. I would like to conclude my contribution to the debate by referring to this feature of CLP policy launched at the Territory elections. The Treasurer claimed subsequently the scheme would be administratively simple and the verification of wholesale records would be able to be implemented by one clerk. On 21 August, I asked the Treasurer when the sales tax rebate scheme would be introduced. The Treasurer replied by saying the scheme would take a little time to bring into operation but that refunds would be backdated to 1 July 1980. He said he would give more details in his budget speech. The Treasurer made 2 references to the freight rebate scheme in his budget speech but, once again, he failed to offer any explanation as to how the scheme might work. It is now getting on towards the end of November, almost 5 months after the due date of the commencement of the scheme, and the government has only just begun considering the applicants who want the job of running the scheme. If the scheme does in fact go ahead, then it appears unlikely that it will start operating until sometime in the new year. Obviously, wholesalers will have available all the relevant documentation from the end of last June in order to enable benefits to be backdated so they will be looked after. But how does the government intend to ensure that the supposed benefits to consumers will be backdated? Obviously, it cannot. It will simply be a windfall to a certain sector of wholesalers.

Many more questions about the operation of the scheme remain to be answered by the Treasurer. Who exactly is entitled to participate in the scheme and how will it work? What about the 4 federal sales tax acts which all apply to imported goods from overseas? Does this mean that these importers will receive a rebate and, if so, how will the value of the rebate be measured? If these importers into the Territory are to be excluded and hence disadvantaged, will the Treasurer offer some compensation? I would ask the Treasurer to explain to the Assembly who will be eligible for the rebate scheme, how the simple verification system of wholesaler records will operate and when the scheme will commence.

Mr Speaker, I said earlier that this is an anti-people budget. Even the fact that we are debating this budget in the last half of November is confirmation of this government's disregard for the people through the parliament. Here we are debating the Territory's most crucial financial measure 3 months after its introduction. The budget is well into being operational. The first 2 quarters of the financial year are virtually over and we are just now considering the implications of this very important document. It is completely unsatisfactory that public scrutiny of the budget's contents should be delayed until the financial year is virtually half over. It indicates an arrogant disregard for the rights of the very people whom this government is alleged to be serving. The same arrogant disregard is evident in the framing of the budget. The needs of our 10% unemployed are not addressed. The homeless are not to be housed. Vital areas of social welfare will continue to be ignored and the rights of Territory children for a good basic education have been eroded.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I have much pleasure in rising to speak to the Appropriation Bill. When looking at the budget that was handed down by the Treasurer in August, the thing that struck me was the overall expenditure in Aboriginal areas. I am sure that anyone who has been through the papers would have noticed this. I wish to make it quite clear that I am not denying Aboriginals the right of equal opportunities or services that are provided to other people. That is their right and I will do everything to support that right. Government assistance in terms of money is given to meet the needs or requirements of the communities. Just because you spend millions of dollars in a community does not necessarily mean that you are going to meet those needs or those requirements.

Some time ago, I opened a seminar on solar energy on behalf of the Minister for Mines and Energy. The member for Arnhem addressed that particular seminar and he gave some startling instances of the tremendous waste of taxpayers' money in remote areas. One of the instances that he gave was of a 32 KVA capacity generator which was used to run a household refrigerator and a few lights, consuming tremendous amounts of fuel which cost an enormous amount of money.

Another instance where I can recall millions of dollars being wasted was at a place called Amoonguna. The federal government spent millions of dollars on this place. It built houses, community halls, a swimming pool, playing areas and purchased a lot of farm machinery and equipment. The swimming pool never had water in it and, when I last visited the area, it had weeds growing up through the tiles. Many of the houses had fallen down. There was a radio station at one time installed at Amoonguna. The equipment from that radio station was stolen - not by Aboriginals. The farming equipment, the tractors and the gear were just left lying around - things that a farmer would give his right arm for. The main hall is now encaged in arc mesh to stop further vandalism by the people in the area. I consider this money to have been spent

in a very irresponsible manner. In the case of Amoonguna, it was a scandal. The original intentions of the federal government are not queried. A committee of the parliament was set up to investigate and approve this project. It was obvious that it just happened that this project did not meet the needs or the requirements of the people. I feel that in such instances, after a period of years, each project should be reassessed to see if it has in fact served the requirements of the particular community - do not just approve the expenditure of more money without reassessment.

In the proposed new capital works program, we see the upgrading of internal roads and systems at Amoonguna will cost \$250,000 for the first stage. There is also an appropriation of \$55,000 to construct toilets and ablution blocks. They are obviously necessary. What I am saying is that, if we had looked at our priorities previously and if the work that had been carried out at Amoonguna had succeeded, then we would not have been required to spend this money.

I open my remarks on the budget in this manner not as a criticism of the budget but because I believe that the budget is one that is geared up for continued growth and development of the whole of the Northern Territory. I open my comments in that way to make sure that the government is not just spending money for the sake of it but that it is spending money to meet the needs and the requirements of the people of the various communities. A situation exists at a Darwin pre-school where the only locker space or cupboard space the children have is made out of chipboard which has been there since before the cyclone. The pre-school cannot obtain a lousy \$250 to build new cupboards.

My first remarks on the budget itself deal with education. I am pleased to see the continued interest that is being shown by the government in having music taught at schools. In the explanation of the variation to division 45, which deals with salaries and allowances, we have additional part-time instructors being provided for teaching intensive music programs. Music has always been left out in the cold as far as our school system is concerned. I know that some of the schools have bands, such as the Casuarina High School Band which is very good. Also, we have music taught to some degree in the schools. I feel that we must continue to emphasise music appreciation.

One thing that does intrigue me in this budget is the reduction in the cost of bussing children from their residences to the schools. We have a situation where the enrolment of schools has increased by some 4.6% in the period February 1979 to February 1980 yet the bussing of the schoolchildren from their homes to the schools has been reduced by some \$62,000. I would be interested to know how the minister has been able to do that. The assistance given to students by various schemes has been increased by 77% to \$585,000. This indicates that the government regards the equal opportunities for their education over a wide cross-section of the community as a high priority. It gives the people the opportunity, particularly in outback areas, of having their children attend schools at a reasonable cost. Independent schools are encouraged thus giving our people the choice of a private or a public education.

I am very pleased to see an increase in Northern Territory per capita recurrent grants. This increase was caused by relating the average running cost per student in Northern Territory schools to the areas in which those schools are situated. The government is also prepared to help with the establishment of independent schools. I believe that these independent schools will play a major role in our education system.

One of the items I welcomed was the provision in the budget for dollar-

for-dollar assistance to schools. The allocation was \$500,000. This was a government initiative which was designed to enable those schools which were prepared to do a little bit of work to obtain some reward. Unfortunately, the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations entered into the debate like a herd of elephants. The question of whether or not some schools would be disadvantaged by the introduction of this initiative is something that can be debated at any time. Many schools have now been disadvantaged because of the delay in having this proposal for support for schools implemented. There are many schools that would be grateful for this assistance. If there are schools disadvantaged, they may be eligible to receive assistance through other allocations in this budget.

One of the areas I am not particularly happy about is the continued lack of support for the upgrading of the older schools in Darwin. I refer here to the Darwin Primary School. The Northern Territory government has always looked to providing equal opportunities and, in the case of schools, equal standards and conditions. This is the case with the new areas and we see that 2 pre-schools will be established at Leanyer and Karama at a cost of \$4m. I notice just above that item that the Darwin High School is receiving some \$50,000 to correct design faults. However, the upgrading of the Darwin Primary School, the Larrakeyah Primary School and the Darwin Pre-school must be given urgent consideration. We cannot continue to neglect these schools. If I did not know better, I would think that we are letting them run down so that they can be closed down. They are required and they need work on them urgently.

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Finally on education, I would like to support the transition from school to work program. Organisations and educational institutions in the Northern Territory which participate in the program for this very important phase in a person's life will be able to receive assistance.

An area that continually comes under attack is that of housing. Unfortunately, in any developing area, there will always be this problem. It is the same with land. If we did not have the problem, we would not have development and we would be complaining that development was slowing down in the Northern Territory. There will come a time when our development will slow down and the housing situation will improve. I would love to have a situation where total housing was provided but who would pay for it? We must be realistic. The government has been able to continue with a development program without raising taxes in the Northern Territory. The government has implemented policies that will work. Instead of pouring money into areas in an irresponsible way, it has looked at the problem and has come up with initiatives which will continue to keep development moving and, at the same time, give us that little bit extra to spend in the housing area. The Housing Commission has several schemes operating which will provide incentives to those firms and organisations developing the Northern Territory - schemes which provide housing assistance to their employees, schemes which assist community organisations and schemes which are designed to help provide housing without favour right throughout the Territory. All of these incentives are to be commended. The latest initiative will enable tenants in Housing Commission flats and townhouses to purchase their dwellings. Once this principle is accepted, it should relieve pressure on the government's building program for houses or at least balance the program so we are catering for both needs. The government, by building townhouses, will not save much on construction. It will save in the land component and it may be able to stretch that dollar just a little bit further.

I would like to touch on a couple of points in the Department of Health appropriation. There is no doubt that the opening of the Casuarina Hospital provided a much improved facility for the people of Darwin. The initial

complaints related to the location of the hospital. Whilst there are still some people who believe that the location was wrong - and I am one of those people - there is nothing we can do about it. I still feel that there is the possibility of using sections of the old hospital to promote some form of private facility. This morning, I asked the Minister for Health a question about this. I see in the notes accompanying the Appropriation Bill that an inter-departmental committee is to be set up to look at the future of buildings in the old Darwin Hospital area. Before implementing any of the recommendations made by the committee - for example, the demolition of any of those buildings - I hope that the minister will wait until the issue of a private hospital has been resolved.

Another point I would like to raise relates to the dental service that has been extended to include secondary schoolchildren. The use of dental therapists for inspection purposes is fine but, if these therapists are recommending treatment or carrying out treatment, then I object most strongly. Adult teeth must be treated by fully qualified dentists, not dental therapists. In isolated areas some of these therapists will obviously have pressures placed on them to perform extractions and other treatment. I stress the importance of qualified dentists carrying out this work. The mobile dental services are there for this purpose and I would ask that the minister ensure that dental therapists are used for inspection purposes only.

I would also mention the grants-in-aid program. I am pleased to see that the government has supported organisations such as the Australian Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service, St John Ambulance Service, the Salvation Army and others - all these provide a service we cannot do without. It is also pleasing to see assistance in the form of grants-in-aid being given to drug education and drug rehabilitation. A very serious problem that we have in the Territory at the moment is alcoholism. I do not know what we are going to do about this problem. Certainly, we cannot allow these unfortunate people to lie around the parks and the streets in a drunken state until we find the solution. I do not believe the solution is near at hand. We will have to do something very positive if we are to help all people concerned. Just ignoring the drunks around the town will not help anyone. The government is treating the matter seriously and I am very pleased to see an increase of nearly 19% on last year's appropriation to the Darwin and District Alcohol and Drug Dependence Foundation.

There are a number of other areas I would like to mention but perhaps I should briefly comment on a few of these points. I am pleased to see that the government is continuing to place emphasis on our heritage. The additions to the staff will enable that very important program to continue. I am pleased to see the restoration of the old Naval Headquarters going ahead. I understand that a contract for this work is about to be let. Might I say here that I hope, in future, ruins such as this will be protected until restoration work has been commenced. A roof was placed over the ruins to protect them from the weather but, before the contract had been let, they pulled the roof off and exposed the building to the weather.

Another matter, Mr Speaker, relates to my favourite topic: coffee bush. I do not see a specific allocation for the removal of this weed. I hope that, through the Conservation Commission and the Department of Transport and Works, the project of removing coffee bush will continue. I might say here that any program of that nature should be on a continuing basis otherwise we will see, as in parking areas behind this Assembly, that a new crop will follow.

Finally, I turn to an area that is very dear to my heart: agriculture.

I asked a question this morning whether consideration had been given to moving the Berrimah Experimental Farm to another area. I notice in the capital works program that more buildings are being erected in this area. I raise this matter because the type of experimental farm we need in the Top End should be on virgin ground. The present farm area has been worked for a number of years and has very little value as far as our experimental work is concerned.

Mr Speaker, I support the budget. It will enable continued growth and development of the whole of the Northern Territory in a responsible manner.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEELE (Primary Production and Tourism): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, the honourable Minister for Education issued a press release yesterday concerning the dollar-for-dollar subsidy guidelines. There has been much discussion in this Assembly on the dollar-for-dollar subsidy but, because I am so angry at the decision of the minister to implement the dollar-for-dollar scheme in the way that he has chosen to do, I wish to speak about it this afternoon.

First, I might also say that an organisation which has made some public comment on the question of the dollar-for-dollar subsidy and has done a great deal of research and lobbying is the Council of Government School Organisations. It appears that there are people who are not quite sure what the function of COGSO is. Perhaps I should explain that. The Council of Government School Organisations represents school councils from all over the Northern Territory. There are, of course, bodies of a comparable nature in other states. School councils consist of the parents of children of Northern Territory schools who are so interested and so involved with the education of their own and other children in the Northern Territory that they take an activist role in that education system. I do not think there is any doubt that COGSO has made a valuable and, in fact, a vital contribution to the Northern Territory's education services. If we are not going to encourage an organisation which involves the parents of schoolchildren in our education services in the Northern Territory, we are in a very sorry state indeed. The honourable Minister for Education says that he does not question the valuable contribution that COGSO makes to education services in the Territory.

Mr Robertson: Has made.

Mr B. COLLINS: 'Has made', Mr Speaker. That makes it even more difficult then to understand the minister's comments in this Assembly during the last sittings when he said that COGSO was an organisation which 'purports to represent parents'. That was one of the minister's famous throw-away lines which extremely offended people in that organisation.

COGSO has a very legitimate interest in dollar-for-dollar subsidies for schools because the dollar-for-dollar subsidies have been introduced by the government to assist the very people that COGSO represents: the parents of children. We are all aware that the honourable Minister for Education made statements that he hopes that the dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme would eventually see the elimination of school fees. Mr Speaker, we all know that in fact school fees do not exist. There are no such things as school fees because we have a free education system in the Northern Territory. There is no legislation, no bylaws and no regulations that compel parents in any way to

pay school fees. They cannot be forced to do so yet we have the minister making the statement that he hoped that the dollar-for-dollar subsidy eventually would remove the need to have school fees.

Mr Robertson: When did I say that?

Mr B. COLLINS: I am glad he asked that. What effect is this going to have on funding for schools in the Northern Territory? Some concern has been expressed on many occasions in this Assembly, by myself among others, as to the totally non-people attitude of this government. The fact is that, in essence, the dollar-for-dollar subsidy announced by the minister yesterday is simply a reward for being rich. It is exactly that. That is something that was pointed out by the very people that this subsidy is intended to help. The same people, I might add, were the most serious objectors to receiving it in the manner in which it is to be received.

If I can turn to the minister's press release, he said: 'The government has introduced this far-reaching scheme as an incentive to parent bodies to raise funds for equipment, materials and activities not normally covered by departmental funding'. I will have something to say about that in another debate. He continued: 'Quite clearly, those schools with parent bodies prepared to roll up their sleeves and help themselves will benefit the most. On the other hand, others will not be disadvantaged as their positions will remain the same as before the scheme was introduced'. Of course, Mr Speaker, that only applies if they were not disadvantaged in the first place.

COGSO wrote a letter to the Leader of the Opposition on 19 August. It said:

Dear Mr Isaacs, at the recent annual general conference of the NT Council of Government School Organisations, the following motion was passed unanimously: that this meeting commends the statement of the Chief Minister in his policy speech of 26 May 1980 in which he stated, 'An education commensurate with the skills and abilities must be available to every Territorian'. This is a worthy aim which should receive support of all who are concerned with education. However, we believe that the dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme will not fulfil this aim. Experience has shown that such a scheme has the effect of benefiting those schools which have high fund-raising abilities and capacities whilst disadvantaging those in lower socio-economic groups and areas. It is COGSO's belief that the quality of education should not depend on the fund-raising ability of the parents.

I cannot do more than commend COGSO for that statement and I support it. It continued: 'To achieve its stated aim to abolish school fees, we call upon the government to increase funding to schools by a per capita grant equal to the amount previously raised by school fees ...'.

Another piece of correspondence from COGSO, which I imagine was sent to all members of the Assembly, said: 'During the Assembly election campaign earlier this year, Mr Everingham announced the dollar-for-dollar subsidy for money raised by parents'. In a subsequent press release, dated 27 May 1980, Mr Robertson said: 'The incentive grant scheme will have a real impact on school fees paid by parents. Eventually, depending on the money raised, it may well have the effect of virtually eliminating school fees'. The letter went on to say that COGSO opposed the scheme: 'The reintroduction of dollar-for-dollar subsidies would be turning the clocks back 10 years to a time when

the schools in the poor areas went without'. That is absolutely correct, Mr Speaker. In fact, it was the 1972 Whitlam government that removed that particular system which was originally brought in for the purpose of funding libraries and replaced it with direct grants to schools for library books on the basis of need.

The letter went on to say: 'In recent letters to COGSO, Mr Robertson said that funds for the scheme were not to be seen as a substitute for per capita funding and that any increase in such fundings was a matter for budgetary consideration. He welcomed any submission COGSO might have in that regard'. The letter then pointed out that they had in fact already made such a submission to Mr Robertson in May. The letter went on to point out the fact that, in real terms, schools are at a serious disadvantage this financial year. It said: 'The department has consistently maintained that funds provided for schools are adequate for all basic needs. We have reason to believe that recent investigations by the Department of Education show that a further \$30 per student is necessary to provide for even basic materials. Discussions we have had with school councils and parents active in the schools indicate that the main reason why they are not in favour of taking responsibility for all school level funds is that they fear the government will go on reducing their input to schools and parents will be left to pick up the tab'. I could not agree more.

I say again that the opposition, as it has previously done, supports the request from the parents of children in schools to have this \$500,000, which the minister announced yesterday was going to be used for dollar-for-dollar funding, made directly available to schools as a direct grant on the basis of the needs of those schools. Let us look at the effect that this dollar-for-dollar scheme will have - this scheme of which the honourable minister is so proud and describes as a far-reaching scheme. In an area where the majority of the parents of children come from a high socio-economic group - I do not have to list them; the minister can do it for himself - those schools enjoy very fine facilities indeed. In an area where the majority of parents come from a lower socio-economic group, the schools suffer so far as school fees are concerned by not being able to raise an amount equivalent to that raised by the larger and richer schools, not because of any inability to roll their sleeves up and get on with it. These are statistics and facts that cannot be disputed. That is bad enough but the government is now going to compound this situation. It is going to increase the gap between disadvantaged and advantaged schools even further by implementing this dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I can only say again that I am disappointed and extremely angry. The people for whom this dollar-for-dollar scheme is intended are the parents of schoolchildren. These very people, the members of the school councils who are to receive the so-called benefit, are the people who are protesting against it. I am sure the minister will have an opportunity to expand on that later on.

In conclusion, I have to support again the request from the parents of children in the Northern Territory that this amount of money, instead of being directed, as it will be, towards those schools which are lucky enough to have a majority of parents who come from a more privileged group of the community, should be made available immediately to schools on the basis of need and not as a reward for being rich.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I am not too sure why the Minister for Education can calmly interject and say that he disagrees with the member for Arnhem, the Shadow Minister for Education, when that member points out that parents of children attending schools and their representatives on the

school councils disagree with the implementation of this dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme.

Mr Robertson: I disagree with you too.

Mrs LAWRIE: It looks as though the Minister for Education is going to disagree with a vast majority of parents of schoolchildren in the Northern Territory. I am associated with 2 schools intimately. I am chairman of one school council and have had a 9-year history of membership on a high school board of management which is in touch with several feeder schools in the area. I have yet to come across one parent of a child attending any of those schools who is in favour of the school subsidy scheme. That includes members of the honourable member's own party, 2 of whom were members of the primary school council. One has just resigned. I cannot find support anywhere for this scheme other than that expressed by the Minister for Education and the Chief Minister who, I believe, dreamt up the whole crazy idea.

The honourable minister keeps stating that 'school fees' will not attract a dollar-for-dollar subsidy. It is one of those situations where we feel a sense of *deja vu*. We have had debate after debate, some instigated by myself, pointing out that there are no school fees. Parap Primary was the school that started the rot. Instead of the interminable fete and cake stall money raising ideas, they thought it would be easier if they asked for a voluntary contribution from the parents of the children. Indeed, by way of interjection, the Minister for Education has just acknowledged that. It is a voluntary contribution; it is not a school fee. As a voluntary contribution, it is funds raised by donation from members of the community and not a fee for service at all. Therefore, how can it be exempted from attracting the dollar-for-dollar subsidy?

Everyone seems to appreciate the peculiarity of this method of distribution of this dollar-for-dollar subsidy except the minister espousing the scheme. I invite the minister to explain to we dumb people of the Northern Territory the fine distinction which has been drawn by someone between money voluntarily raised in another form such as a plant stall, a fete or skipping competition and someone walking into the front office and saying, 'Here is \$30 towards my children's contribution to the orderly running of this school'. That is all so-called school fees are.

I represent an electorate which has amongst its constituents some rather rich people. They are also very busy people; they are probably rich because they are busy. Some of them work 6 and 7 days a week. They cannot afford time to pot plants, to stand on cake stalls or to attend fetes. Instead of doing that, they will often say, 'By way of my contribution to the school, here is a cheque'. It would appear, under the guidelines which have been put forward, that that will not attract a subsidy because that is no more than what is presently accepted as a school fee. That is the wrong nomenclature for the gift. Does one have to submit a statutory declaration if one stood in the hot sun at Pavonia Place selling plants and raised \$5 to attract a subsidy rather than approaching the school bursar or secretary and saying, 'Here is my \$5, I can't be on duty on Saturday'. That is achieving the same end.

Mr Robertson: Obviously, that money would go into the same pool as that raised on Saturday.

Mrs LAWRIE: It will be an interesting succession of amorphous school fetes and plant stalls that we will see from now on because I am happy to nominate myself as the bunny to stand in Pavonia Place with the one plant while the rest of the parents of the school contribute by way of money. If that is the way

the minister wants it, that is the way he can have it.

The point I am trying to make, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that the scheme, as announced by him, is so full of holes and so open to manipulation that it does the intention no credit at all. Given his interjections and the tenor of the debate, it will be easy. If we no longer have a voluntary parent contribution, subtitled 'school fees', we will have the one plant stall a year with the one plant and everybody contributing \$30 towards buying that plant. That seems to me to be an ideal way out of it.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to comment this afternoon on the answers to 2 questions I received this morning from 2 ministers. The first one, on which I would like to comment was the decision that the Minister for Primary Production and Tourism has made to discontinue the Bali cattle cross-breeding project at the Beatrice Hill research station. This project was started in 1962 when the first cattle were taken there. To be strictly correct, the cross-breeding might have started in 1967. The Bali cattle seem to have been at Beatrice Hill for a long time. However, taking into account the fact that several things were looked for in this cross-breeding program and it took a while to get going and also the fact that cattle have to reach a certain age before they can be bred from and another few years before their progeny can be tested, the 13 years does not seem to be very long. For those people who do not know, when Bali cattle are crossed with other cattle, the first-cross male progeny are sterile. This does not get you very far if you have a cross-breeding program. The first-cross females are fertile. The program that has been going on out there all these years has been the crossing of quarter to three-quarter crosses of Bali and Banteng cattle to try to obtain the fertile first-cross males. The reason the Bali cattle are being used is because they have good qualities in common with Brahms: their tick resistance and their ability to live in the tropics. They have also one bad property but so have Brahms. The Bali cattle are very nervous - a bit like white leghorns but they lay eggs. The Brahms have a couple of very bad properties but people still breed from them. One of them is that they jump fences.

The reason that I am rather concerned at this project being discontinued is that a breakthrough has been made at last and more fertile first-cross males have evolved from this program. There are cows of quarter to three-quarter cross in calf now to bulls of quarter to three-quarter cross Brahman-Bali animals. As you cannot test the fertility of a bull until it is 3 years old, the project seems to have continued without showing any results.

The minister said that perhaps some place would be found for these hybrid cattle. He mentioned that other scientific organisations or perhaps farmers might be interested. I personally made a representation on behalf of some farmers about a year ago. They were interested in finding out if they could buy any. At the time, I think they wanted pure-bred Bali cattle but they were also interested in cross-bred cattle. I spoke to a senior officer in the Department of Primary Production who is still there and he told me that, under no conditions, could the common or garden farmers have these Banteng cattle in their paddocks because they might get loose again and become feral all over the Northern Territory.

There have been some Bali cattle sent to other places in Australia. I stand to be corrected but I think the 2 places are the Melbourne Zoo and the Taronga Park Zoo. There could be other places but these are the only 2 places I can remember. I have also been told that the calves suffer from a very high morbidity rate in that the cattle cannot reproduce in the southern climate as well as they can up here. Therefore, it is important that we keep some

pure-bred Bali cattle under official control to have the original gene pool, as far as possible, in the Northern Territory where the cattle can reproduce. If the Bali cattle are completely eliminated from the Coastal Plains Research Station, it will make the whole future of this very interesting animal rather uncertain. I think that the Bali cattle are feral only in one part of the Northern Territory, the Cobourg Peninsula, which shows that they can regulate their own behaviour when they are running loose.

If these cattle are to be sold to CSIRO or any other scientific organisation, I am wondering if they will get the benefit of all the work that has been done by primary industry departments since 1967 on this cattle hybridisation program for nothing. If these cattle are going to be of use to these organisations, why aren't they of use to the Northern Territory government? If the government is going to get rid of these cattle and stop the program, consideration should be given to selling the cattle under certain conditions or, if CSIRO or other organisations continue with experiments, we should reap some benefit as we have had the program going all those years. The final option is to restrict the numbers but still keep a nucleus herd. The Coastal Plains Research Station covers about 10,500 acres. There are about 2 square miles of land around that farm not being used for the property. The Navy has one square mile of land for its installation and the station could not be farmed intensely because of the installation there. However, greater use could be made of this land. There is also another square mile on the outside of that Navy station which makes 2 square miles of land which could be used for the benefit of the Bali cattle cross-breeding program.

The second point on which I would like to touch this afternoon concerns the answer that the honourable Minister for Transport and Works gave me when I asked about an emergency water reticulation repair service being made available to the people in the rural area. I have spoken before about those kind people at Wormald and the very friendly answer they give you when you ring them up in an emergency: 'Sorry love, can't do anything about it tonight. Ring at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning'. That is all right perhaps over night but, when it is over the weekend, it is not very satisfactory. Mr Deputy Speaker, the minister said that there were not many calls on the emergency repair service in the rural area and there was a repair service available for these few calls. I would like to be assured that somebody will tell Wormald that it can contact the emergency repair service and that, on the few occasions that these people are needed in the rural area to repair people's water reticulation, they will be available.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): I will be very brief. I have received a letter from the General Secretary of the Northern Territory Police Association. It is a short letter so I will read it:

I have been informed that the tracker at Wave Hill Police Station has recently resigned his position because of illness and that he will not be replaced by any other person. Enclosed is a copy of the letter received by the association from the officer in charge which points to a definite need, both at the station and within the Aboriginal community at Wave Hill, for the services of a tracker or police aide to assist in various ways.

You would appreciate that Aboriginal communities have their own special problems and it is desirable that liaison between these communities and the police should be maintained at all costs. For this reason, the association would hope that some influence could be exerted through available channels to ensure that the harmony and cooperation within the various Aboriginal communities can be

maintained and, where possible, improved. It is believed that an Aboriginal liaison officer, either tracker or police aide, is a vital part of this cooperative effort at each settlement police station.

It is signed by the General Secretary. The policeman has written complaints about the condition of his lawns around the complex and the house is not as good as before. That does not particularly interest me. He says that the community council is upset that they now have no liaison with the local police through a tracker, a liaison officer or a police aide. They have agreed at present to employ a tracker for the police station for one month while this matter is resolved. The matter has been forwarded to me.

I think it is a bit rough that the local council has to pay a tracker to work for the police force. I think it is very rude indeed. I was not terribly impressed with the need for the lawns to be mowed although everybody knows that these days that is what a tracker does. He holds the hose, he sometimes minds the policeman's kids and he does all sorts of things. Occasionally he may be called on to do some tracking. I thoroughly agree with the sentiments that some liaison between the Aboriginal community and the police force is needed. Some pretty raw policemen are sent to bush stations and they do not know what it is all about. An Aboriginal tracker is an invaluable aide for this reason.

Trackers played a terribly important role in the history of the Territory. Some 30 years ago, I had the privilege of staying with a very famous old Territory bush policeman. I stayed with him for a week and he was a wonderful host. He was a very good policeman, a very honest man and an incredibly brave person but I have never seen anybody with such a hopeless sense of direction. In fact, he would get lost in the horse paddock. He was credited with catching a very desperate Aboriginal criminal and factually he did so. What happened was that this tracker followed the criminal and the policeman followed the tracker. The tracker cornered the criminal and the policeman grabbed the criminal. I do not think the tracker received much credit out of it at all.

Those days are more or less past but I would definitely agree with the sentiments expressed by the secretary: 'It is believed that an Aboriginal liaison officer, either tracker or police aide, is a vital part of this cooperative effort at each settlement police station'. I would ask the Chief Minister as minister with responsibility for police to take steps to ensure that a tracker or preferably a police aide be provided for Wave Hill and all other isolated police stations, particularly for those that are situated in Aboriginal communities.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to join the honourable members for Arnhem and Nightcliff and fire a few rockets in the direction of the honourable the Minister for Education. It is a pity that the honourable minister is not in the Assembly at the moment. I hope that he returns during this debate.

I would like to raise a matter which I believe reflects on the competence of the honourable minister in his handling of the education portfolio. I would like to refer to Gillen House Hostel in Alice Springs which is right in the backyard of the honourable minister because it is in his electorate of Gillen. It is a matter about which I am concerned. It also concerns the people who are associated with it. The education portfolio is perhaps one of the most important portfolios in the ministry because it effects every family in the Territory and it effects the future of all the young people who

live in the Territory.

Honourable members would be aware that the Australian Labor Party is ever mindful of the importance of the tourist industry to the economy of the Territory. Some time ago the opposition proposed that there ought to be something better than the existing ad hoc arrangement of staff recruitment. Indeed, many members here would know that some hotels and motels have incredible turn-overs in relation to staff. I understand that there have been reports of up to 400% turnover per year in the Territory. Many of these people are transients. They are trying to get up the track to stay for a few months. They save some money and then they move on. In the meantime, there are literally hundreds of local young people who are unemployed. If given the right opportunities for training and education, these people would make ideal staff in the tourist industry of the Territory. Because these people live in the Centre, they would like to stay in the Centre. It is their home. The Territory has their allegiance and the Territory is their future.

I believe that the history of politics in this country is one of plagiarism. The ALP, which is the oldest and the most democratic party in Australia, is able to thrash out its policy at annual conferences where issues of great concern are under rigid scrutiny and where ideas are able to be canvassed amongst the widest possible range of those representatives in the community who are associated with the party. When every aspect has been examined, the party then takes these particular policy platforms to the people. I have no doubt that among the keenest readers of our particular policy platform would be members of the Country Liberal Party. In recent times, the CLP was able to recognise the good sense in the Labor Party's policy on tourism and, in particular, the proposal to develop some staff training programs.

Even though we do not like to see our ideas taken, we like to see our initiatives implemented. At that time, we did not oppose the hospitality course when it was recycled and relabelled by the CLP. All we asked was that the course be introduced as a matter of urgency. It ought to have been done on a professional basis. Certainly, we approved the appointment of Mr Gould to head the program at the Community College of Central Australia. Alas, Mr Deputy Speaker, our approval soon turned to worry because, like so many other education professionals, he turned out to be a little bit too smart for the minister. Mr Gould is the father of the olympic gold medallist, Shane Gould. He is not a public service puppet. He is not a genuflector in the presence of the Minister for Education and he is not a subservient type of person whose only interest is initialling pedestrian memos. Indeed, it was inevitable that there would be clashes between Mr Gould and the Minister for Education. The course was promised for the start of 1980 and Mr Gould worked hard to achieve that goal. However, it would seem that certain elements were determined to frustrate the project and ensure that it would only proceed at the usual Territory pace; that is, in a series of circles and with a lean to starboard after lunch.

It is the job of a minister of the Crown to ensure that the policy is implemented. Indeed, it actually says much for the minister's inability to get things done that the course did not become established at the start of this year. It says that the course will not be able to be started this year. There was some suggestion in fact that the course will be started halfway through next year. This is even a greater black mark against the administration of this government. I have to stand here and tell the Assembly that the course is now subject to further delay. It was Mr Gould who indicated that the course ought to have been under way by now. However, it would appear that he did not have the backing of the minister. Unfortunately, Mr Gould

had to leave the Northern Territory. I suppose it was wise for him but not for the Territory. The minister, at a loss as always, took the course of the inept: he stalled and then he called for another report. You may recall that Mr Gould was commissioned by the government to make a report on the hospitality and the tourism catering course which was proposed for Alice Springs, in particular at the Gillen House Hostel. The minister, true to form, was not satisfied with the fine recommendations in that report.

He had to commission another report and that report arrived. It was compiled by the Principal of the Tasmanian College of Hospitality, Mr Dean. Mr Dean pointed out that the government had a commitment to start the hospitality school in July this year. That was amended from February this year. He remained sceptical that anything apart from some part-time programs would be offered before 1981 and certainly not at the chosen location - the Gillen House Hostel in Alice Springs.

Honourable members may think it strange that a course with a promised commencement date of almost 12 months ago will be delayed for 2 years or even longer. I believe that it would not be unfair to suggest that the CLP perhaps might have used it as another one of its election promises. Let me give you the reasons. According to the man commissioned to do the second report, there was inadequate staff to institute any worth-while programs. Indeed, he questioned the expertise of the staff already available at the community college. The proposed school had no principal at that time. It did not have a guiding force because Mr Gould had left in disgust. He was totally disillusioned that the minister had handled this matter in such a cavalier fashion and had adopted such an abysmal attitude towards this vital project.

I understand that, in recent times, a head of the tourism and hospitality course has now been appointed. However, that does not detract from any of the points which I have outlined earlier. I would say that the pattern of this particular saga is typical of the way in which the Territory is being run. As a Territorian and a member of the Legislative Assembly from the Centre, I am deeply concerned at the incompetent way in which this particular project has been handled. I would like to conclude by touching on the pattern that I mentioned.

First, we had a policy which was stolen from the Australian Labor Party, repackaged and then sold to the community as a government initiative. The next stage was that the community expectations were aroused. The parents were able to plan for the future of their children and the employers to make ready for new staff. Reports were written and other plans were made. At the next stage, unfortunately, the white ants got into the system and the minister turned out not to be the Mr Flick that was promised in the election campaign. The next stage was that a number of the key staff quit and others moved on to other tasks. This resulted in a severe decline in the morale of those persons associated with the project. More importantly, it would also appear that thousands of dollars of the taxpayers' money was wasted in this whole process.

In the next stage, the minister blustered his way around the Territory and tried to tell people that it was not like this or that, and that the facts were not what they seemed. In the meantime, there was a group of almost 50 people living at the Gillen House Hostel, wondering when they would have to leave to make way for the on-again, off-again hospitality course. These people have contributed much to our society in the Centre and also to the economy. They are builders, carpenters, mechanics, office workers and other technicians. Indeed, they are useful people who have the skills and the

talents we need in a place like Alice Springs.

It is important to raise interesting questions about these people because they had a meeting recently with the minister. He arrived late for that meeting and then could only spare them a few minutes of his time to try to explain the government's policies. At that meeting, he made some promises and he indicated that equivalent accommodation would be found, that no one would be evicted and that, as this particular place was within his electorate, those particular people were the first priority. The people at this meeting asked the minister for certain information which he undertook to provide. To this day, that information has not been provided and these people are still wondering about their future accommodation.

In the meantime, a number of people have been forced to move into other accommodation in the town which is available to them at a higher cost than what they were paying at the Gillen House facility. The Gould report stated that the government would only need half the accommodation facilities at Gillen House to operate the hospitality and tourism catering course and that the other half ought to be made available for those people who required the accommodation. It is a well known fact in Alice Springs that accommodation is a critical problem. There are no appropriate alternatives for these people.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rural Policy in the Northern Territory

Mr STEELE (Primary Production and Tourism) (by leave): The government's plans for encouraging and fostering the development of cropping and horticulture in the Territory were outlined in my second-reading speech on 20 February 1980 when I introduced the Agricultural Development and Marketing Bill. My statement today reports progress which we have made since the act came into operation. I will also outline the government's rural policy which will show how the cropping and horticultural development program fits in with the government's overall rural development strategy.

The government moved simultaneously to constitute the authority and to mount certain investigations in the Douglas-Daly and upper Adelaide River areas. Pending the appointment of the chairman and members of the authority, the government appointed a co-ordinator whose main task was to initiate and co-ordinate the necessary investigatory work. Specialists from the Water Division of the Department of Transport and Works Soil Conservation Commission and from the Department of Primary Production moved quickly to enable the authority to negotiate for areas of rice growing during the 1980-81 wet season. Negotiations are well advanced between the authority and landowners for leasing and acquisition of land during the primary phase. Contractors for earthworks and timber treatments have been registered and suitable agricultural machinery is being obtained. In addition, design work and soil surveys are continuing from both the Adelaide River and Douglas-Daly areas.

As the government is well aware that the success of the development scheme depends not only on the enthusiasm and dedication but also the expertise of members of the authority, it moved carefully with the selection of a chairman. Originally, I had proposed to appoint a part-time chairman with 2 full-time members. However, because of the complexity of the scheme and the importance of its role in the development of the region, I decided that a full-time chairman would be more beneficial to the authority and the Northern Territory government. The government is now in the process of seeking the 2 other members of the authority. The 2 selected members will be of the highest calibre and bring to the authority a range of skills and experience that complement those already existing. The authority will also recruit senior specialists in the areas of marketing and development to complement professional advice from the Department of Primary Production.

We have approached the Commonwealth for financial support and the federal government asked the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to provide an independent assessment of the scheme. Two senior officers of the bureau visited the Northern Territory and the Ord River Scheme early in October, mainly to establish contact with our own officers and to discuss the timing and the scope of the study. Our officers are cooperating very closely with the bureau.

In parallel with the progress of establishing rice growing in existing farms, the government has provided extended assistance to farmers through the Crop Development Committee by providing a freight subsidy on fertilizers and by introducing for this cropping season a guaranteed first advance payment. Progress to date should enable the government to keep to its original program and undertake farm development in the Adelaide River area as well as establishing project farms in the Douglas-Daly area during stage 1 of the scheme.

The implementation of this program would demand the allocation of considerable resources, both human and financial. Until early 1980, the government's rural policy followed those policies of the late 1960s which concentrated on pastoral development based on improved pastures and improved cattle husbandry. The government has now embarked on a scheme which will bring new dimensions to rural production in the Territory. We are conscious of the need for balanced development and in this context we are also very much aware of the needs of our long-established cattle industry.

For these reasons, I will now outline the government's overall rural policy and the priorities we place on the different activities within the overall policy. Mr Speaker, the government's overall rural policy can be very simply stated. It is to encourage those industries which are technically efficient, environmentally sound, conducive to closer settlement and which will result in a viable rural community.

To ensure this policy was carried out efficiently, the Department of Primary Production was established on 1 July 1979. Its main task is to provide advisory, research, development and protection services to the agricultural, pastoral and allied industries. The successful implementation of the government's cropping and horticultural development would depend to a considerable extent on intensified research and extension on crops, pastures, ornamental plants, fruit and vegetables. The creation of 4 additional positions for crop agronomists and of 2 additional positions for horticulturalists demonstrates the high priority the government placed on this work.

Emphasising high priority, the government at the same time wishes to maintain its research, extension and other services to existing primary producers. To this end the government will encourage the development of a viable pork industry and look at the possibility of establishing a viable goat industry. The recent trade missions to the Middle East and South-east Asia have identified opportunities to producers and exporters to develop an export market in live goats. There have also been very encouraging local market prospects for live pigs, pig meat and goat meat, which speaks for the future prospects of these industries.

The egg and poultry industry will be strongly supported by government legislation. Whilst the development of cropping is the prime objective, the government has not lost sight of the vital importance of an integrated farming system using crop and pasture rotation and cattle production.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the cattle industry policy to indicate the direction the government wishes to guide the industry in the 1980s. The Territory is divided into 3 major environmental regions: the wet-monsoon, the dry-monsoon and the semi-arid areas. Whilst each of the regions has its own particular problems, all have 6 major problems in common. These are low productivity compared with southern Australia, cost-price pressures, diseases, weeds, feral animals and bushfires. These problems can be overcome only with more efficient management practices. We will direct a considerable effort not only by my department but also by other departments and authorities to explore strategies which would lead to reduction in input costs. Apart from our major effort in eradication of brucellosis and tuberculosis, priority will be given to appropriate research and extension work in the dry-monsoon and semi-arid areas which will be directed at increasing productivity through more efficient infrastructure and improved husbandry practices.

Whilst in the dry-monsoon and semi-arid areas there is no need to change in a major way the system of cattle production, the poor soils and the inferior pastures in the wet-monsoon area militate against profitable expensive production methods. In this latter area, a complete structural change in the production

system is required to enable landholders to adopt more intensive and profitable management practices. Certain advances have been made in defining suitable management practices but there is still a long way to go. High priority will be accorded to improved pasture and animal nutrition work.

We are convinced that only with the successful introduction of suitable grasses and legumes and with the prudent use of animal husbandry practices will we achieve more intensive production. Only through more intensive management systems will we achieve higher productivity, overcome the problem of disease eradication and control feral animals, weeds and bushfires. I have instructed my department to have a critical look at various functions and concentrate its resources into work which reflects the government's priorities. The department is organising a seminar early next year to discuss with landholders in the Marrakai region the resources, various production practices, research and investigation work undertaken, research work completed and the lessons learnt from those programs. A separate seminar will be held in February 1981 on buffaloes. The policy in regard to this important economic resource will be developed in consultation with various industry groups and the Conservation Commission.

To sum up, the government will accord high priority to cropping and horticultural development and to the development of more intensive cattle production in the wet-monsoon area. Priority will also be accorded to research and extension work directed at increasing productivity in the cattle industry and other areas of the Territory. We will maintain the current level of services to primary producers in the Territory as a whole as well as investigating opportunities to develop new industries.

I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): There is not very much comment that I can make in regard to this rural policy statement that the minister has made. I believe it is a very good and comprehensive policy even though perhaps it is a bit of a pipedream. If it can be implemented, the agricultural, horticultural and pastoral industries cannot help but benefit from it. I would say that almost every aspect that would encourage and promote rural industry in the Territory has been covered. I do feel obliged to say that I cannot believe we will ever see 45 rice farms producing a twice-yearly crop on the Adelaide River. However, it is good to note in a recent press release that the minister and Dr Peter Hooper have been out to the Keep River area and the Ord River area. I am informed by experts that the Keep River area has far better prospects for rice growing.

The minister said that the main task of the Department of Primary Production is to provide advisory, research development and protection services to the agricultural, pastoral and allied industries. I think this is most commendable. However, I believe the minister has neglected to say that the Department of Primary Production is grossly understaffed in most areas and is finding it increasingly hard to recruit experts because the reputation of internal dissatisfaction has spread. Many of those who join the staff stay for a short period only. I am very pleased to note that the government, in its zeal to promote the agricultural and horticultural industries, has not neglected the pastoral industry. I believe it is a very good policy and I am sure we all hope that it can be successfully developed.

Motion agreed to.

SUMMARY OFFENCES ACT (No 4) 1979 AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 38)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to remove from the Summary Offences Act that section which would repeal the noise provisions which we inserted in the act at the end of 1979. Those provisions are in sections 53A, 53B, 53C and 53D of the act. They provide for complaint and action against noisy parties after midnight, for action against undue noise and for noise abatement orders. Honourable members will recall that I introduced the bill for these provisions with a degree of optimism hoping that more explicit provisions would make this legislation more effective than its predecessors. However, the bill for those provisions met some fairly stringent criticism in this Assembly.

Whilst not prepared to make drastic changes to the bill, I had inserted a twilight clause providing that the amendment would lapse 12 months after its commencement. The purpose behind the clause was to enable the Assembly to review the provisions. If it was deemed ineffective, no action by the Assembly was necessary and the provision would lapse. If it was deemed effective and the legislation to be of continuing value, then action by the Assembly to remove the clause which would repeal the provision would be necessary. The bill that I have introduced, Mr Speaker, is for that purpose. In other words, I am of the opinion that the noise provisions are effective and that we should remove the repealing clause so that they will remain as part of the act.

The provisions came into operation on 2 May this year. I asked the police to report to me on their operation and they reported on the position as at mid-October, that is, after about 5½ months operation. In the northern command, which covers Darwin, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Groote Eylandt, 270 complaints were received in the period. Of those, 183 related to noisy parties and the remainder related to industrial noise, dogs, fire-crackers, motor vehicles, arguments and so on. As a result of the initial request of the police, all but 8 of those incidents were satisfactorily resolved. Only 19 complaints were received in the southern command covering Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, 16 of which related to noisy parties. In each case, the noise was stopped or abated when police so requested and no further action was necessary.

The policy commented: 'The legislation is considered effective as it has covered all situations encountered by police to date'. I endorse the police view. Any legislation which results in a nuisance being adequately stopped or abated on request without need for further action is, in my view, eminently effective. Of course, the reason for its being so effective is that the legislation has teeth enough to bite deeply if the request to stop the noise is not complied with. I would prefer that there was no need for any legislation of this type, Mr Speaker. I have already expressed my view that it is unfortunate that legislation is necessary to protect against the thoughtlessness of people who refuse to consider others. I am heartened that these provisions are working well without need for court action against offenders.

This bill will remove the provision which would repeal the noise provisions at the beginning of May next year. I introduce it now to give time for consideration before the next sittings of the Assembly. It must be passed, obviously, before May next year if it is to be effective. I am happy to commend this bill to all honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the Moluccas whose visit to this Territory will further cement the cordial relations existing between our countries. On your behalf, I extend to the distinguished visitors a very warm welcome.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 46)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill pursues the policy of this government to encourage responsible local government by increasing its powers of independent financial management. Its more substantial provisions arise from the recommendations of Dr Ian McPhail, Director of the Department of Local Government in South Australia, who consulted at the government's request with local councils and officers of my department and reported on the Local Government Act. These recommendations and the bill have the support of local government.

The bill is designed to enable councils to manage their finances in a business-like way by investing surplus funds in guaranteed investments and creating insurance reserves. Further, it recognises that a council's major responsibility is to its ratepayers rather than the Territory government by allowing councils more autonomy in their spending powers. It requires reporting of expenditure to replace the present requirement for ministerial approval to be obtained before estimates may be varied or exceeded. Due to the increasing amount of land now being used within municipal boundaries, primarily for agricultural or horticultural purposes, the Northern Territory Local Government Association has requested that councils be given the discretion to reduce rates on land used for this purpose. The bill makes provision for urban farm land rating so that councils may reduce any disincentive to such activities in their municipalities.

Long delays in payments of rates has caused cash flow problems for all councils in the Territory. Some ratepayers are taking advantage of the fact that a one-time fine of 5% imposed 6 months after rates become due offers them the opportunity to use a council's overdraft rather than their own at far below current commercial loan rates. The bill proposes substitution of the present fine by a system of compounding interest similar to that adopted in southern states. This is recommended by Dr McPhail. In addition to penalty rates for late payment, further incentive for prompt payment may be offered as a result of provision for a rebate of up to 10% on rates paid within a month of service of the rate notice.

In line with councils' requests, the bill provides that their formal title will include the term 'council' by which they are generally known rather than 'corporation'. The bill proposes that the status of city, town or shire will be a matter for the determination of the Administrator and, within these constraints, councils will have some choice in determining their formal title.

The bill also fills a gap omitted in the consequential amendments arising from the extension of term of office of councils from 3 years to 4 years by providing a mechanism for filling mayoral vacancies occurring in the third year of a term of office.

Finally, the bill regularises practices made necessary by inflation by increasing petty cash limits and providing a simpler method for their amendment in the future. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

LAW OFFICERS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 40)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will be aware that section 8(3) of the Law Officers Act provides for the Attorney-General to appoint a person to act as Solicitor-General or Crown Solicitor in certain circumstances. These circumstances include the illness or absence of the Solicitor-General or Crown Solicitor or during a vacancy in either of those offices. At present, on each occasion the Solicitor-General or Crown Solicitor is absent, an instrument must be signed appointing someone to act in his place. This procedure necessarily involves a great deal of administrative time, particularly so in the case of the Crown Solicitor who is very peripatetic and is often absent from the Territory on government business. This bill seeks to rectify the situation.

Clause 2 of the bill provides for the automatic appointment of an acting Solicitor-General or Crown Solicitor whenever either one of these officers is absent from duty or a vacancy occurs in either office. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

INDUSTRIES TRAINING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 32)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The bill is a very simple one. Its object is to add one member to the Industries Training Commission who shall reside outside of the city of Darwin. Members would recall that section 11 of the principal act deals with the classifications of members of the Industries Training Commission. It is quite obvious that, since Darwin is by far the most populous area in the Northern Territory, it would contain the people for recommendation by the various authorities such as the employer organisations and employee organisations. On looking through the applications, it turned out that by far the best people in each of those specific categories all resided in Darwin. The intention of the government was to ensure that the very best possible talent joined the Industries Training Commission within the various categories as prescribed by the act. The consequence was that, in the circumstances, it was quite impractical to provide for a member not resident in Darwin. The amendment seeks to ensure that a person from outside of Darwin will now be appointed to the Industries Training Commission. Accordingly, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

OATHS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 41)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will know that the Oaths Act is silent on the issue of whether or not commissioners for oaths or affidavits have an interest in the subject matter of the document witnessed. It is in the public interest that courts and other authorities and persons be confident that important documents such as oaths, affidavits and statutory declarations have been witnessed by a responsible independent party. This bill seeks to ensure this. Clause 5 of the bill amends the Oaths Act by inserting a new section which prohibits a commissioner from witnessing a document which involves the abandonment of the legal right or interest to the direct or indirect benefit of the commissioner.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL COURTS ACT (No 2) 1979 AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 48)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members may recall that an act to increase the jurisdiction of the Local Court and to provide a time limit for appeals was passed by this Assembly last year. The monetary jurisdiction of the court was increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000 and a limited equitable jurisdiction was also given to the court. That act has, unfortunately, not yet come into operation. During the course of preparing new appeal rules, certain procedural deficiencies and formal errors have come to light. The bill seeks to cure those deficiencies and errors.

Sections 36 and 37 of the principal act provide procedures whereby actions which are brought in the Supreme Court which could have been brought or which could have been continued in the Local Court can be remitted to the Local Court. References in those sections to \$2,000 should have been changed to \$10,000 to reflect the increase in the court's jurisdiction. By an oversight, the sections were not amended. Clause 3 of this bill cures that error.

Section 36 also provides that, where an action brought in the Supreme Court has been remitted to and tried in the Local Court, the result is certified to a judge and judgment is signed in the Supreme Court. That procedure is cumbersome and inappropriate. Once remitted to the Local Court, the action should proceed in all respects as if it had been instituted in the Local Court. Clause 3 of this bill seeks to achieve that result.

New section 54A which was inserted by the act last year requires the party intending to appeal to give 28 days notice to the opposite party. That section should have related to final judgments and orders only and not as it does at present to interlocutory orders as well. Twenty-eight days notice is far too long for interlocutory orders; it should be 7 or 8 days. Procedure on appeal from interlocutory orders is and can continue to be adequately covered by rules of court. Clause 5 of the bill, accordingly, removes all references to interlocutory orders in section 54A. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CONTROL OF LEPROSY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr SPEAKER: Since the member has not risen, I order that the motion be struck from the Notice Paper.

APPROPRIATION BILL (Serial 25)

Continued from 19 November 1980.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): In rising in this debate, I would like to concur absolutely with the remarks made in this Assembly yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, he was able to effectively canvass a number of important issues which are not adequately provided for in the Northern Territory budget. I believe it would be important to restate a number of those issues, in particular housing and education. Later on in this sittings, I will be taking up the issue of housing in more detail because I believe it is one of the most critical and vital issues affecting the lives of Territorians.

In the budget speech, the Treasurer made a number of confident and self-assertive claims. It will be the object of my speech to try to point out that some of these claims are ludicrous and unrealistic. For example, the Treasurer claimed that the budget will result in extra jobs, more opportunities for Territorians and accelerated development. I would like to take issue with some of those claims. We were told that there would be more growth in the private sector and this would be encouraged by the government. The Treasurer further claimed that the government is able to support a strong development and to accept the new challenges in the Territory. I believe that those claims are absolutely ludicrous and unrealistic. They must be challenged and scrutinised by this Assembly and indeed by the people of the Northern Territory.

Even if the government feels that it is able to hoodwink the people of the Territory, it will not hoodwink members on this side of the Assembly. The claims made by the Treasurer were fine words but they may be empty rhetoric if you consider that the Territory has a housing problem. Where is the concrete evidence that the government is accepting the challenge of overcoming the critical housing shortage in the Territory? Indeed, the housing crisis has even been recognised in recent times by the NT News. In the NT News of 15 November, there was a report which rightly claimed that the housing situation in the Northern Territory is in a critical condition and was resulting in soaring rental accommodation costs. Indeed, the other information and details in that article were correct. It is unfortunate that the paper's recognition of the problem is rather belated but it is a credit to it that it has at last been able to recognise the problem. However, I do not believe it is a credit to the government that it does not appear to recognise the seriousness of the housing crisis in the Territory. It has not given any indication of the short-term action it proposes to take on a priority basis to overcome the critical housing shortage in the Territory, particularly as it affects those people in the lower income groups; for example, the unemployed.

The evidence speaks for itself but I think it would be worth while to go over the well-known facts about the housing crisis in the Northern Territory. We have a great number of homeless people, particularly in the lower-income groups. There are scores of people living on beaches, in parks, in vehicles, in tents and in already overcrowded conditions in houses and caravans. Indeed, earlier this year a survey was carried out and an emergency housing register was established by the Northern Territory Council of Social Services. It was able to ascertain a number of interesting figures on the basis of a register which it

established in the Darwin Mall for people in need of low-cost emergency accommodation. A similar register was compiled in Casuarina Square in July this year.

The information in the register indicated the existing needs. It would be useful to quote a few figures because there has not been much change in the situation to date. It established that 82 adults and 6 children were living on beaches or in cars. In relation to people living in inadequate conditions - for example, in tents, flats and caravans - there were 177 adults and 101 children. We ought to be concerned that those figures are some indication of the homeless problem in the Territory. They also point to the need for a proper survey of housing needs to be carried out in the Territory. Apart from that, they obviously demonstrate the need for the Territory government to act as a matter of priority to overcome the crisis situation, particularly as it affects the low-income groups.

If we look at the evidence in relation to housing for public servants in the Northern Territory, we find a Territory-wide problem of inadequate housing. Earlier this year, the opposition carried out a survey. We discovered, for example, that in Alice Springs itself there was only one government house available for up to 7 public servants. Those figures alone indicate that the housing needs of the public servants of the Northern Territory have not been adequately and properly met. Nor does it appear from the allocations in the budget that we can expect the problem to be overcome to any great extent in the short term. It would be most unfortunate to lose people who are employed in the public service in such places as Alice Springs and Darwin as a result of their not being able to be supplied with adequate and proper accommodation by the government which employs them. I understand that some people have already left the Territory as a result of that.

The Housing Commission in Darwin has a waiting list of 15 months in respect of houses and 9 months in respect of 2-bedroom flats. As emphasised by the Northern Territory Council of Social Services, there must be some policy changes on the part of the government to deal with this situation and to bring down the waiting period for houses and flats. I will be saying more about that later.

If the Territory is to have a sound economy, then a vital component is quality house accommodation on a low-cost basis. I believe that this is fundamental to the future development of the Territory. One of the vital components of a sound economy is a workforce which is satisfied and wishes to stay in the Territory. The essential problem is that the homeless must be housed quickly. Unfortunately, I have not seen much evidence in the budget to indicate that that particular matter will be handled in the short term by the government.

The words of the Treasurer will become only empty rhetoric unless the government embarks on a realistic housing program all around the Territory. Naturally, it would also need to increase the available serviced land and the housing stock.

I wanted to point out to the Treasurer that the accelerating development of the Territory depends on the Territory government being able to overcome the critical housing needs in the short term, particularly the housing needs of the low-income groups. One of the keystones of a sound future for the Territory is a responsible and a realistic housing program.

I had a look at the budget papers. Certainly, under the allocations for the Housing Commission, there is a total amount of \$50m this year which is up on the allocation made last year and about \$39.5m of those funds is earmarked for the new dwelling starts and the completion of works in progress in relation to public housing and Aboriginal housing. It is interesting to note that there is only an allocation of \$204,000 for Aboriginal housing. There will

be 800 new dwelling starts this financial year which compares with 700 in the last financial year. In Darwin there will be 607 starts, in Alice Springs there will be 94 starts, in Tennant Creek there will be 61 starts, in Katherine there will be 20 starts, in Batchelor there will be 12 starts and in Alyangula there will be 6 starts. However, Nhulunbuy will have no starts. There is a zero allocation of funds for housing in the Nhulunbuy area. I would imagine my colleague, the honourable member for Nhulunbuy, might be saying something about that later. I hope that the government will come to its senses and ensure that, in the short term, the necessary land in the Nhulunbuy area can be acquired and used for the purposes of housing those people in need over there.

I do not believe that the program as outlined in the budget papers will be enough to overcome the housing crisis. We have a housing crisis in the Territory and the sooner the government is able to recognise that, the better for the future development of the Territory. I am not alone in that particular concern. I noticed a report in the Darwin Star today which relates to comments made by Senator Kilgariff. He obviously shares the same philosophy and political platform as honourable members opposite and he has recognised the housing crisis at last. It is a pity that his colleagues on the other side of the Assembly have not recognised the problem too. He said that housing shortages in the Northern Territory had reached critical proportions, particularly in the major centres. I concur with his remarks in that regard. He went on to indicate that a survey into staff housing was carried out recently by the Commonwealth and its reaction to that particular survey is expected to be available soon. Interestingly enough, he indicated that housing programs for Commonwealth employees in the Alice Springs area had been hampered as a result of a shortage of serviced land and that this year it had been necessary for the government to forgo the construction of 5 houses.

I hope that, as a result of the express concerns of people like the CLP Senator for the Territory, the government recognises this serious problem and acts in the short term to overcome it. As I have indicated, it would appear that we are not seeing any concrete evidence of the government's concern or its ability to come to grips with the problem. I believe it is most unfortunate that a higher priority has not been given to the housing crisis in the Northern Territory. The government certainly had the opportunity to ensure that housing needs actually received a higher priority in this budget but, as usual, it has let the opportunity pass.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that he thought that the budget was an anti-people budget. I could not agree with him more. Indeed, I believe it is an anti-welfare budget. That is apparent from the decisions taken by the Treasurer to deny funding to NTCOSS, the Darwin Womens Centre and other community groups this financial year. The facts would be fairly well known. I do not think it is sufficient for the Treasurer to suggest that, because NTCOSS - which is a worth-while community organisation - made some criticism of the government's concern as far as welfare and housing is concerned, it ought to be penalised for that. It would appear the Treasurer is trying to adopt 'bully-boy' tactics in relation to some of the social welfare organisations in the community. I believe that such tactics are totally reprehensible because there are organisations in this community which actually provide a valuable service to people in need - like NTCOSS which has often been used by the Territory government and other governments as a source of information, advice and assistance. It would be a great pity if the Treasurer did not reconsider the decision which he made not to fund NTCOSS in this financial year.

The objectives and aspirations of NTCOSS were outlined earlier this week by the honourable member for Fannie Bay. I certainly concur with any suggestions that NTCOSS has been providing a valuable service in our community and ought to

be supported by the government. It is unfortunate that the Treasurer, who has responsibility for the funds of the Territory government, has this attitude which must be challenged in this Assembly and elsewhere. It would appear that he is arrogant, haughty and insensitive to the needs of the people in our community. I believe that those particular attributes have surfaced in the recent actions he has taken in respect of funding our local community organisations. If anything, he will go down in history as being a hard and indifferent person who had succeeded in stopping the progress of the work carried out by the social welfare organisations in our community. I hope that he is recorded in history as being that type of person because he certainly deserves to have that description applied to him. As a result of the scorched-earth attitude of this government towards the funding of community welfare organisations and its head-in-the-sand attitude to the housing crisis, the Territory could quickly end up with a reputation of being the homeless north. The figures indicate that we indeed have a housing crisis in the Territory which continues unabated because of lack of urgent government action to overcome its problems in the short term.

To give an example of the extent of the housing crisis, there are hundreds of workers employed at the meatworks in Tennant Creek. We visited Tennant Creek and discovered that many workers at the meatworks were unable to obtain accommodation in the Tennant Creek area. They were forced to live in cars or in inadequate conditions at the CWA Hall. There are people sleeping on mattresses on the floor. These men and women are employed by the meatworks at Tennant Creek. It became apparent in discussions with these people that their attitude was that they would earn their money and then leave the place because they were unable to get accommodation. If there was adequate and proper accommodation to satisfy their needs, they would be prepared to stay and to work in that particular area.

As we have this housing crisis in the Territory, we ought to be explaining to people in the south who intend coming to the Territory that they ought to ensure that they have a job and somewhere to stay when they arrive in any of the Territory centres. This is one of the factors that has exacerbated the problem. There are already people in the Territory who have not been provided with low-cost housing yet other people from the south are coming here as a result of the publicity which the government gives in the south to the development occurring in the Territory. When many of those people arrive here, they just do not have accommodation and many of them do not have jobs either. Naturally, they are disappointed and dismayed by the situation which exists here. In recent times, we obtained some figures from the office of the Minister for Lands and Housing which indicated that there was an increase in public housing waiting lists in all of the major centres of the Territory. It is instructive to compare the figures. On 30 June last year, there were 1,319 persons on the waiting list as compared to 1,893 on 4 July this year. On the public service staff housing list, there were 970 persons on 30 June last year. Unfortunately, it was impossible to obtain other figures from the minister's office at the time. I have indicated that the Housing Commission waiting period has increased to 15 months for a house and 9 months for a flat in the Darwin area.

Mr Perron: Do you know how long it is in Victoria?

Mr PERKINS: Yes, I am coming to that. The government always says that the waiting period for Housing Commission housing in the Northern Territory is the shortest in Australia. It is important to note, Mr Speaker, that this becomes rather meaningless in the context of the Northern Territory situation. The cost of living in the Northern Territory is much higher than the national average and the population growth is 3% higher than the national average. The unemployment rate is now conservatively estimated at over 10% in comparison to the national average of a little over 6%. Another factor is that there is an acute shortage of private accommodation and this results in high rents. The average rental for

a 2-bedroom flat is \$70-\$75 per week and for a 1-bedroom flat \$45-\$50. House rents are about \$130 per week in the Darwin area.

The other factor why that particular comparison is meaningless is that there is a lack of alternative cheap accommodation in the Territory. For example, hostel accommodation, if it can be obtained, is over \$30 a week and, if full board is provided, \$60 a week. I understand that accommodation in a caravan park is over \$70 per week and, for a site alone, \$40-\$45 per week. Another factor relates to the age of the Northern Territory population. We find that 80% of the Territory's population is under the age of 40.

These types of peculiarities in the Territory are further compounded by the Northern Territory government's heavy promotion in southern states of the opportunities which the Northern Territory offers. It would seem that these promotions are quite successful and have attracted a great many people - unemployed people. There has been a large increase in transfers of unemployment benefits recipients - 18% to 31%.

These figures demonstrate the need for the government to totally reappraise its housing policy in the Territory and review its present attitude. It is forgetting that the Territory's greatest resource is its people. It must do something in the short term to overcome the problems of the many homeless people in the Territory. I do not think it is wise to adopt a policy of development at any cost. We ought to ensure that we have the necessary housing infrastructure to accommodate those people in the community who urgently require housing. If the government wants to make true the claims made by the Treasurer that the government is accepting new challenges and that we will have a strong and accelerated development in the Territory, it must act, as a matter of priority, to ensure that the housing crisis is overcome in the short term. If it does not do that, the future development of the Territory will falter and we will end up with the reputation of being the homeless north. I do not think that ending up in that particular situation would enhance in any way the future development and growth of the Territory.

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

Mr STEELE (Primary Production and Tourism): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to join in this debate this morning on the third budget brought down since self-government and to provide information in my portfolio areas. I listened with interest yesterday to the Leader of the Opposition's very long reply to the second-reading speech. He did not touch on very much in my area. He reminded me of the time when Bill McMahon was made Minister for Primary Industry. Fred Daly remarked that the nearest he got to primary industry was probably his canary cage and the garden hose.

The theme of the opposition's arguments is the housing crisis and the unemployment figures. I challenge the member for MacDonnell's figures of 6% down south and in excess of 10% in the Northern Territory. The best it has been down south in the last year is around 9.6% and I would be very surprised if he could find anyone down south to say that it is 6% today.

Mr Speaker, the theme has been housing, a problem that the government is trying to come to grips with in a very rapidly developing area. I do not doubt that the strains and stresses that the member for MacDonnell mentioned are real. Certainly, we were very well aware of some of the accommodation problems in Tennant Creek after the construction of the abattoirs. The member for MacDonnell would have us believe that the houses should have been standing there empty and waiting for those workers to move into at the opening of the meatworks. The system is not in any way geared to work in that manner at all. What you have to remember is that, with 1% of the population, the Territory has something like 5%

of the currently committed Australian investment. We have a budget for 130,000 people which equals Tasmania's for 450,000 and we probably have a growth rate of around 6%. I do not believe that any community should have such great strains placed upon it, particularly in the housing area. I am sure the Treasurer and the Minister for Lands and Housing will give some facts and figures in support of this argument.

The member for MacDonnell rightly says that some people are probably attracted up here by the promotions of tourist bureaus and development themes promoted by the government. It is unfortunate that people do come up here without securing employment before they leave the south. Certainly, our promotion is geared towards other areas of attracting investment in the Northern Territory. We are attracting tourists who are importing money into the Northern Territory. It is not geared in any way towards attracting people up here for employment.

A big area in my portfolio, an area of significance, is the development of the tourist industry. It is the fastest growing industry in the Northern Territory today with an average visitor increase of 12% per year. There were more than 300,000 visitors during the last year and income generated is expected to exceed \$100m. I attribute that increase to several factors, not the least of which has been the promotion, which was mentioned earlier, and new office locations in Sydney and Brisbane. We came from the 11th floor in Carrington Street in Sydney and moved to street level in King Street. The figures for the growth of products sold have been remarkable. The new media presentations have been lauded quite highly around Australia. The natural attractions featured in these promotions have been very significant in attracting visitors to the Northern Territory.

The appointment of a new chairman to the Tourist Commission on 12 December 1979 has been another significant bonus in its effect on the new budget on tourism. To give an example of the increases around Australia in the bureaus, looking at the month of October 1980, we recorded \$273,000 sales from product, an increase over the corresponding October in the year before of 45.9%. I believe that we are on the right trail. The government further increased the appropriation by \$1.1m to just over \$2.6m in this financial year. The breakup of that tremendous increase in marketing expenses is a little tedious but obviously the member for MacDonnell is very interested in how we spend our money in attracting unemployed persons to the Territory.

The breakup is as follows: production of television commercials - \$136,467; production of multi-screen audio-visual presentation - \$90,000; general media television advertising - \$625,533; travel promotion, and this includes overseas promotion - \$190,000; preparation of foreign language brochures in German and French - \$21,000; brochure assistance to Northern Territory operators - \$10,000; grants to regional tourist associations - \$30,000; special brochures for the Melbourne Centenary Exhibition, royal shows etc - \$15,000; tourist awareness campaign - \$5,000; and contingency promotion and membership fees - \$10,000. As I indicated, this program has been very successful. On an allied subject, the federal government has responded to our request to consider opening a consulate office in Denpasar in Bali which would enable visas to be issued quickly to genuine tourists wishing to visit the north of Australia. The problem of delays in issuing visas in Bali was constantly raised with the Minister for Industrial Development during his recent trade mission to South-east Asia and a consulate could remove a problem experienced in this area. In a similar area, but far removed geographically, we have printed 2 tourist brochures in French and German for distribution in appropriate European countries to familiarise overseas visitors with the Territory's attractions which, together with the English language version, will give us greater coverage of this rapidly expanding market. The commission is also considering opening a tourist bureau in Perth which would give the Territory a bureau in every state.

One area of concern is that the Territory must continue to upgrade its facilities so that tourists are provided with facilities of international standard. The government appointed a combination task committee some months ago comprised of the Chairman of the Tourist Commission, the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Housing, the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation and a local government association representative. Its charter was to establish, investigate and encourage the provision of more visitor accommodation in the Territory by private industry, taking note of the major shortfall in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

Several investors and developers are investigating or have indicated interest in building a total of 447 units - approximately 1,340 beds - over the next 12 months. Some of these programs have yet to mature and it has been part of our program of interstate travel to talk to the managing directors of hotel chains. For example, recently the Chairman of the Tourist Commission and myself called on the managing director of Travelodge who stated that he was very satisfied with the performance of Travelodge in the Northern Territory. He would not give us an assurance that he would construct a hotel on his site at Alice Springs even though the Travelodge company owns 3 blocks in Alice Springs. However, he did commit himself to a visit to the Northern Territory to examine our accommodation requirements.

One significant advance is the Territory government's involvement in Yulara Tourist Village at Ayers Rock. This project is proceeding steadily and the planning committee is at present assessing the submissions received from interested private developers.

Turning now to primary production, I note the member for Victoria River supported our policy statement this morning. This department continues to expand and it has had its overall budget increased by more than 20% this year. The figure does not include the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. The department will increase its staff to ensure that support is provided to that authority during the development stages. The upper Adelaide River experiment station and Douglas-Daly experiment station will be progressively built up to accommodate the support to stage 1 of the scheme.

As in previous years, the government has continued its commitment to cropping development by providing funds for fertilizer subsidies, a guaranteed price system and an advanced payment scheme. This continued support will help to overcome the disadvantages that Territory farmers experience due to the high cost of inputs.

The importance of beef production continues to play a major role in the Territory's social and economic development. Australian producers are facing a threat that the United States market could be closed to them after 1984 unless they have their properties declared free of brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. We have taken a very serious view of the American deadline and have developed a program to help Northern Territory producers achieve disease-free status to avoid the loss of this lucrative market. We have provided an additional \$200,000 towards increasing the testing required to achieve the objective of disease-free status. This is, however, a two-way business and the producers must contribute towards this program. It is obviously in their best interests. The need to develop more efficient mustering methods to clear total areas of all cattle is an important consideration in eradicating any diseases. I do not have to point out how wild some of the country is in which the musterers have to operate. The Commonwealth government is also providing assistance through taxation relief and direct subsidies to enable the producers to write off stock destroyed during the program.

Overall, the beef industry is in a better condition this year despite the effects of drought in some areas. The drought situation is becoming a problem and there has been discontent expressed by the Central Australian cattlemen over the application of the drought policy in their region. Their main bone of contention is the 2-year eligibility period required for drought relief as compared with the northern region. The main reason for this is the climatic history of the south where graziers can expect a drought every 4 years. Compared with this, the cattlemen in the north of the Territory experience a virtual drought every year without having the benefit of top quality feed that is available from southern producers.

This government is willing to assist but there is a need to satisfy drought requirements of the Commonwealth government which also provides funds. Satisfying legitimate claims for drought assistance will run into hundreds of thousands of dollars if rains do not fall this summer. That could be a light estimate. It is possible for a pastoralist who is forced to turn off his live stock in the first year of drought to be eligible for tax relief under section 36AAA of the Income Tax Assessment Act. Under this section, the taxpayer who has been forced to dispose of his livestock because of fire, drought or flood may elect, if he intends to replace the livestock, to have any assessable income received from the disposal during that year to be adjusted over the next 5 succeeding years. The question of what constitutes drought depends on the circumstance of each case and I have to approve each case individually. A review of the Northern Territory drought policy is taking place at present and I expect to make an announcement on this shortly.

Following up on the Feral Animal Inquiry convened by the Northern Territory government in the 1978-79 financial year, this budget allows for a large injection of funds totalling \$205,000 which is a 75% increase over the previous year. This increase will cover new projects to look into problems associated with feral pigs, donkeys and buffaloes which were outlined in the report resulting from that inquiry. The administration of these new projects has been transferred to the Conservation Commission because their major thrust related mainly to environmental control and protection. Obviously, the Department of Primary Production will have a major input into this matter.

The Territory government continues to sustain the development of a wider range of fishing ventures to improve the viability of the industry. We have increased the operational expenses by about \$400,000, almost 70%, to develop a training scheme aimed at developing the local Spanish mackerel fishery. Experimental fishing for shark and demersal fish is taking place. At the same time, mercury and consumer tests of these fish are being conducted to ensure their acceptability to markets. I understand they are pulling quite a lot of shark out of Darwin Harbour. There has been much interest shown already in the seminars and training programs held for members of the local fishing industry.

New regulations have been imposed on amateurs fishing for barramundi to relieve the pressure of concentrated fishing on existing numbers and breeding stocks. The regulations set a limit of 5 fish to be caught per day by a person and limit the number to 10 per person per trip. My father-in-law advises me that it would not matter what bag limit is imposed, he cannot catch a barramundi. We have increased activity in the training of Aboriginal communities in fishing and marketing techniques.

One area I must touch on is the development of the rural education centre in Katherine. This will be a very important aspect that will contribute to all sectors of primary production in the Northern Territory. The practical application of the agricultural courses will be guaranteed for the development of the upper Adelaide River and the Douglas-Daly areas and, ultimately, the Katherine River area.

Another consideration could and should be the development, as proposed by the NT Cattle Council, of a certificate of competence for ringers and stock workers to facilitate and encourage the transition of young people from juniors to better qualified and more useful people for the industry by providing them with formal recognition of the multiplicity of skills needed, job security, better rates of pay and easier transfer between employers. The council has proposed that 9 subjects ranging from general horsemanship to a basic knowledge of butchering, slaughtering and cooking be included in the certificate with on-the-job training being provided by the employer.

Over all, the next 4 years will be a period of great expansion on all fronts for the Territory. I look forward to being part of this development under this budget which is providing the impetus for the Territory to rise to a position of major importance in the nation as a whole.

I commend the bill.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Yesterday, the Minister for Education referred, and I think I remember his words correctly, to the superior role of this parliament compared with what happens in the Executive Council. If only that was so! We know that, in fact, the executive, because it has access to knowledge through the public service, is able to run rings around the parliament particularly in matters of the financial management of the Northern Territory.

The Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory has a responsibility to scrutinise the expenditure proposals initiated by the executive. Of course, it is its right to initiate proposals. But it is wellnigh impossible to undertake a proper scrutiny of these budgetary proposals in the only manner which is available to us - through this debate. This problem is recognised not only here in the Northern Territory but in Commonwealth parliaments throughout the world.

I have in front of me a report of an international study group of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association entitled 'Parliament and the Scrutiny of Public Finance'. Among the many things it commented on, it said: 'The striking feature of this process of budgetary preparation and examination is the late stage at which the legislature becomes involved'. In debating this budget for 1980-81 here today, we are not simply 3 months too late, because it is 3 months since the Treasurer introduced it, or 5 months too late, because we are 5 months into the financial year which it covers, but in fact something like 12 months too late because already the public servants in the Northern Territory are preparing the budget estimates for the year 1981-82. That is happening at this very moment and this is the first opportunity for members of the Assembly to discuss - with the inadequate information that is available to them - the expenditures initiated by the executive in the Northern Territory for 1980-81.

It would be of assistance if we had that public accounts committee which the Treasurer indicated last year would be set up during the course of this Third Assembly. Indeed, after this budget, I very much look forward to his initiating such a proposal as soon as possible because it is certainly very necessary. Even so, a public accounts committee of the parliament will look very much at expenditure after it happens rather than before, somewhat in the way that the quarterly accounts are printed and we have access to the Auditor-General's report for the past year. It is still an examination of expenditure after the event rather than before.

In the federal parliament, which has much weightier financial matters to consider, there is a vast array of committees which look at the financial processes at various stages. These are committees of both Houses as well as of individual Houses. I would like to refer honourable members to a few of them so that they can appreciate the access that federal members have to information which we in

this Assembly are denied. Firstly, there is the Standing Committee on Expenditure. It is appointed to consider papers on public expenditure presented in the House and such estimates as it sees fit to examine. It considers how policies implied in the figures of expenditure and in the estimates may be carried out more economically. It examines the relationship between the costs and benefits of implementing government programs and it inquires into and reports on any question in connection with public expenditure which is referred to it by the parliament.

There is also the Joint Public Accounts Committee. Its duties are to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditures of the Commonwealth and each statement and report transmitted to the House or Parliament by the Auditor-General in pursuance of subsection (1) of section 53 of the Audit Act; to report to both Houses of Parliament with such comment as it thinks fit on any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports or any circumstances connected with them to which the committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Parliament should be directed; to report to both Houses of the Parliament any alteration the committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them or in the mode of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys, and to inquire into any question in connection with the public accounts which is referred to it by the House or Parliament and to report to the House upon that question. That is committee number 2.

We then have the Joint Public Works Committee. While it is not directly a financial committee, because of the very large amount of public money which is spent on public works - in this budget before us something like 14% of the budget moneys are in the capital works program - it nevertheless has a very significant impact. I shall refer to the Public Works Committee and what it does later.

There is a Senate Committee on Finance and Government Operation. I am assured by Senator Rae, who is a great believer in Senate committees, that it is an important committee. In addition to that, there are 5 Senate estimates committees which examine the budget papers for each year. That, of course, is supplementary to the examinations in the committee of the whole which the federal parliament has found so totally inadequate. That is why the Senate estimates committees were established.

Despite this vast range of information that is available to our colleagues in the federal parliament, they still believe that it is not enough. I will quote from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure Report 1979: 'The committee has concluded that parliamentary scrutiny and influence are limited because of (a) the lack of specific procedures to influence executive thinking prior to the formulation of the budget and (b) the absence of appropriate information for parliament to increase its contribution to the formulation of public expenditure policy and to improve its reviews of the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure'.

Mr Speaker, if that is what they think in Canberra, then how much worse off are we up here because all we have is this budget debate and the grossly inadequate information which is available in the budget papers. It is notable that, in the 3 years that I have been here, the amount of information in most of those accounts is less and less each year. However, we will attempt to ascertain some of it in the committee stage.

I included the Public Works Committee before as a committee which has a great influence on financial policies of the government because of the large amount of public money which is spent on capital works. In addition to some sort of financial committee, I believe we require a committee on public works in the Northern Territory. I will just quote a few examples of the funny things that have happened in the capital works programs over the last few years. These were

not major things but I think they must raise the fact that we do not really know what is happening. This is partly because of the nature of capital works programs, the large sums of money involved and the fact that items frequently extend over several years. For example, we are looking at items in the Third Assembly that were initiated in the Second Assembly. The situation has changed.

Some particularly peculiar things happened this year. Items which were included in last year's budget have been dropped from this year's budget. I refer particularly to the upgrading of the Nightcliff Primary School and the building of the Dripstone Community Health Centre. There is no reference to those in this budget although last year this parliament appropriated money for them. I believe that those projects are absolutely necessary and I am totally mystified as to how we can vote the money for them one year and they can just disappear the next. I suspect that, in the process, the very fact that they have gone onto the capital works program and then off again has cost the public money.

I think that this parliament should have a way of examining proposed major capital works projects to ensure that this sort of shilly-shallying does not happen. When a major project is considered, the parliament can look at the desirability or otherwise of it, the cost effectiveness of it and the other matters which public works committees normally consider - I will not read out the long list of powers and functions because they are considerable - so that we do not have the comings and goings of capital works that have happened over the last few years.

While I am dealing with capital works, I would like to mention a couple of matters of interest to my electorate. I mentioned the Nightcliff Primary School and the fact that it had gone from the capital works program despite what I consider to be a very great need for that school to be upgraded. I can only support what the member for Port Darwin said yesterday about the upgrading of the older schools in the Darwin area. I can appreciate that schools in rural areas have significant and somewhat different problems in maintaining their standards. Nevertheless, at the Parap School in my own electorate, there was a reasonable expectation that phase 2 of the upgrading of that school would appear on this year's capital works program because we knew it was next in the line after Nightcliff which received the nod last year. But phase 2 for the Parap School has not been included in the budget and I certainly hope it is next year because it really is a very great need. I am more than happy to invite the Minister for Education or the Treasurer or any other minister to have a look at those buildings at Parap, which have received only very basic maintenance since they weathered the cyclone, to demonstrate the need for that appropriation in next year's budget.

Another item of interest to my electorate is the fire station at Parap which has been proposed in both last year's and this year's budget. However, I heard very strong rumours that this will not be built. It is one of those questions that I intended to ask without notice but I have not had a chance this week. I heard very strong rumours that the Parap fire station may not go ahead yet it is included in the papers before us. It was passed in last year's budget. I would be interested to hear from the minister what is happening with that proposal. This is another example of what happens with capital works programs when the parliament does not have proper examination of the projects before they are approved.

There is another item of interest to my electorate: the central zone sewerage treatment station on Ludmilla Creek. The Minister for Transport and Works might well close his eyes. It is probably closing his nose that my constituents would recommend to him from time to time. There are problems with the operation of that plant. It is recognised that it has never worked properly. There is also a problem of the foul odour which the former Minister for Transport

and Works assured us in the last Assembly was due to infiltration of salt water at the pumping station in Coconut Grove. I am very disappointed to see that money has not been allocated for either of those matters to be rectified: the working of the plant itself or for the salt water infiltration. There is some money available - \$150,000 I think - for an office or storeroom. This will not help the residents terribly much.

I was thrilled to bits when I came across an item under works in progress for the Water Division: 'Darwin Waste Water Treatment Plant - construction of odour screen, \$52,000'. I thought, 'That is marvellous. That is just what my constituents want'. I made some inquiries. I was a little puzzled by the fact that it was a work in progress because I knew it had not been allocated last year. It is my information that, in fact, that \$52,000 is for a screen of trees around the waste water treatment plant. I know that might improve the appearance of the waste water treatment plant for those happy residents of Nightcliff who use the connector road but it will not do much to remedy the problem of the odour. I understand the \$52,000 has been transferred from the roads division allocation last year for the connector road. I was fascinated that in fact that can happen. This is all the more reason why we should have a closer look at capital works programs as they are presented to us. I am sure we would find many other examples like that if we had the time to look.

It is 3 months since this Assembly sat. How much more informed we would have been if, in those 3 months, we could have had a committee working to examine the budget papers in detail so the parliament would have some better idea of these appropriations proposed by the government for expenditure of public money. I cannot stress too often how inadequate the information that is available to us is and how urgently we need to do something about it in the interests of our responsibilities to the taxpayers who provide the money that is being spent.

I wish to ask some questions and make some comments about one particular appropriation: the appropriation for arts and cultural affairs in the Department of Community Development - division 65, subdivision 4, item 05. Once again, it seems that there is no breakdown. We simply know that there is an allocation of approximately \$2.5m to cover grants-in-aid for youth, sport, recreation, arts, cultural affairs and heritage programs. I ask the Treasurer if he could possibly provide, either in reply or in the committee stage, a breakdown of the money that is available in the area of arts and cultural affairs. I am excluding heritage from that, Mr Speaker.

We have heard that there is an allocation of \$100,000 towards the Darwin Cultural Centre. I asked a couple of questions about this already during the week. I am interested in the determination of the method of design and construction for this building. I have also asked questions about the method of management. This is a very important project indeed. It ranks with the museum and with the new Parliament House as a major and prestigious building, not only for Darwin but for the Northern Territory. It is most important that the method of choosing the design should be one in which the public has an opportunity to be involved. We should have public exhibitions, as we had with the museum, so that people can see what is happening and to ensure that we obtain a building worthy of this major project. I have heard rumours that there will be no such competition. There will not be an architectural competition such as the Assembly rightly determined should take place for the Parliament House nor a design and construct competition such as took place for the museum building. I would certainly urge the government, bearing in mind the important nature of this building and the involvement of the people of the Northern Territory with it, that some public method of determining the design, such as takes place with other public buildings of that sort, be carried out on this occasion.

I also asked a question about the method of management and I appreciate the minister's point that, in fact, the Darwin city council is involved. Nevertheless, I would urge him to seriously consider following the precedent, which the government established in the last parliament in relation to Araluen, of establishing a trust to manage the building in addition to other functions. I believe that the precedent established in relation to Araluen is a very good one. It has already demonstrated that it will work very well indeed and that it has the support not only of the people in Alice Springs but generally throughout that region. I have the act in front of me. The Araluen Trust is charged with the responsibility of encouraging and facilitating artistic, cultural and performing arts activities throughout the Alice Springs region and also the care, control, management, maintenance and improvement of the Centre. We have the precedent there of a trust being established with the responsibility of managing the building and also facilitating cultural activities in the Centre. I think that would be very desirable for the Top End too.

At the moment, there is a grave dearth of information on the government's policies in the arts area and the methods of promoting artistic and cultural activities in the Northern Territory. We do have allocations in the budget for the Arts Council, the Darwin Theatre Group, Araluen etc. There are 4 or 5 organisations which we can consistently name every year yet the money seems to be allocated on an ad hoc basis and not in consideration of any long-term determined policy to promote cultural activities in the Northern Territory. I think that is lacking and I would ask the minister if he could outline his government's policy or perhaps table a copy of it in the Assembly so that the people of the Northern Territory and the members of the Assembly will know in what way the government is guided in the allocation of moneys to the arts and cultural affairs areas.

This year we had \$40,000 - I am not sure which allocation it came from in last year's budget; perhaps the Treasurer can tell me - spent on the visit of the South Australian Symphony Orchestra. That was quite fun and many people enjoyed it. I think such things are desirable from time to time but it was an enormous sum of money. Of course, there was plenty of ABC money spent in addition to that spent by the Northern Territory government. The cost benefits of such expenditures need to be looked at by the government in comparison with expenditures on local organisations whereby we may well obtain a more lasting benefit to the Northern Territory in terms of promoting activities, promoting interest in artistic affairs and promoting achievement in artistic affairs rather than a hit-and-run visit by the South Australian Symphony Orchestra or some other worthy organisation.

I ask the minister to advise the parliament of his policy in this area. We thought we were going to hear it when we had 2 announcements from the former minister in the last 12 months. In October 1979, an inquiry was announced into the performing arts in the Northern Territory and the minister appointed a number of people to carry out that inquiry. To the best of my knowledge, for various reasons, they have never met. I do not believe that that is the fault of the members and I would ask the new minister to explain what happened to that inquiry. I thought it was very desirable.

Later, the former minister announced something different again. We thought - we did not know - that when he announced the establishment of an arts advisory council in the Northern Territory, he perhaps felt that the inquiry into the performing arts was unnecessary. That council's establishment was announced and applications for membership were invited. Once again, we never heard what the functions of that council would be. We have never heard if any appointments were made, who they are and when it will meet. I ask the new Minister for Community Development to give consideration to those matters because they are important

to people in the Northern Territory. There are many other unanswered questions and a very apparent lack of direction by the government in this interesting and important area.

In closing, I would like to indicate my dismay at the behaviour of some members of the government front bench. When the member for MacDonnell was speaking of the plight of the homeless in the Northern Territory this morning, they laughed as if they thought it was a great joke. I found that totally deplorable. I do wish that more members of the community in the Northern Territory had an opportunity to come into the Chamber to see that sort of thing because I believe it is very distressing indeed. Certainly, it is not worthy of the high office that they hold in the Northern Territory.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak in this budget debate and to comment on the appropriations as they affect the Territory generally and my electorate particularly. I think that we must have development in the Territory if we are to have jobs to offer to people who want to come and live here with us. I consider it to be a development budget. Development provides jobs for people and therefore it is a people's budget. It is necessary for the government to offer financial help to private enterprise because it is only by private individuals working in the Territory and outlaying their capital and their labour that we can hope to live in the Territory as we are and have a solid base on which to develop further and also provide a good place for our children's future.

My only regret is that there could not be more money allowed for developmental projects. The way I look at it is pretty realistic. I look at it from the point of view of how it has affected me in the past. You have to continue putting money into the farm to obtain satisfactory harvests before you can think about buying things like fancy curtains and pictures on the wall. Since this budget is primarily a developmental budget before it is a people's budget, ultimately it will put money into the farm. We will reap the benefits of the budget through the development projects that the government has encouraged for our betterment this year and in the future. We must keep our feet firmly on the ground and reality demands that, if we want people to come and live in the Territory, we must have something to offer them. The first thing you offer people when they come to a new place is a job.

Commenting generally, I am very pleased to see the money allocated for roads, the Territory Development Corporation, the Bush Fires Council, lands, mines, primary industries and the tourist industry. All of these things are related to development. The roads are necessary if we want the Territory to be opened up. It is necessary to turn off more land every year if we want development in the Territory. Our government is trying very hard to meet the demands for land for people living or working in the Territory.

I am very pleased to comment favourably on the allocations for the different projects in my electorate. The first thing which I would like to comment on is the police station which is to be built at the 19-mile. I have been told that it will be completed by January next year. I sincerely hope that this project will be completed and in operation by then. I understand that it will be bigger and have more men than are currently in the Howard Springs Police Station. Although it will not be strictly in my electorate, it will certainly serve all the people in my electorate. It was due to the demand from the people in the rural area that the present caravan police station was established out there. This is an item which was brought forward from the previous financial year. I hope it will be built this year.

I am very pleased to see the money which has been allocated for the provision of services to Bathurst and Melville Islands. These services include the

provision of toilet facilities, ablution blocks, power supplies, sewerage pumping stations and things like that. It is only by considering health from a preventative point of view that we can hope to have people living in healthy conditions in these outlying communities. It is false economy to provide very expensive medical services if we do not provide the basic sewerage and water facilities. A welcome spinoff from these projects in the Tiwi Islands is the fact that jobs are provided for the people there.

The next area of interest in my electorate, Mr Speaker, is the Gunn Point Prison Farm which is mentioned in the proposed new works for this year. There will be the construction of 2 cell blocks at Berrimah Prison at an estimated cost of \$800,000. At Gunn Point, an officers' mess, kitchen, a toilet block and showers will be constructed at a cost of \$135,000. I only wish that the sums of money were reversed. The work being done at the Gunn Point Prison Farm is active rehabilitative work for those people who show positive interest in rehabilitation. I understand they opt to go to Gunn Point from Berrimah Prison. Only by the active encouragement of rehabilitation at places like Gunn Point Prison Farm can we hope to obtain any good from our prison system.

I would like to see the situation that exists at Gunn Point Prison Farm at the moment rationalised in the future. I would like to see official consideration being given to the fact that, on the one hand, rehabilitation of the prisoners is sought and, on the other hand, the prisoners at Gunn Point Prison Farm are growing agricultural produce. It is only common sense that, if one hopes to rehabilitate the prisoners into an agricultural life, one has to carry it right through from start to finish. It is no good telling them how to grow tomatoes and pumpkins if you do not also give them some instruction on how these things can be marketed. It is no good growing things if they are just left for the rats to eat. I have seen this happen. Pumpkins and squashes have been left out there because nothing official has been said to the effect that they can be sold.

I know that the prison at Berrimah is supplied with produce. I know that some discussion has taken place about the disposal of this produce and that the produce will be turned off at the rural school farm at Katherine. Now is the time to seriously consider all the questions surrounding the growing of produce and then the selling of that produce. As I understand it, animal produce grown there cannot be sold. We would assume that the Gunn Point Prison Farm is an official establishment and it cannot sell excess pigs. On the other hand, any person can go down to the Upper Adelaide River Experiment Station and buy, at auction, its culled cattle. They are both government establishments; they are both growing things under government supervision with government money. However, one establishment cannot sell its produce and the other can. The officers at Gunn Point Prison Farm have an interesting swapping arrangement for their pigs in the rural area. While I agree with this, I feel that official recognition should be given to the sale of produce.

The next point in the budget in which I am interested is the upgrading of the school at Pularumpi which has been long overdue. The demountables are over there now. When the final upgrading is done, it will be a great improvement on the previous building. I took friends over there who went to school there a number of years ago. They were sad to think that the old school would be pulled down. But we cannot always look back. We must look to the future. I think the roof leaked a bit and it was not the best place to teach children.

The next item in the budget that affects me is the construction of a new primary school at Humpty Doo. There has been a delay and, to put it mildly, the people in the rural area are becoming a little upset about it. The present school is made up of a few demountables. These demountables are at their full capacity

and there will be more children next year. The plans for the new school specified that it had to be air-conditioned. A reassessment of the situation has led to a new plan for a fan-cooled school. I think this would meet the wishes of the people in the rural area but, unfortunately, it has meant a delay in the construction of the permanent primary school.

The next item that is of interest to me is the one which says: 'Provide village centres at Humpty Doo, Howard Springs and Fred's Pass'. When I saw that, I was rather disturbed. I thought: 'Here we go again. The town planners in their ivory castles in Darwin are thinking about providing village centres for the people in the rural area'. I understand that there was something mentioned about this in the media also. However, I have been told it is to provide essential services for the current village centres.

The developmental part of the budget is brought out in the next item which deals with construction of access roads to horticultural blocks at Lambell's Lagoon and also at Marrakai, which follows subdivision out there a short while ago.

The next serious item is the 2-bay fire station at the 19-mile. This is one item which I cannot quite understand. I have spoken about this to other members ad nauseum. It is an item of unexpended appropriation. I hope it does not develop into a 'gunna' job because it was 'gunna' be built for the previous 4 years to my knowledge. I hope that somebody builds it this year because it is only lucky that there was not a worse fire situation in the rural area this year than there was last year. It is high time that it was built. The land has been allocated next to the proposed police station which is in between the 19-mile pumping station and the Fred's Pass Reserve Hall.

While we are on the subject of the fire brigade, I was very interested in the publicity that the fire brigade received recently. I was very sorry that it was adverse publicity because I have a lot of regard for the people who work in the fire services. I seriously suggest that consideration be given to looking at a separate authority for the fire brigade in the Northern Territory. In some states, the fire brigade is a separate entity and not the 'tail-end Charlie' of a government department like the Department of Transport and Works. There is nothing wrong with the Department of Transport and Works but the fire brigade always seems to be on the end.

I am pleased that the resealing of Whitewood and Hillier Roads is mentioned. I hope to goodness that is finished this year because there has been delay and confusion about that. As Whitewood and Hillier Roads are the 2 main roads in my electorate, it is absolutely essential that they be sealed. There will be further roadworks completed from the Humpty Doo station turn-off to past Beatrice Hill and around the hill. It can be rather dangerous on that stretch of road and causeway now.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to see that \$350,000 is the estimated cost of upgrading the Stuart Highway intersections at Howard Springs Road and the Arnhem Highway. If any projects are overdue, they certainly are.

I would like to think the next item is just one of stretching geographic factuality a bit. I would hate to think that it was a gross mistake. When I first read it, I could not for the life of me think where it was going to be. The item is: 'Howard Springs - construct 5-megalitre elevated water storage balance tank'. The member for Alice Springs has told me that 5 megalitres is over one million gallons and I wondered where one million gallons of water was going to be in a tank at Howard Springs. But it is not going to be in a tank at Howard Springs; it is going to be in a tank at the Palmerston subdivision. I

understand it will be quite a grandiose water tank and will also be used as a viewing tower for all those people who feel jealous of the people who live in Darwin. They can walk up to the top of it and view Darwin. But why stop at walking up to the top of the tank and viewing Darwin? I saw a very practical enterprise in Copenhagen. There was a restaurant on top of a water tower. This would present an interesting possibility considering the Treasurer's interest in fishing. Perhaps we could have something like the floating restaurant in Hong Kong combined with something like the Copenhagen restaurant and we could fish for our barramundi in the water tank. That concludes my remarks on the budget.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): In talking to the bill, I would like to deal mainly with the Treasurer's treatment of the Northern Territory Police Force and, more briefly, with various aspects of the budget as they affect the people of Nhulunbuy.

The police force in the Northern Territory, as everywhere else, has a general responsibility for the maintenance of public safety, the prevention and detection of crime and minor offences, protection of life and property, controlling of traffic and the maintenance of law and order. The structure of the force comprises the administration and service groups which provide for special services, such as forensic science, as well as training and planning faculties and the bulk of the force which carries out operational functions.

Mr Speaker, despite the various important responsibilities in the force within the community, the Treasurer has seen fit to cut back heavily on funding in a way which may make these responsibilities unattainable. The editorial in the September edition of the Northern Territory Police News sums up the situation very well. It says: 'One may question the effects on prevention and detection of crime of such a reduction in the available finance'. The editorial acknowledged that there are areas within the force wasteful of both manpower and resources. It also said that sudden and ill-directed cuts must have significant implications.

Let us consider the appropriation in detail. The force is divided into 4 commands, an accounting and supply section and services to the uranium province. There was considerable overspending on administration items in nearly all areas in 1979-80. In the northern command, actual expenditure was 18.8% above the sum appropriated for last financial year. In the southern command, administration expenses were some 17.2% over the appropriation figure. The management and planning division overspent by a massive 192% and the operational division overspent by some 30%. These figures suggest that there was certainly a need to undertake a review of costs to see where savings could be made. Where have the cuts been applied?

For 1980-81, the northern command has seen its administrative expenditure allocation increased by only 1.1%. The southern command has seen its administrative expenditure allocation increased by 6.5%. In the uranium province, the appropriation for administrative costs shows virtually no growth for the 1980-81 period. There has been a tightening of funding in these areas. In the operational area, there has also been minimal growth. Funding for the northern command allows for an increase of 5 persons. The southern command has an allowance for an increase of 13 persons. The uranium province has funds allocated for an extra 1 person. The number of stations allowed for in the northern command for 1980-81 is 23, 2 less than the number allowed for in 1979-80. The number of stations appropriated for in the southern command showed an increase from 1 to 15. The policeman out in the field has been hit and operational commands will have to tighten their belts.

What of the support staff within the force - the people responsible for management and planning, operational services, supply and accounting? In contrast with the cuts imposed on operational areas, it appears that support areas have been allowed to grow. In management and planning, the appropriation for this

financial year has made provision for an extra 28 people. This division has had an increase in administrative funds for 1980-81 of some 17% after overrunning last year's allocation. The operational services command is to gain an extra 25 persons and its allocation shows an increase of 21% over 1979-80. The supply and accounting division is to gain an extra 17 staff.

The overall result is that, while support staff have expanded by 70 in 1980-81, operational staff, the people in the field, have been allowed an increase of only 19 persons. In the same way, the support staff has been allowed an expansion in administrative expenses while operational staff expenditure has been cut to the bone. The government will respond by saying that these priorities are necessary because we need infrastructure growth and they are essential for the efficient operation of the force, I agree. In fact, the Northern Territory Police Force submission to the Commonwealth Grants Commission in the middle of last year made this point. I quote from page 21 of that report: 'To provide such specialist services as forensic science, fingerprints, communication, planning, training, traffic services, legal services, recruits, inspectorates, stores and the like requires a core group of specialists and support staff. However, we submit that the administrative and specialist infrastructure is capable of coping with considerable expansion of the force without expansion of the infrastructure'. What happens? The support infrastructure is expanded by 70 people and the operations area, by far the largest section of the force, by 19.

The department's submission continued: 'It is also noteworthy that the Northern Territory is undergoing a development phase in 2 distinct areas which have an effect on our staffing levels: the development of townships and, in particular, mining communities and the development of Aboriginal communities. Obviously, these developments mean a greater demand for policemen in the field'. Where do the cuts take place? In the operational areas, where the need is greatest.

Let us look at how these tight administrative budgets will be met. The use of telephones and telexes will be restricted and photocopying will be reduced. Accommodation restrictions are to be applied. Higher duties are to be minimised and the use of paper is to be cut. In fact, divisional instructions for greater Darwin state: 'Any paper used for the purpose of jotting down details of telephone messages, complaints etc is not to be discarded until fully utilised'.

The cutbacks have also taken the form of limitations on patrols and the reduction in the manning of police stations. I will give some specific examples in relation to Nhulunbuy. Bush patrols from Nhulunbuy are now not to be undertaken. Patrols are only permitted to operate in a radius of 20 kilometres except in response to a call. At the Nhulunbuy station there is only one person on duty after midnight. This single person is also required to undertake foot patrols and, as a result, the station can remain unmanned for periods of up to 40 minutes. We cannot have any trouble after midnight.

It is obvious from this that there are real cuts in the provisions for the police services to the community and it becomes equally obvious that this is having a very damaging effect on the morale of the force. These cuts must inevitably frustrate the man in the field in carrying out his work. We have easily the highest level of violent crime in Australia. Unfortunately, violence is part of our way of life; one only has to read the newspaper to know that. Take this selection of items from the Northern Territory News: on 11 September, 'A man was alleged to have knifed another man three times in the chest and stomach and was charged in the Magistrate's Court with attempted murder'; on 16 September, 'Senior detectives left Darwin to investigate the fatal shooting of a man in Katherine yesterday afternoon'; on 30 September, 'The Northern Territory has nearly 5 times the national average of violent crimes'; on 1 October, 'A man wielding a knife told a police officer who tried to arrest him, "I will cut you up like a

buffalo"; on 7 October, 'A man who fatally shot the husband of a woman with whom he was having an affair was jailed for 8 years by the Supreme Court'; also on 7 October, 'A man was charged in the Darwin Magistrate's Court for the murder of his father'; on 10 October, 'A youth was remanded in court for sentence after pleading guilty to 5 charges of assaulting police'; on 20 October, 'Chief Justice Forster sentenced a man to 5 years jail for grievous assault of a 75-year-old woman'; and on 22 October, 'Chief Justice Forster sentenced a man to 8 years jail for bashing his wife to death'.

All this and the government cuts back patrols and station manning! No wonder the force is having trouble attaining its full complement of men. No wonder the level of officers on sick leave is on the climb. No wonder there is an extremely high rate of resignation. This year, there have been 51 resignations and 6 so far this month. I would suggest that the budget now before us may well exacerbate these problems.

While I have the opportunity, there are 2 other matters I would like to raise in the debate. The first is the accommodation position in Nhulunbuy. The Treasurer has increased the allocation of funds for the Housing Commission building program this year. He said that dwelling starts will be up Territory-wide. However, 'Territory-wide' in this case means the exclusion of the Territory's third largest community, the very community where there has been a long-standing housing crisis. There has been a history of correspondence with the government regarding Nhulunbuy's housing problem; it was not until August this year that the government even commenced to look at the problem. It took industrial action on the part of some members of the public service in the town before the Minister for Lands and Housing was prepared to consider and study the position. Remember this is basic accommodation for families that we are talking about, not \$94,000 for a house for the new Solicitor-General. I am sure the information contained in this study of Nhulunbuy's housing needs was most revealing. I would appreciate an assurance from the minister that this information will be made available as soon as possible. Along with many other people in Nhulunbuy, I would appreciate an assurance that the government will act on the report immediately.

Finally, I would like to comment on the closure of Dhupuma College. I will not spend time on how the college was closed and reiterating that the Minister for Education gave a firm commitment that the college would not only remain open but would in fact be reconstructed, that the commitment was made in a ministerial statement and that the minister then closed the college with no notice to students, parents or teachers. It may interest the minister to know that the people now speak of a real promise or a Dhupuma promise. There is a certain degree of sophistication in Nhulunbuy when referring to commitments made by the Minister for Education.

While the short-term consequences of the closure of this college are significant, it may well be that the long-term consequences will be most important. The aim of Dhupuma was to develop an effective method of educating young Aboriginal people and to provide educational and training facilities which have been found to be nearly impossible to establish in local communities. The college was able to offer the programs which met the value systems of the Aboriginal people and, to achieve this, a large percentage of the staff was Aboriginal. The college was succeeding. Disciplinary problems were few and liaison with individual communities in the region was effective. Dhupuma was an experiment in Aboriginal education that was proving itself in every sense other than cost. The premature end to this experiment must have an adverse effect on the future of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory. Let it be on the minister's head.

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to support the Appropriation Bill and associated documents delivered by my colleague, the Treasurer. The Leader of the Opposition commented that the portion of the budget spent on capital works had been reduced from 17% to 14%. I believe, Mr Speaker, that this should be put in perspective. Firstly, with the advent of self-government, the Territory government concentrated on building an infrastructure for the Territory on which further development could be based. This infrastructure included the building of roads, bridges, water mains, school, health centres etc. The success of the government's capital works program over the first 2 years has meant that the infrastructure has improved to such an extent that the government can now concentrate on providing other services. This is one of the main explanations why there is a proportionate decrease in capital works outlay. The other explanation is that the government has encouraged private development in areas which previously required government expenditure. The main examples of this are Karama and Leanyer subdivisions - \$24m which the government did not have to spend. If one added the capital investment of these projects together with the government capital works projects, it would be viewed in a more favourable perspective.

I turn now to specific comments on the roads and public building program. First, Territory development is not as dependent on government spending as the Leader of the Opposition suggests. I refute his statement that 95% of the civil engineering activities are met by public funds. Thanks to the encouragement of this government, the private sector is now making a greater contribution by providing subdivisions and infrastructure in mining towns. I am sure that money being invested by private enterprise at Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt, the Alligator Rivers region and Tennant Creek amounts to more than 5% of the Territory's civil engineering activities.

Looking at the roads program, I might remind members that, in previous years, a major component of the program was subdivision work. If one adds the private investment in Karama and Leanyer to our roads program, one will see an increase in real terms. A similar position exists in my Public Works Division capital works program. The Northern Territory construction industry must be seen in its proper perspective. It comprises both private and public sectors. While there was only a small increase in our budget, one only has to look at the private investment in Darwin alone; for example, Centrepont, Star Village, the West Lane development and the casino. Added to this, of course, are building programs of the Housing Commission and NTEC. I am sure we have a thriving construction industry and not one as portrayed by the Leader of the Opposition.

May I remind members of my department's achievements during 1979-80. The department expended some \$144m which accounted for one third of the total Territory budget. I would like to place on record my acknowledgement of the financial management of the department in achieving its target in only the second year of its operation. Again, I would like to remind members of a couple of those achievements. New bridges were opened over the Adelaide River, the James River, the Rankin River, Bonnie Creek, Charles River and the Collier Creek in Alice Springs. The first stage of the Petermann Road was sealed and work on the Daly River Road was commenced. The Karama water tank and pumping station is to be opened shortly. Work continued on major port development, the land-backed wharf and the small ships facility. Major progress was made with work on the museum and art gallery and work commenced on residential and industrial subdivisions for Katherine.

I would like to turn to the 1980-81 budget which provides an outlay of \$185m for my department. This allocation is indicative of a government commitment to the development of the Territory. This significant outlay will lead to more stable industries, improved employment opportunities, better government services

and growth in population.

The commitment to development is demonstrated by the fact that the 3 construction arms of the department - roads, water and public works - account for some \$150m of our total outlay. These areas are charged with the vital role of assisting the development of the infrastructure needed for the Territory's future.

A most pleasing feature of the department's allocation is that money is spent in all regions of the Territory. In regard to the roads program, we see a special emphasis in the Tennant Creek area for a major project on the Barkly Highway. You will recall that a tender has recently been let to construct 42 kilometres of roadworks and a bridge over Kiama Creek. Additional roadworks will take place from the 20 to 56 kilometre marks on the Barkly Highway and 24 kilometres are being reconstructed between Elliott and Renner Springs. In your own area, Mr Speaker, a major project is the sealing of the Mainoru to Bamyili Road which the department is oversighting through direct management. The total cost of this project alone is in the vicinity of \$2m and the tenders close today.

In addition, subdivisional work will continue at Katherine through this budget. This will provide much needed industrial and residential blocks. Tourist roads in the Alice Springs area also benefit by this budget with the sealing of the Petermann Road and the Jay Creek-Glen Helen Road. Other projects in the Alice Springs region include the sealing of sections of the Plenty Highway and the Tanami Road. In the Darwin region, the government is addressing itself to the peak hour traffic problem. Dick Ward Drive is already completed and I am extremely happy with the progress of the Bagot overpass, a project which will cost some \$3m. The Frances Bay Road has recently been sealed and this will provide a bypass to the wharf for heavy vehicles. Roadworks are being carried out on the Bynoe Road and a bridge is now under construction over Pioneer Creek. The honourable member for Tiwi expressed thanks for the progress regarding the sealing of the Whitewood and Hillier Roads.

On road safety aspects of the government's road program, there is a provision of \$0.5m for roadside rest areas. The basic aim of these areas is to provide safe stopping places for tired and hungry travellers.

The Leader of the Opposition, in the budget debate in September 1979, said: 'We need roads but the road construction program must be one that allows the construction industry long-term viability'. In the same speech, the Leader of the Opposition also referred to an over-commitment to new road construction in 1978-79 and 1979-80. I cannot let this opportunity go without completing his quote: 'If that is sensible economic planning for the future, then there is no question about where this government is heading for at the next election'. We know where the government headed at the last election.

Looking at the program itself, capital works and repairs and maintenance - in 1979-80 expenditure for roads was \$45.1m, public works \$59.097m and water \$22.1m. The appropriation this year for 1980-81 for roads is \$47.5m. This is a slight increase of only 5.25% in real terms but, nevertheless, it is a consistent program in its second year. Let us assume that, in the 1981-82 budget, there will be the same amount of funding with a similar increase if not slightly larger. Public works has a 1.53% increase and water 1.74%. These are steady increases. Despite what the Leader of the Opposition suggested, we will not overburden our contractors in the Northern Territory. I believe that this government has continued with its policy of providing an efficient road transport system for industry, tourism and our residents. Our southern all-weather access to Kulgera is now complete and I believe that is a significant achievement of this government.

I would like to comment on water and remind members of the initiative the government has taken in regard to our election commitment to reduce water charges from 1 July this year. These charges were substantially reduced by 33.3%. However, I believe that the member for Nhulunbuy has criticised the government for not implementing the scheme over in the Nhulunbuy area. Unfortunately, we do not control the water services in private areas such as Nhulunbuy and I believe it is his responsibility to exert pressure on Nabalco as well as the government to see what kind of water rate reduction he might be able to obtain for the residents of Nhulunbuy.

The government is continuing to upgrade water supplies and sewerage systems throughout the Territory and the following projects are only some which will be undertaken through this budget: the completion of the Katherine soft water supply; the upgrading of the sewerage, water and reticulation plant at Batchelor; the completion of the Marrara reservoir and pumping station; the augmentation of the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek water supplies; and the continuation with the duplication of the water main from McMinns Reservoir to Darwin. This list indicates that this is a Territory budget.

I would also like to remind members of the rural advisory service and drilling program undertaken by my department, which is of vital interest to industry in the Territory. I know my colleague, the Minister for Primary Production, takes particular interest in this program.

The department is also involved in the provision of a number of major building projects which will enhance the development of business and cultural opportunities for the Northern Territory residents. These include the Yulara Tourist Village which is perhaps one of the major developments undertaken by the Northern Territory government. The provision of the terminal and facilities will be added to the airstrip this year together with other infrastructures. The museum and art gallery is expected to be completed in July next year as is stage 2 of the small ships facility which will provide additional berths for the provisioning of the fishing vessels or other small vessels. Further progress will be made with the land-backed wharf. There will be provision of essential services for remote areas. Total program provision for these activities exceeds \$22m in the 1980-81 budget. Nhulunbuy High School will be completed early next year when the enrolment of pupils will commence. The primary and pre-schools at Malak will open their doors to pupils in 1981.

The Leader of the Opposition this morning alluded to the fact that the government is diverting money from essential service programs to upgrade airstrips. The fact is that \$3m out of \$22.1m is programmed for upgrading works - only 13.6%. The Treasury is now reappraising upgrading needs now that the Metroliner has been withdrawn from Top End routes. The aim of essential services is to provide communities with not only water, sewerage and power, but adequate means of communication also. The Leader of the Opposition has obviously missed the point in his attempts at criticism. Upgrading of airstrips to provide for better and more frequent air services is surely essential to remote communities. Upgrading works at Bathurst Island and Hooker Creek have already been completed this year and the Maningrida airstrip is soon to be completed. Discussions are taking place with various other communities where future upgrading works are planned.

It would be remiss of me, Mr Speaker, if I did not mention other areas of my department, especially those which provide a service to the Territory residents; for instance, this budget's continuing support for the Darwin Bus Service. I am pleased to report here that patronage has increased by 22% in the last 12 months due to the purchase of new buses. The service has expanded a number of routes to cater for new growth in Darwin, especially at Malak,

The budget allows for over \$4.5m for fire services throughout the Territory through the agencies of the fire brigade and the Bush Fires Council.

Another important feature of this budget provides for upgrading of community airstrips which will allow a better service to all those areas. This service will be provided by Northern Airlines. The Transport Division of my department will continue to develop and improve transport projects during this current year, examining the shipping links to the east coast of Australia and participating in other Commonwealth-state projects; for example, the Darwin Airport and the railway.

In the administration of the Department of Transport and Works, there are 2 prime objects. The first object relates to traditional functions inherited from the previous Commonwealth administration. I have spoken at some length about the construction and service function of the department. Considerable moneys are involved. The first objective is to ensure that the Territory gets full value for each dollar spent. This does not mean we will be penny-pinching; it means that we intend to establish a management attitude dedicated to efficiency. I have instructed my officers to question all activity against the criterion of efficiency. Inefficient practices and unnecessary functions are to be discarded.

The department's other responsibilities are the consequence of self-government and were not inherited from the Commonwealth administration. I refer of course to the department's responsibility for policy, advice and planning of the basic infrastructure of the Territory. Roads, water supply, structures and transportation systems are fundamental to the Territory's economic growth and material progress. Our second objective is to establish professional but imaginative plans to provide the Territory with appropriate infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, I would remind the Assembly that the scarce resources available do not permit all Territorians to have everything they want immediately. Priorities have to be set within the framework of far-reaching and optimum plans. We then have to implement these plans in an economic way. This might mean that some people would be disappointed in the short term but some traditional practices will have to change.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I would like to commend the Treasurer for this budget as it provides the necessary impetus to develop the Territory's abundant resources for the benefit of all.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): On the surface, this budget would appear to be quite reasonable. We see a 10% increase on one item, a 12% increase over last year's budget on another item and 33% on another one. That looks very good. But considering the dramatic increase in population in the Territory and the enormous increase in inflation, I do not believe that the Treasurer has produced anything spectacular at all.

In the particular areas of interest to me, I was very pleased to see that the Northern Territory Development Corporation budget is \$10m which is double that of last year. I believe the NTDC is doing an excellent job and richly deserves such an increase. However, I think the budget of \$13.3m overall for development in the beef and agricultural industries is far too small. My sentiments are echoed by many of the senior officers in the Department of Primary Production. For instance, I believe the allocation of \$1.6m for the program to eradicate TB and brucellosis is far too small. Mr Speaker, as you well know, 1984 is the deadline for the eradication of these diseases in stock. If they are not eradicated by then, we lose our export market to the USA and that would be a disaster of the greatest magnitude for the Northern Territory. I know the minister spoke at length on this matter in his policy statement this morning but I would like to see more funds allocated and more action.

In one part of his second-reading speech, the Treasurer mentioned funding for preliminary detailed studies on Darwin's coal-fired power-station. However, over the last few weeks the public, the media and anyone who listened have been brainwashed about the wonderful benefits which will accrue to the populace if nuclear power is introduced in the Northern Territory. Now, as the advent of nuclear power seems now to be a fait accompli, I would suggest that the funding for studies on a coal-fired power-station could be transferred to a more useful item.

The minister mentioned upgrading airstrips in various Aboriginal communities in order to provide better access to those communities. Is the real intention to give the communities better access or is it to provide longer sealed strips to cater for Metroliners operated by Northern Airlines? It is indisputable that these aircraft are totally unsuitable to do the job and that the old Heron aircraft operated by Connair were performing better for 2 reasons in particular. The first is that the Metroliner uses a much longer landing and takeoff run and, secondly, that its propellers rotate so close to the ground that planes are being damaged by flying gravel and, in fact, are dangerous if there are bumps or ant-hills on the bush strips. My colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, spoke at length on where the funds for this sealing and lengthening of strips are coming from so I will not continue in that vein. Quite a number of senior officers in various departments have complained bitterly that departmental funds have been cut to provide extra funds to have bush airstrips bituminised and, in some cases, lengthened.

The minister mentioned the provision of services to Aboriginal communities and that funds have been allocated to the value of \$14.6m. At least he had the grace to admit: 'This amount will only touch the surface in righting this serious deficiency'. \$14.6m is certainly totally inadequate for new works in Aboriginal communities.

In regard to the allocation of \$20.6m provided for Territory police, I have not gone into it in detail but it is fairly obvious that the amount must be inadequate. To my certain knowledge, there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in the Northern Territory Police Force and most of this dissatisfaction has been engendered by a drastic cut in funds. For example, police manning bush stations are under strict instructions that they are not to undertake patrols to more than 10 kilometres from their station except in serious emergency situations. Mr Speaker, it is an old adage that prevention is better than cure. Police were previously able to travel reasonable distances from home base which enabled them, for instance, to apprehend people whose intention it was to bring liquor into a dry area. Within 10 kilometres of most Aboriginal settlements it is quite common to find a number of alternative routes into the community. If police were able to patrol further out on the main arterial highway, they could block these people who intend to break the law and also obviate quite a bit of trouble. They could do nothing about it once the liquor was taken into the place. It would simply be a process of prevention rather than cure.

To strengthen this argument that the 10-kilometre limit should be extended considerably, perhaps to 100 kilometres, consider the safety aspect. People are more prone to behave themselves if they know that there is a possibility of police arriving unscheduled in an isolated area. I refer to places like Top Springs where there is no police station within a couple of hundred miles either way. It is just silly. Without going into names, I know places where locals go to the pubs, obtain booze and go home. Previously, police used to pay unscheduled visits and it tended to make them have a bit of restraint and to behave a bit more sensibly. It is a joke now.

It appears that police trackers will not be replaced if a present incumbent of the position becomes ill or resigns. I believe that it will be a sad day for the bush when we no longer have trackers, not for cleaning the policeman's car and not for cutting his lawn but because of the fact that they almost invariably provide an invaluable means of liaison between the police and the Aboriginal community.

With regard to this 10-kilometre limit, I can tell you briefly about a little incident that transpired recently. I pulled into the Hayes Creek Inn and there was a prospector there. He had not been drinking but he had become mentally deranged and they did not know what to do with him. The poor fellow was in a shocking state. He was a man of very small stature and he was living in a 44-gallon drum. He was starving. It was only because some of the prospectors fed him that he stayed alive. The publican had rung Pine Creek and the police said they were not permitted to come to Hayes Creek to pick him up. It was not serious enough. Eventually, a young policeman from Adelaide River arrived. He was quite concerned and thought he would be in trouble if he transported this bloke to Darwin Hospital. He did not know what to do. Finally, I brought him to Darwin myself and it was not a very pleasant experience as the poor fellow was right off his brain. He would not ride in the front of the car and I had to keep him in the back. He kept hopping out and it took about 3 times as long to get from Hayes Creek to Darwin as it normally does. He was a sick man and as soon as I took him to hospital he was admitted.

Reducing the length of the patrol to a maximum distance of 10 kilometres is a ridiculous way of cutting funds. I would ask that the Chief Minister, as minister responsible for police, to take a serious look at this situation.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to rise to address the Assembly on this Appropriation Bill. Most of my remarks will be in relation to the Alice Springs area.

I would first like to talk about the matter of housing. This is a serious problem and I object to the member for MacDonnell saying that the government is not aware of this and is not doing anything about it. There is a song which says, 'Give me land, lots of land' - that is the cry in Alice Springs. Many builders there are saying, 'We can build houses but what we need is the land'. I must commend the Minister for Lands and Housing on the fact that he has been able to have private developers get the Sadadeen subdivision and the Araluen subdivision under way. It cannot happen soon enough. Serviced land must be turned off so that the people who are willing, ready and able to build the houses can get on with it.

I am pleased to see that there are some things going on in the meantime, particularly with the Housing Commission. It has recently been given an allocation of 20 blocks which people had bought privately but turned in again for various reasons. The Housing Commission has been given those. Further, the Housing Commission is building on 5 blocks on Gap Road. Plans are in hand, I believe, to develop single officer accommodation in that particular area. It has been an area where people have camped. It is an eyesore; there are bottles and litter everywhere. I know that people in that area are very pleased to know that things are on the move there. Many single people who find it particularly difficult to obtain accommodation will be pleased about that aspect. I mentioned in my maiden speech that there are a number of empty blocks in the Alice Springs area on which are derelict houses. I am pleased to note that the Housing Commission is making plans to build houses on these blocks. Those are some of the short-term efforts being made while we are waiting for the serviced land.

At the time of self-government, there was a tremendous number of houses for sale in the Alice Springs area and there were stories in the paper that the

Housing Commission should not build new houses because it would be a waste of time. We know things have turned around. I know the government is embarrassed about the situation but I wonder how much the opposition may have contributed at that stage. They were the ones who poured cold water on self-government and many people believed them. Even some of the members of the government of the day had a few of those nagging doubts about how well self-government would go. Anybody who looks into the unknown always has a few fears. Perhaps a little bit of the blame for the problem could be laid at the feet of our opposition.

Government loans for people on low incomes were mentioned yesterday. These loans really do benefit those people who are starting off their working career and who receive the base rate of \$175. These people are often ones who have not even reached the stage of getting married. People who jump in at that stage really benefit from these loans. I have had a few complaints from people in the higher income bracket. When they apply for loans, the amount that they can obtain is reduced and the interest rate is pretty high. They are saying, 'It is just as good to go to the banks now'. That may be the message that has to be reckoned with.

I would like to turn now to the matter of water. Alice Springs is a growing town which will grow very rapidly as more land is turned off. I am pleased to see that there is an allocation made for bores in the Mereenie aquifer to keep up the supply of water. I was also pleased to hear from the minister this morning that there are plans for another water storage tank to be built in the hills east of the Sadadeen subdivision. I remember that, in about 1972-73, because of the lack of storage tanks, Alice Springs often had water shortages and low pressure. The problem was not that there was not enough water around. You needed to be able to pump the water up and store it overnight. Without that, the pumps on their own could not keep up the supply. When the tank in the Gillen area was built, it relieved that problem. We are fast reaching a stage on the east side where we will need a new tank. It is good to see that this is being looked after. The recreation lake has been on the books for many years and I am very hopeful that, in the near future, the problems relating to the establishment of that lake may be overcome.

I would like to comment on a meeting I had with people from the Lands Branch and a couple of members of the Central Land Council about a stand of coolibah trees on the east side at a place where it was intended to build the road from the Stotts Terrace bridge to Sadadeen. The 2 people concerned, Mr Mort Conway and Mr Norton Little, had a meeting with a number of other citizens who are also quite keen to see the stand of box trees remain. I was very pleased with the attitude of all concerned. It was decided that the road could be shifted. It needs to be a 4-lane highway and therefore it was not all that easy. You cannot put too many kinks and bends in such a road. This road was able to be moved and, instead of bowling over several hundred trees, only about 10 or a dozen trees will have to be moved. At least these 2 members of the Central Land Council could appreciate the point that a big effort had been made to try to relocate the road and were prepared to recognise that there was no way you could avoid bowling over a few trees. I thoroughly commend this sort of attitude. I hope it is the attitude of all of the Central Land Council. I hope that the problems relating to significant sites at the telegraph station may be resolved by discussion to benefit all people. All Territorians in the Alice Springs area and our visitors will benefit from the establishment of a lake. It will definitely enhance the environment and it will help to keep people in the Territory, particularly at this time of year when it is pretty hot and dry in Alice and the people often miss the water. People in Darwin appreciate the water; it is one of the enhancing features of their environment and that is what the people of Alice Springs would desire. I firmly believe that the establishment of that lake would be a big help in keeping people here in the Territory.

Several roads will be constructed in the Alice Springs area this year and others will be constructed in the following year. We look forward to seeing these in next year's budget.

The power-station at Alice Springs has been a very efficient station. It generates electricity at a much cheaper rate than the one in Darwin does. We look forward to the work which is proceeding towards proving the Mereenie gas field and the work towards the development of a gas pipeline to make that station even more efficient and self-reliant so that we will not be held up by oil supplies which may become very scarce. We also look forward to negotiations being completed for the establishment of the refinery. This will be a growth industry. It will mean employment for people in the town and it will give the southern region an assured supply of petroleum products.

Tourism is a very important industry for Alice Springs. The successful campaign that the Tourist Commission has run in the southern states has brought even more tourists to the Centre and, no doubt, to the Top End as well. However, there are problems with tourist accommodation. We are well aware of them. In the process of attracting tourists, we may attract people who will see the opportunities. Where there is a problem, there is an opportunity. There are big opportunities in Alice Springs for tourist accommodation. The best thing the government can do is to provide the land. That is its aim and I commend it for that.

Another important aspect of this tourist campaign is that, even if people do not come up here, we are getting publicity and much interest is being shown in the Territory of late. This publicity cannot do us anything but good. There was tremendous publicity over the railway and there have been articles in southern newspapers which have really helped to put the Territory on the map. People realise that we exist and that is important.

In my electorate, the Ross Park Primary School is very close to reaching its capacity. There is always the problem of that hiatus. The Sadadeen primary and pre-school complex is due to be opened in 1983 but, in the meantime, there will be some problems. Members will remember that I asked the minister a question on this subject on Tuesday morning and the matter will be discussed by Cabinet tomorrow. The problem is to decide what can be done in the meantime to provide for the few extra students who will create a problem until these schools open in 1983. We have a 6% growth rate and this will always create problems. We will need extra housing, extra school buildings etc and these all require extra money. The ideal would be that Sadadeen primary would be available to take its first students next year. Unfortunately, we just cannot afford to have money lying idle.

There has never been much farming in Alice Springs. I wish we could see more of it there. I commend the Minister for Primary Production on his report this morning. It was an excellent report and it is nice to see that things are mapped out clearly for the years ahead in this first stage of the agricultural scheme. I also commend the subsidy on fertilizer and the guaranteed payment for certain crops. This will encourage farming and the Northern Territory Development Corporation's low-interest loan will also help. I do not think the government can go much further than that. Farming tends to be a risky business. If you have a good season, you make a lot of money but, if you have a poor season, there is nothing much anybody can do to alleviate that. I believe that those 3 things will provide real encouragement to the farming community. Those with the get up and go will seize the opportunity.

The agricultural college at Katherine is something of considerable interest to me. Recently, I had a look at a couple of agricultural colleges in Queensland and I thought they were excellent. If something along similar lines were

developed in the Territory, I would be delighted, I am sure it would be a great aid to this \$63m scheme to encourage agriculture. I would like to report at a later stage on that particular visit.

One complaint that I have heard in Alice Springs from some of the builders is the lack of public building. We have had a fair bit of public building of late in Alice Springs. One appreciates that you cannot always have an ongoing project or series of projects. We are not too badly off for public buildings at this stage. This discontent will be overcome when land is available and when private developers from down south realise the potential that the Territory has for tourism. They will start building large hotels and motels and other complexes. Given the land and opportunity, I look to the private sector to solve that problem.

The budget provides \$5.7m for transport. Alice Springs is spreading out and there are people who have problems getting from place to place. A bus service for a town the size of Alice Springs will hardly be a profitable enterprise. However, it is something which we believe to be important and it needs to be paid from the public purse. Of course, it needs to be done in the best manner possible so that we do not waste public money. I look forward to the establishment of a bus service and so do many other people.

It has been stated that we have a 10% unemployment rate and that is not good. Unfortunately, there are in this Territory a number of people who, due to various problems, are unemployable.

Mr Isaacs: Rubbish!

Mr D.W. COLLINS: I would like to suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that I could pick out a few people with whom he could not make ends meet if he employed them and I do not mean just Aboriginal people. There are people who are just not employable. I have one suggestion why this is so: the high alcohol intake rate in the Territory. We have a fairly large per capita intake of alcohol and somebody is drinking my share. These people do add to the unemployment numbers. It is an unfortunate problem and I would like to see everything possible being done to help overcome this problem.

We also have some people who do not want to work. When I was young, I had never heard of that attitude. These days there are people who do not want to work. Mind you, they roll up to the Commonwealth Employment Service every now and then and are sent out to interviews. Unfortunately, they are not employed or, if they are, they do not last long and they are back to collect their money.

Mrs Lawrie: It is not so.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: It is so; it is very true.

There is another point which concerns me. Education is offered to the young people of the Territory. I have been in the game in the Territory for a bit over 10 years. Unfortunately, many of our young people do not realise the importance of the education which is provided and, because of that, they come out of school with very little to offer. I think that one of the most important things that anybody can pick up in education is attitude: an attitude that the world does not necessarily owe you a living; an attitude of good manners; an attitude of willingness to listen and, having listened to an instruction, to be able to get on with the job without having to be told, day in and day out; and an attitude of looking at what has to be done next instead of waiting until the boss says that something else has to be done.

Some students receive grants to help them stay at school and I know full well that these grants are abused. The students do not turn up for school very often. If they start missing days here and there out of the school program, they miss work and cannot understand the next day's work. It is a gross abuse of money. These students and their parents do not realise how important it is that they take every advantage of the educational opportunities which are provided. It costs money to employ a person, particularly someone new to a job, and any employer who has to keep on saying 'Do this - do that' will become very sick of employing such a person. I am disappointed over this need for extra education for the transition between school and the workforce. It has not been really necessary in the past. I think it is an indictment of what is happening in some of our secondary schools. I do not know so much about the primary school system because I have not been that closely involved with it but my impression is, as some of the opposition have suggested, that there is much good work going on in the primary schools. We seem to have some breakdowns at the secondary level.

Town councils have been given more and more of their own public works to undertake and I believe this is a very good concept. They are the ones close to the people who have the complaints. If there is any area I would like to see receive a bit more money, it would be local government.

I am a bit concerned about the appropriations for the police in the field. These are the important people. However, I would like to comment on a session I heard on the radio recently. A man from the United States was talking about the effectiveness of patrols. No doubt, these were in urban areas rather than in the country areas. However, they undertook tests of car patrols in an area. They looked at the number of crimes that occurred over a time and also the number of cars. They deliberately reduced and increased the number of cars. The actual number of crimes that occurred did not seem to alter to any noticeable extent. The conclusion he drew was that the motor car patrol does not do a great deal. He was saying possibly what the London bobbies have known for a long time: foot patrols, particularly in the built-up areas, have a far greater effect than car patrols.

In conclusion, I believe that the people of Alice Springs received a fair proportion of the budget. We would always like a bit more but there is only so much of the cake to go round and I believe that we received a fair share of it.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I wish to endorse the remarks made in this debate yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition. Having said that, I would like to use this opportunity to take up a few matters on behalf of my constituents.

Yesterday, the honourable member for Port Darwin raised the question of maintenance and improvements to inner-city schools and I listened with some sympathy and interest to the honourable member's remarks in that respect. I also acknowledge that the outlying districts of Darwin, particularly in my electorate, are very well served as far as the physical structures and facilities are concerned. This is because the construction of the area occurred at the time when the Darwin Reconstruction Commission was presiding over the physical development of Darwin. As a result of its activities, we were able to avail ourselves of extremely well-designed and quite expensive new schools. Mr Speaker, my electors are certainly very cognizant of the fact that, as far as schools are concerned, they are very well off in comparison to people living in Port Darwin. To give a more balanced view of this discussion, I must also say that the residents of Port Darwin have access to a number of other civic, cultural and entertainment facilities which are not, by and large, available to people in the northern suburbs. However, with much gratitude I acknowledge that my schools are extremely well set up.

In looking at the capital works budget, the matter which concerns me a little is that in fact the government proposes to quite deliberately downgrade the facilities which will be provided in new schools. We find that there has been already some reference made to the new schools which are to be constructed in Karama and Leanyer and the new school which is to open for the 1981 school year at Malak. I am sorry to say that we will not be able to maintain the high standard that we are used to in Sanderson in terms of our primary schools. We are now looking to the rather more moderate standard design of school which has been designed by the Department of Transport and Works.

The honourable Minister for Transport and Works made reference to the Malak primary school which is to be designed on the standard module. Presumably, that same design will be duplicated in all new schools in the Top End. We have an unexpended authorisation for that school of \$2,095,000 because it is a capital work in progress. This school is quite a way advanced towards its completion and, as the minister mentioned, it will be in operation in the 1981 school year. However, it is with some alarm that I note that the 2 new schools at Leanyer and Karama have been allocated \$2m each. I put it to the Minister for Transport and Works that we will not be able to even duplicate the standard of Malak school for the \$2m that he has allocated for each of those 2 schools. I can only conclude that it is proposed that there be a general downgrading in the design and facility to be provided. I am very disappointed at this particular trend.

These districts are fairly removed from civic and cultural facilities, such as in Port Darwin, and these schools tend to be used for a wide variety of community activities outside of school hours. I am certainly not suggesting that we should reproduce the wonderful schools we have at Wulagi and Anula - although it would be very nice - because those schools cost in excess of \$4m in 1976. We certainly could not reproduce those schools for that price these days. Nevertheless, these schools have been well used by community organisations outside of school hours. They in fact act as centres of community activity outside of school hours. So I am disappointed to see that the trend is to have just a basic building with no trimmings at all. It seems that this particular module will be used because I note that the Humpty Doo school is allocated the same amount of \$2m. I can only assume that it is going to be just the same design on a different site.

In connection with this same concept of schools being used for community facilities, I had put forward a proposal that, in new schools being built in the Territory, swimming pools be provided to take the pressure off the municipal pools which are being over subscribed at the moment, particularly by people who are training for competitive activity. I raised that matter then because there seemed to be some dispute as to who had coaching rights in the municipal pools. I pointed out at the time that the primary schools are using these municipal pools during school hours and that, if they had their own pools, the pools could be used for swimming activities connected with the school as well as casual activities by other members of the community who are not disposed to competitive swimming.

The matter of schools' provisions raised the further question of a school's individual budget. In the past, water bills, electricity bills and telephone bills have been paid by the Department of Education. In more recent times, school councils and associations have been informed that this will no longer be the case. They will not get money for this from the department and the school associations will have to raise their own funds to meet these charges. Some would argue that this gives more local management to the school councils and they should be more independent etc. However, the practical fact of the matter is that,

whilst the schools in Sanderson are certainly not what could be classed as poor schools - their school associations raise large amounts of money - to ask them to foot their water, telephone and electricity bills as well is an unnecessarily harsh imposition and it would certainly strain their funds to the limit.

I ask the Minister for Education why this initiative has been taken? I gather that it has been taken without much consultation with those who will end up paying the bills. The Sanderson schools are grateful for the fact that they were designed on very generous lines. However, having been designed on very generous lines, they also consume very large amounts of water in order to maintain those lawns in their wonderful green condition and to make them available for other people in the community to use. It is an unfair imposition on the school associations to now find the money. I attended all the fund-raising activities, which are numerous in my 9 schools, and I find that the parents, whilst not grudging the expenditure of time and effort in raising this money, do find, particularly where there are many children in the family attending school, that it is a bit of a burden on the household budget.

I have mentioned that these schools are not poor but, nevertheless, just about every family has at least 2 children at pre-school or primary school level and it becomes quite a burden to have to find money for books, fittings, audio-visual equipment etc. They are now also being asked to find the money for electricity. This raises a further point: those schools, rightly or wrongly, have been designed on the totally air-conditioned, enclosed concept. When there is a power failure - I gather that these are going to be less frequent now with the addition of the Berrimah turbine - it is impossible to work within the building itself. As you can imagine, one of the very severe impositions would be the high cost of electricity in just keeping the power going during normal school hours. I also point out to the Minister for Education and to the Minister for Transport and Works that these schools are totally artificially lit and air-conditioned. On that aspect alone, I can say that this would not be a welcome initiative to school councils in my area.

Another matter which concerns my electors perhaps to a greater degree than those of other honourable members is the question of public transport. I was gratified to hear from the honourable Minister for Transport and Works a little while ago that ridership rates had increased by 22% over the last financial year. Well, all members of this Assembly know that I am a firm and vigorous advocate of the use of public transport and that many times I have advocated various improvements that could be undertaken in the public transport system. Some of these have not been greeted with the enthusiasm from other members that I would have wished. However, I remember the Minister for Mines and Energy saying to me that it was all very well to hopefully suggest that people would go to work and places of recreation on buses but the plain fact was that they all wanted to be motorised. He said it was just a hopeful suggestion that would never come to fruition. I am particularly pleased that the number of people travelling on buses has increased and I hope that, with the improvements that are planned, the numbers will go even higher and that, in due course, we will see people commuting by public transport, at least for the work journey, as a matter of course. I further hope that the sheared-off wheel and the metal fatigue that has been suffered by some of our newly-purchased buses has now been overcome and that these buses are now all thoroughly roadworthy.

A further matter that I wish to raise concerns local recreation. I raise this matter because the youth of my electorate need outdoor recreation. I have touched on the question of swimming pools and I certainly think it would be a good idea if all schools could have a community pool attached to them. This could be used not only by the children attending the school but by other members of the community. In particular, I wanted to raise the matter of the valuable recreation resource that is provided to us by way of our foreshores.

Last week I paid a visit to the Casuarina coastal reserve, as it is called, and I was very impressed by the work that has been done there by the Conservation Commission. I hope that money is available for the Conservation Commission to take an interest in other beaches in the metropolitan area of Darwin. Having looked at the appropriations to the Conservation Commission, I cannot find any specific reference to work that would be undertaken of a foreshores protection or management nature. I am hoping that these will be covered in the funds for various projects which cost less than \$25,000 and which are listed in summary in these allocations rather than spelt out in detail.

I think we should recognise that the foreshores, particularly in the Casuarina district, are very handy to my electorate and provide a very valuable recreation outlet. If they are not protected and correctly managed, this resource could very easily be destroyed beyond redemption. I would like to see the Conservation Commission become more involved in the question of foreshores management and protection because, at the moment, I am sorry to say that nobody seems to want responsibility for this particular resource. I have spoken briefly and casually to the chairman of that commission, Dr Letts, and I have suggested to him that perhaps his commission could take on board this particular aspect of conservation. He asked me to write to him about it and I will do so.

There is one other matter which I wish to canvass, a matter in which I am taking an increasing interest: tourism. We have heard from several members, Mr Speaker, the amounts and allocations that have been set aside for promotional work to sell the Northern Territory interstate and overseas as a place for prospective holiday-makers to visit. The amounts are very generous and I wonder whether, in fact, the timing of this particular promotional program is a little early. I certainly have not watched any southern television but I understand that these advertisements, and very good ones they are too, are being screened at what you might refer to as saturation limits in southern cities and this has generated an enormous increase in interest in visitation to the Northern Territory.

When I was down in Alice Springs recently, I called upon the Commissioner for Tourism, Mr Poole. He showed me on a video machine the type of advertisements that are being shown to southern television watchers and it is a very attractive and very professional series of commercials. I then read in the newspaper that Mr Poole had said that there had been an amazing response and that the increase in interest had been such that there would be a tourism boom. I am all in favour of a tourism boom but I am concerned that those attendant facilities and concomitant structures that we require in order to avail ourselves of the economic spin-off that would come from this tourism boom are not there. I refer particularly to the question of housing.

We know that tourism is a very labour-intensive service industry and certainly all members would like to facilitate the tourist industry in the Northern Territory, not only because it is a very significant sector of the Territory economy but also because it is an area in which there is a large potential for employment. There is no real point in trying to get people to work in the industry if we cannot house them. This is the major constraint to the development of tourism in the Northern Territory. From various visits that I have made to Alice Springs, I can see that this would be a major constraint to development, particularly in the Alice Springs region which is now solely dependent on tourism as its driving force. I think that firms that comprise the Tourist Promotion Association in Alice Springs also recognise this problem. They say that they have trouble keeping good staff as they cannot find accommodation for them.

I myself had a dreadful experience in my most recent visit to Alice Springs. This was in connection with the opening of the railway. On that particular

occasion, when there were so many visitors from the Top End and also invited guests from the south, Alice Springs was bulging at the seams as far as its tourist accommodation was concerned. Imagine my disappointment when I could not get a decent meal anywhere in Alice Springs. The service was terrible and the food, when it came along, was also terrible. Having mentioned this to one or two of the managers of the establishments, I was told that it was simply too difficult to keep qualified staff for more than a few weeks at a time because they could not hack the living conditions. Naturally, if we want to encourage tourism, we will have to look to providing better accommodation. These people want to live somewhere and certainly first-class chefs who have the ability to command any number of well-paid positions in other hotels will not hang around Alice Springs while we wait until the accommodation industry catches up with us.

I feel that the problem of accommodation will not be easily met despite the helpful remarks made by the honourable member for Alice Springs. One of the things that is now coming to light in the financial press is the proposed increase in interest rates and a coming credit squeeze. We all know that, when interest rates rise, construction and home building tend to drop off. People cannot easily obtain loans. Loans are not that easily available and, when they are available, they certainly are much more expensive than they have hitherto been. Whilst I applaud the efforts being made to encourage tourism in Territory centres, my note of caution simply is that, unless we can also provide other development which goes hand in hand with this particular expansion, we will not be able to avail ourselves of the economic spin-offs.

I do not really want to raise a large number of issues in this debate. I personally find that debates on the Appropriation Bill can be somewhat of an endurance test. I appreciate that every member would like to take the opportunity to say a few words about the appropriations in respect of his electorate so, with those remarks, I shall end this endurance test.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, to add to the honourable member's problems with endurance, perhaps I should ask for an extension of time now.

I was disappointed at the lack of funding provided for the Marriage Guidance Council. When I talk of marriage, I talk of a stable relationship between 2 people, together with or without children and not necessarily having a piece of paper attached to it. The government talks constantly about encouraging stability and encouraging people to stay in the Territory. I must draw to the government's attention that this is an area of severe government neglect: not funding this organisation to expand its activity.

Some time ago, I had a meeting with a group of CWA women in a certain community. Quite a large number of women were talking about the problems their community was facing and it was an extremely interesting meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting, I asked those women what they considered to be the most urgent social need in their community. To my great surprise, the answer was a marriage guidance counsellor. I communicated that to the marriage guidance people and they told me that they were hopeful of obtaining funding to provide for that need. I am very disappointed to see that they did not.

During the last Assembly election campaign, I happened to be in a community and I was going through the electoral roll with some locals deleting names that the Electoral Office had not deleted. To my great amazement, we deleted over 100 names in a matter of an hour. During the course of these deletions, the 2 people who were helping me had this constant litany; 'He's still here but she's gone. She's still here but he's gone'. It was extraordinary. When I went through this list of deletions, the majority were the result of marriages that had been dissolved and either one or the other or both of the marriage partners had left. It

certainly verified in a very interesting way the great problem that is posed.

This was brought to my attention again very recently. The marriage of a young couple with children was in real trouble. All honourable members know the pressures that can be placed on marriage. Quite often marriages are dissolved simply because of financial mismanagement which could be corrected with expert advice. This married couple moved to Darwin from an isolated community in a very commendable attempt to keep their marriage together. They wanted to have regular contact with the marriage guidance counsellor available in Darwin. It is a very real problem and I would ask the government to have another look at it.

The next thing that I must touch on is the government's 5-year plan. I will not spend much time on it because it was covered adequately by the Leader of the Opposition. On the question of the upgrading of airstrips for Metroliners, I said some time ago that I considered these aircraft to be unsuitable. I got howled down at the time and I was told that I was not an expert on aviation. The reason that I was concerned was that I flew on these aircraft regularly and I found it intriguing that, every time I walked off the aircraft after landing, I saw the pilot and the co-pilot counting the latest number of knicks out of the propellers. This worried me somewhat. I asked them what they did about it and they said: 'Well, when we fly back to Darwin, we get the engineers to file them out but there is a limit as to how long you can continue to do that and still fly'. I found out that a particular aircraft had had a complete propeller change after 300 hours at a cost in excess of \$10,000. Even though I am not an aviation expert, it did not take me very long to work out that Metroliners were not economical. At Maningrida we now have a very impressive airstrip which is fully bituminised to Metroliner standard. Unfortunately, we have no Metroliners.

I wish to turn to 2 aspects of education that concern me. I have touched on both of them in previous debates. The first area is the Darwin Community College trade courses. The minister made some comment on this earlier and he issued a press release yesterday saying that the trade courses were under no threat. I am delighted to hear that that is the case but let me assure the minister that these stories did not come about as a result of a malicious or irresponsible rumour and I will explain why. There have been cuts in expenditure in a very vital area of trade - that of boilermaker-welding - and I would ask the minister to have a detailed look at them. I might add that it worried the Australian Welding Institute which wrote to the college and expressed its concern about the possible cuts in this vital area affecting the Territory's development, not only employment. It received a letter back from the college only 3 weeks ago. I ask the minister to accept that I am not reading this out of context for I will run out of time if I read all of it. It said in part: 'Yes, we are short of funding for both consumable and part-time lecturing staff for this financial year and, unless we receive some more money, constraints may have to be imposed'. It was about the welding courses at the Darwin Community College.

The minister is aware that, although the community college is autonomous, the minister is the person who determines its global budget. Therefore, the minister is the person who does have some responsibility in this matter in imposing the initial restraints. The vital part about this course to the Territory is that all graduates of this course get jobs - every single one of them. Not only do they get jobs, the welding courses at the community college cannot supply the demand because the interesting fact is - and I obtained this information from the CES - that boilermaker-welders are in greater demand than any other tradesmen in Australia. That is certainly the case in the Territory because of the developments in mining and other areas.

The courses offered at the Darwin Community College are very good. They are up to Australian standards. They take in unemployed people, apprentices and

so on. They also provide courses for people who are already employed in the welding industry who wish to upgrade their certificates. After a year, you can get a third-class welding certificate at the Darwin Community College. After another year's study, a second-class welding certificate is awarded. Finally, you can get the Australian Welders Institute Certificate. All those courses are provided, together with specialist courses in pressure vessel welding, at the college. Unfortunately, the number of students it can take in is limited by the number of welding machines it has - I think it has 10 or 12 - to train students. As the minister knows, it is an expensive area of trade training. It costs 5 to 6 times more than other trades because of the cost of the steel, welding rods and so on that are used in the training. There must be a limit on the number of students it can take. This year, 38 people were knocked back because there was no room for them.

The cost is about \$3 per head per student hour in this particular area of trade training. In last year's budget, \$22,000 was allocated for this course. Next year - and these figures are based on the same number of students as the present enrolment - with inflation, a 15% rise in the cost of steel and so on, \$27,000 is needed. In fact, the trades course has been provided with \$16,000 which is \$11,000 less than is required to maintain the course and \$6,000 less than the college received last year for the course. Not only is this area of boilermaker-welding vital in helping to reduce the Territory's unemployment statistics but it also happens to be vital for the Territory's development because, at the moment, we are in the position of Territory industry advertising interstate to get boilermaker-welders. That is a fact. Every single graduate of this course at the college gets a job. It is an area that I think the minister could look at a little more closely. Consider the development of the North-west Shelf in Western Australia. It will attract welders from all over Australia because of the high wages that will be offered. There is no doubt that a great many welders from the Northern Territory will go there which will exacerbate the problem. The time to plan for that shortfall and to do something about it is right now.

I would like to turn to the next problem. It has been touched on already by the honourable member for Sanderson. It concerns the cutbacks that have been made in the schools program, an area where the education is actually provided. It is the workface of the education program in the Northern Territory. The difficulties that the budget cuts are causing to schools must be due either to deliberate ministerial direction or a massive degree of incompetence. It is the same kind of choice that was given in the closure of Dhupuma College. It involves in part the famous musical instrument grant which I will speak on a little later.

The member for Sanderson has already touched on the schools in her electorate that were affected and it would be impossible in the time available to me to touch on it in detail so I will just look at 3 other schools: Darwin, Casuarina and Nightcliff High Schools. As the honourable member for Sanderson has already mentioned, a so-called government initiative based on the Victorian model has been adopted of supposedly giving schools responsibility for certain aspects of their school budgeting. The problem is that this so-called progressive move has in fact become in practice a serious financial disadvantage to schools in the Territory. The problem is that it is almost impossible for schools to have any control of the economics in areas where they have been given responsibility for paying the bills.

In the budget for 1980, expenditure for education will increase from \$65,963,000 to \$77,058,000, an increase of 16.66%. When all of the new items are taken out, such as the university planning unit, this increase is reduced to 14.8%. When we focus this down even closer on to the northern directorate of education responsible for funding the schools I have already mentioned, the

increase comes down to an extraordinary 3.2%. It is very clear that some fairly drastic budget cuts have been made in the area of the northern directorate which actually supplies the educational needs for this area of the Northern Territory and, in fact, for the children of most of the members who are sitting in this Assembly.

Just so members do not think I am making these figures up, I will refer to actual examples. Casuarina High School was allocated in the 1979-80 budget for school operational expenditure the sum of \$68,725. This was for the library books, textbooks, consumables etc. This year that was reduced to \$55,000, an actual money decrease of 20% over last year's budget. If we consider a 10% inflation rate, in real terms the budget of that school has been cut by 30% since last year. It is extraordinary. Nightcliff High School received \$73,000 last year. This year it received \$60,150 - a reduction of 16%. Darwin High School went down 11%.

To allow for the difference in the enrolments of the schools, let us put that on a per capita basis. Last year, Casuarina High School spent \$9.50 per head on library books. This year, it has \$7.00 per head. It was a decrease of 17½% in the case of Casuarina High School and 15% in the case of Nightcliff High School. These are in actual dollars. If we add the 10% inflation, we find a 27½% reduction at Casuarina High and 25% at Nightcliff High. On a per capita basis, the totals for educational materials have been reduced by 11% over last year at Casuarina, 12% at Nightcliff and 12% at the Darwin High School. It is not an exaggeration to say that these reductions have been drastic. When the schools have also to pay their electricity, water and phone bills, the situation is made even worse.

A number of very concerned parents belonging to the parents organisation at Nightcliff High School approached me about that school's budget allocation. For recurrent expenses on educational items, it has been reduced by 14%. The problem is that this cut in funding, this reduction of 14% in actual dollars, is not reflected in the overall increase in the education budget. There is a general increase of 14% but, by the time it gets to the schools, there is a reduction of 14%. It is a reasonable conclusion that any new initiatives by the Department of Education are being funded at the expense of the actual school programs and that these programs, where the education is actually delivered, have become the lowest priority of the Minister for Education.

The other point that must be made is how these cuts were implemented. Well, they were implemented without any warning at all. This brings me to that interesting topic of public debate: the famous musical instruments. Yesterday, the honourable member for Port Darwin said that he applauded the allocation of money for musical instruments and I support him totally. Musical appreciation is a very important thing but a small problem exists with the way in which it was implemented by the department. It was implemented across the board. The problem was also that schools, to their horror, found out that, even though they received a reduced allocation, \$5,000 of that was tied to musical instruments and they could not spend it on anything else. That did not take into account whether they had instructors available to teach anybody to play the musical instruments nor whether they needed them or not. Some schools - for example, one at Batchelor - which could have used the money, did not get it. Other schools - such as Nightcliff High School - which did not want the money, got it and were told they could not spend it on anything else. I would be interested to know if that situation has been corrected. In a great many schools, the advice was confirmed in writing that the money could not be spent on anything else. It is no good the minister shaking his head because schools have had it in writing from the department that it was a tied sum that could not be spent on anything else. It became a right old mess all round.

We can now turn to the new so-called initiative of the privilege that has been extended to schools of paying their own bills. The problem is that they are paying bills in areas in which they are unable to economise. This has been done so that the schools can implement economies. They have not been told whether they will be able to keep the savings that they make. The trouble is that they cannot economise in these areas. For example, Nightcliff High School pays its water bill but the grounds contractor is employed by the department. The school has no control over him whatever. The amount of water he uses is between him and the Department of Education yet the school has to foot the bill. Seventy percent of the school's power is consumed by the air-conditioning and this school is designed for air-conditioning. The school council, although it is responsible for paying for the air-conditioning, cannot redesign the school to make economies.

The other problem is that the department made no consideration whatever for the individual programs of the schools. Take a look at telephone accounts, for example. Nightcliff High School's phone bill was greater than Darwin High's and Casuarina High's yet the department averaged them all out. These are facts the minister can easily obtain. They all received the same amount of money. Nightcliff High School has developed the best work placement program of any high school in Darwin. It places over 1,000 students a year in work experience programs, and that involves many phone calls. The other schools do not have such an extensive program.

Nightcliff High School also operates, on behalf of the department, the interstate school sports program. That means it has to make many more interstate phone calls than other schools. It now has \$4,000 less to pay for the phone calls than it had before. It has been told that it has \$8,000 to pay the bills. Unfortunately, the budget cuts were received after the bill of \$4,000 came in for last financial year. Thus, \$4,000 of that money was used before the school even knew there were to be economies instituted in relation to telephone bills. The problem is that, if it has to stick within its telephone budget, it will have to drop its work placement program and I certainly hope the school will not do that.

Schools have been told also that they will have to charge community groups for the use of school facilities. The cubs, the scouts and the girl guides will now have to pay for the privilege of using the schools' facilities after hours. I know that some school principals are so annoyed about this that they have stated to their staff in a reasonably public manner that they will not implement this direction. The problem also is that, despite repeated requests from the schools, the department has given absolutely no advice as to how the schools can cost these particular charges. The schools have asked how much they should charge for lights, air-conditioning etc which are used after hours. The department has responded with nothing yet the school principals are expected to economise. Some principals have said that they are not going to do it. They will keep operating as best they can with restraint and, when the money runs out, it will be up to the minister to close the school or give them some more money.

The other problem is that the budget cuts were made without warning the schools. In most of the areas in which the schools have to economise, they are still receiving bills for the 1979-80 financial year. They are causing all kinds of horrible problems. In fact, it is a shambles. Earlier this year, schools had to work out their curricula so that the children of the Northern Territory could have a reasonable education next year. They were told by the department that they could plan curricula on the basis that they would receive the same amount of money as they received in the last financial year. They were told, 'Plan your curricula for next year on the same amount of money as last year and we will tell you later how much extra you will receive'. They did that

and the result was that, in some cases, they received 20% less than they did the previous year.

The first indication that schools would be responsible for this was given at the beginning of the third term this year at the principals' conference. About the same time, schools were notified that the amount of money they would actually be receiving was in fact drastically less than they received last year, despite the fact that they had been given earlier advice that it would be the same or a bit more. As a result, some schools had to immediately implement across-the-board cuts of up to 20% in all faculties. This was further exacerbated when they were told that, out of the \$65,000 - \$10,000 less than they received last year - \$5,000 had to be spent on musical instruments that they did not want and could not use. This caused more than a little friction between the people working in the various faculties in the schools and it was not until the end of September that formal guidelines were supplied to the schools regarding these new budgetary restrictions.

This brings us to the final point I want to make. As a result of these budget cuts, schools have now been placed more firmly in the position where they are relying utterly on school fees to keep going. Parents in the Northern Territory raise approximately \$980,000 for education programs in the Northern Territory every year. \$600,000 comes from school fees and the rest from fetes and selling pot plants. Almost \$1m a year is raised by parents in the Northern Territory. It has been said by the minister and by the department on numerous occasions that the government supplies all of the basic necessities for education services and this voluntary contribution by parents is to provide those nice little extras the school might need. The minister and the department have said that again and again. Let me finally put that myth to rest. I would like to read out a typical letter sent out by schools all across the Northern Territory. I will not quote the school:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Parent contributions for 1979 are \$45 or \$15 per term. According to our records, payments totalling \$x have been received in respect. This leaves a balance of \$x. Please note that this contribution applies to all students in general and does not take into account any extra costs incurred in subjects such as home economics for cooking ingredients, technical studies, woodwork materials and the like. Your contribution is distributed among those subjects which your child studies and provides educational equipment and resource material which cannot be obtained from within the limit of funds allocated by the Northern Territory government. For this reason, you can see that your contribution is an essential resource in itself for this school to be able to draw upon in providing the best possible education for your child.

It is not 'a little extra' but an 'essential resource' and that is precisely what it has become. The government has now exacerbated this situation even further by this dollar-for-dollar scheme. If you still fail to pay the school fee, this 'voluntary' contribution, you receive what is called a follow-up letter. A 'demand letter' is what it is referred to as. It is a reminder that you had better pay up because the money is required for essential educational services for your child. Let us put the myth to rest forever.

The problem is that school funding has been cut over the last year by up to 14% in real terms. With a 10% inflation rate over the same period, this translates to an actual cut of 24% in the spending power of the schools. The schools have been given the responsibility for paying bills in areas in which they cannot control the expenditure. Many of these bills have come from the last financial

year and are still being delivered at the schools and they are expected to pay for them with the money that is available this year.

I will conclude this budget speech with a remark which I must direct at the honourable member for Port Darwin. He said that he welcomed the dollar-for-dollar subsidy but, unfortunately, COGSO had entered into the debate like a herd of elephants. I repeat for the honourable member's benefit that COGSO is an organisation of parents. The dollar-for-dollar subsidy is intended to assist parents in providing finance for the schools and, if that is not a legitimate area for COGSO to debate, I would like to know what is. A letter from COGSO said - and I would challenge the minister to deny that this is true because I happen to know that it is - that a departmental study had shown that a further \$30 per student is required to provide basic educational material in the education service of the Northern Territory.

I would ask all members, before they start accusing the opposition of being negative, to take all of the remarks I have made so far in the context of the remarks that I made in the debate on the university. I am not opposed to the university but I am seriously concerned that planning is going ahead for a university when the Department of Education itself knows that \$30 more per student in the Northern Territory is required to provide basic educational services for the Northern Territory. The facts are that the department is reneging on its responsibility for education and is expecting parents to pick up the tab. They already foot the bill to the tune of \$980,000 a year in the Territory and the department is expecting them to dig even deeper and to pay more.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I am not going to speak at length in the budget debate because, whilst it might be a useful exercise to tell the government what we think of the way in which it has budgeted and is continuing to budget, as the member for Fannie Bay said, there is precious little we can do about it. We need to institute a new set of procedures to ensure the best use of the taxpayers' money. We are certainly not appearing to get the best use at the moment out of the dollar raised in the Territory and from other Australian sources.

Following the remarks of the member for Arnhem, I would like to put in my two pennies about the funding for schools. I am chairman of a primary school council and I have been a member of the Nightcliff High School Board of Management for the last 9 years. I have watched with dismay members of that board and that council over the last few meetings worrying about how they would be able to pay for the running of the school and what is going to happen. That is a strange and parlous state for us to be in. It seems that the Minister for Education is completely abrogating his responsibility for the orderly running of education in the Territory. He is having the vapours and saying: 'Well, it is too much for me; it is over to you. You pay. You raise the money. You worry about it'. I do not think that is the way that education should be funded in the Northern Territory or anywhere else.

The member for Arnhem was quite correct when he spoke of the cuts in funding to schools for their running expenses and also in the provision of furniture and fittings. Children will receive a lesser education as a result of this budget than they received previously. Schools, their administrative staff and the teachers are not miracle workers. If he does not have the money to fund the programs, the educationalist cannot deliver the goods. It is as simple as that. I find it alarming that, in this most basic of all areas in society, such cuts have been made. I would be very interested to hear the Minister for Education attempt to defend what is happening.

To suggest that COGSO had not the right to enter the fray is the height of absurdity.

Mr Harris: It is the way it did it.

Mrs LAWRIE: The member for Port Darwin is saying, 'It is the way it did it'. Of course it made press releases. Of course it contacted members of this Assembly. What else is any group of concerned citizens supposed to do? It holds meetings. It is comprised of representatives from all the schools and they put the school councils' points of view.

Perhaps some of the members are not involved with school councils and do not know how they conduct their affairs. I will talk about Nightcliff Primary. We are a very democratic bunch. If there is a matter of urgency coming up, such as the ones we have been considering this afternoon, not only do we have the normal school council meeting but we send notes home to every parent or guardian of children attending that school stating the agenda item for the meeting. We hold special open meetings so that everyone can come and put a point of view. We then formulate a policy for COGSO on behalf of the parents of the school. It is too easy to say: 'It is just the council of the school'. We do it far more democratically. We actually involve all the parents whom we can get to come along who are not on the council and we put that policy to COGSO. It then assists us by putting that point of view to the government. The fact that I am a member of the Assembly is a side issue. I am talking about the way in which school councils run and the way in which, as chairman of a council, I see it running. COGSO is representative. I would say that it has been fairly conservative in its criticisms having regard to the level of debate which has taken place in a reasonably conservative area.

Mr Speaker, on the last sitting day of the last Assembly, when the budget was presented, I asked a question of the Minister for Education concerning stage 2 of the rebuilding of Nightcliff Primary School. He declined to answer and said that I would see some papers to be presented that day; that is, the budget. When we had a look at the capital works program, we found the answer: there was no stage 2. Of course, all hell broke loose. The minister and the Chief Minister, after some fairly heavy negotiations, were saying: 'It is all a dreadful mistake'. Rot, it was a dreadful mistake! I am glad we have an amount of money now. I am very pleased that the minister has seen fit to provide that money. My only fear is that, because of the time lapse and the rate of decline in real terms of money in the economy, by the time we start to use the money, its real value will have depreciated.

It was an example of near parental revolt at what had happened. We held meetings at the school. We held meetings at night where parents came with their torches and walked around the derelict buildings, worried sick over the future of that school. To some degree, their fears have been allayed and I thank heaven and the minister for that. I do point out to him that there is a continuing concern that the \$850,000 will not in fact cover the latest plans which have been approved by the school council in consultation with his department. Might I say in that context that I feel that the parents - and I am very much in touch with them on this issue - would not be prepared to take easily any further reductions in the rebuilding program which we have approved. I will leave that for the minister to think about should his departmental advisers suggest further cuts.

COGSO has been funded to the tune of \$13,000 for running expenses. All I can say is 'Lucky COGSO. It did better than NTCOSS'. It must be that the Minister for Education has a more highly-developed sense of democracy than the Treasurer. He does not seem to have much sense of democracy.

I could take up all my time talking about education but it has been very well covered by the honourable member for Arnhem. My point in supporting him is to say that I happen to be one of the people here - and there are a few others,

including the members for Arnhem and for Fannie Bay - who are intimately connected with schools. We know damn well the distress and concern that has been caused to parents by this current budget for education.

Mr Speaker, we are given all these yellow booklets which are supposed to explain to us the places where the money is going. But they do not. For all the use some of these books are, it would have been better to leave the trees standing in the forest. There are 2 areas of administration which consistently failed to provide information - just glossy words and hidden amounts. That does not include education; it was pretty good. One area is community development: 'Do not ask us about the breakdown? We would rather you did not know about that'. The department deserves the utmost censure and so does the minister for presenting the papers with such paucity of information.

The other one is the Chief Minister's papers. Well, the Chief Minister's department knows how to spend a dollar. It is not backward in coming forward. I wish it would transfer a few of its funds to the Department of Education where it is really needed. Now there is a fair bit of interest in the Chief Minister's Department. Members of the public who are nose to the grindstone slaving away in their little jobs and budgeting for their holidays look at the very peripatetic Cabinet and think: 'Boy that must be a good thing'. Then they look again and think: 'I wonder what that is costing us?' I wonder too. They come to my office and they say: 'Dawn, what does the budget say for the Chief Minister's Department for overseas travel expenses for ministers?' By gee, you look and you look and it does not say anything.

Mr B. Collins: Funny about that.

Mrs LAWRIE: The honourable member for Arnhem says: 'Funny about that'. I had a look through the 'Explanations to the Appropriation Bill' for the Chief Minister. I finished up at page 23. Now I could be wrong but that is where I think it will be found. It is so inscrutable that I can only assume that I am right: 'Department of the Chief Minister, Administrative Expenses - Functional Units: This item covers payment of administrative and operations expenses of all functional units of the Department of the Chief Minister'. There is a whole list of things. Under sub-item 10, we find: 'Minister, members and staff'. Now, I think that's it: '\$746,000'. I would like to see a little breakdown of that \$746,000. It certainly is getting close to the million. Of course, I shall be seeking that information on notice.

I think that it needs to be pointed out in this budget debate that information like that will not satisfy the wish to know about the taxpayers' dollar. The people of the Northern Territory are not all stupid. You can fool some of them all of the time, all of them some of the time but you cannot fool all of them all of the time. Sometimes these funny little truisms need repeating. For the record, on page 22 of that explanatory booklet, it has \$54,000 for consultants' fees. Perhaps it would be nice to know where that is being spent and for what purpose the consultants are being engaged. But \$54,000 I suppose is a fairly small amount given the other figures mentioned today.

I invite members to take up the 'Explanations to the Appropriation Bill' for the Chief Minister's Department and look at page 20 under 'Salaries, Wages and Allowances-Functional Units'. It lists the executive, inter-government relations, Co-ordinator General, special development etc down to ministerial staff. It says: 'Establishment - nil; Allocation - \$1,484,000. If it is a misprint, I want to know what is going on. That is a million and a half and all it says is 'Ministerial Staff: Establishment - nil'. I would like to know how many people are employed for \$1,484,000.

Mr Perron: They are on contract.

Mrs LAWRIE: The Treasurer sits there interjecting, 'They are on contract'. Could he perhaps explain in his address in reply in what budget paper I will find the breakdown of that \$1,484,000 because people want to know what it is for. How many people are expected to be employed, for what tenure and for what purpose? The information given does not measure up to the expected standards of Treasury documents.

Before I move on to correctional services, might I just add one more thing about the Department of Education's budget. The member for Arnhem mentioned the need for schools to start charging community groups using school facilities. Sometimes trying to save money in this way is simply not worth it. It costs a great deal administratively and it is difficult. The school buildings - which are paid for by the taxpayer - should be utilised 24 hours a day if possible to get the maximum return for the large capital investment. I fear that this will mean that the schools will be locked up at 2.30 in the afternoon and not used again until 7.45 the following morning because people will not be able to afford to use them. That is not saving money; it is a very foolish way of budgeting the Territory's resources.

Under 'Correctional Services', on the capital works program, we have \$800,000 for the erection of 2 more cell blocks at Berrimah Prison. We have all said a couple of times and I will say it again: the bigger you build the jails, the more people you will put in them. I am not satisfied that those 2 extra cell blocks are necessary. Parts of the Berrimah Prison which were built for specific purposes are not being used for those purposes. The minister in charge had better go out to Berrimah even half as often as I do. He should open his eyes and wander around a bit, not just go on a guided tour. I will take him around if he likes. He might also tell me what has happened about the exercise yard adjacent to B block and why it will not be used. Apparently this involves one of the minister's brainstorms about security. It is ridiculous.

Community development was covered by the member for Fannie Bay. I feel that I must enlighten members as to how the Community Services Division sees the role of voluntary groups. After I read this, the minister might order its deletion from the budget papers: 'Community Services - Functional Statement: Community Services seeks to act as a catalyst for community self-activation'. It had better not be too good a catalyst because, if the people become too self-motivated, they will have their funds taken off them like NTCOSS. It is so incongruous and so incredible! The minister's own department says that it acts as a catalyst for community self-activation. God help the community if it becomes too active: 'We will not give you funds. You are too outspoken'. The minister cannot have it both ways. It shows the absurdity of the peculiar approach which the minister has taken to one particular department and its funding of community organisations.

The member for Alice Springs made a couple of comments. I was fascinated with his criticism of secondary schools in the Northern Territory. It seems he is fairly critical of his colleague, the Minister for Education, because the Minister for Education is responsible for the programs in those schools, the way they are carried out and the end product: the student completing secondary education. If the member for Alice Springs thinks that the programs are so bad, he will have something to say to his minister and instruct him on how to run his department better.

He trotted out the hoary old tale of the community dropout being funded by the taxpayer, not bothering to try to get a job but rolling up to the CES and, if there is a job available lasting a couple of days, and then rolling back to get his cheque. That does not happen. I was a member of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and I am intimately aware of the provisions of the Social Security Act and the way in which it is administered. If you voluntarily quit your last job,

you do not get your cheque. You have to be sacked and not of your own instigation. If you were sacked because you were deliberately scruffy and unemployable, you still would not get your cheque. Let us put that in perspective. I am tired of middle-class people of mature age saying we have unemployment among young people because they are not looking for work or they are too scruffy or they don't try. What a lot of rot! If they try that trick, they starve on it.

The other area of extreme concern in the budget is the pressing housing problem of the Northern Territory. This must have been raised about 6 times in various ways during this sittings and we are only on the third day. I would have looked for a deliberate commitment from this government at this time to a surge in the building industry and to a jump in the level of government spending on government housing because the problem is critical and we need housing. Even now, Mr Deputy Speaker, if the Treasurer could say that next year extra funds will be sought, it may give us some relief from what we know will be a tragic sequence of events with some people continuing to be homeless in the urban areas, particularly in Darwin.

I leave the people from Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Nhulunbuy to describe their own areas, but the housing problems which exist in Darwin at the moment are soul-destroying. We have people sleeping on beaches and in cars. We have people sitting in members' offices saying: 'Well, where will I go with my kids?' Some of this is the result of people being attracted here by the promise of the emerging state, the booming economy and the jobs. Some of it is simple human tragedy: single supporting parents or parents who are struggling to find a job and who cannot afford private rents. Some of them could afford the rent but they cannot afford to obtain the accommodation because they cannot pay the bond money and the rent in advance. They simply have not got it. They do not have assets to mortgage in order to borrow it. If they did have, they would be able to support themselves on the private market anyway. I do not think the minister is aware of how dreadful this problem has become. Perhaps an immediate attempt to alleviate it could be to have a close look at the bond provision and rent asked in advance by landlords. Of course, there is the occasional bad tenant but that is part of the reason why rents are generally high: the good ones pay for the bad ones. At the moment, people cannot afford to get into private accommodation that is exacerbating the human tragedy of the homeless families in this city.

Finally, I want to mention a couple of things which might be of some solace to the Minister for Education. It has become apparent that some high schools, more so than primary schools, seem to think of themselves as totally self-supporting little cities. They are, of course, public schools, funded by public money and accountable to the minister who is accountable to parliament and the taxpayers of the Territory. I want to place on record my concern at attitudes developing from time to time in high schools that they can do as they like, they can set their own curriculum and they do not want any interference. I have spoken against this at board of management meetings and have been roundly criticised by staff members on the board for my temerity in presuming to question the running of the school or to question whether particular programs were in the best interests of the society which they serve and which I serve. I have been told at every available opportunity that I must not question their professional conduct.

I do not see it as questioning their professional conduct or the manner in which they carry out their duties. However, every member of society has a legitimate right to question the programs in schools and the way they are being run. That is one way that the Minister for Education can be made aware of community concern. I feel a bit sorry for him. He is the one who answers here when employers and colleges for advanced education complain that the students

they are receiving need bridging courses to make them literate and numerate. Why should not the minister issue directions from time to time to the schools for which he is ultimately responsible? I am sorry if the schools do not like it. If staff in the schools do not like it, let them start their own private schools and stop trying to tell a minister who has ministerial obligations to this parliament that they are not answerable to anybody but themselves. While they accept the taxpayer's dollar, they are answerable.

I also believe in education being free and compulsory. I would ask the minister to provide more money for the operational expenses of schools and to stop the nonsense about so-called 'school fees'. Let us start funding a free, compulsory and reasonable education for the kids of the Northern Territory.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was interested to hear in the debate earlier this afternoon the honourable member for Nhulunbuy say that policemen are being given directives that the scrap paper which they use to record telephone messages is not to be thrown away until it has been fully utilised. In terms of that statement, perhaps I could suggest that they could economise in a far more efficient fashion with some of the circulars that are distributed from the Management Services Division. A few days ago some of these came to my attention and I believe that they are classics of their kind. I have 3 of these circulars; 2 of them are genuine but I happen to doubt the authenticity of the third one very much. The first circular, number 80/81, is addressed to all typists and supervisors and it is headed, 'Use of coloured paper as drop copies for outward correspondence'. It reads: 'It has been decided to use coloured paper as file copies for outward correspondence. Apart from preventing confusion between originals and copies to be filed, it will also serve as a quick means of identification of outward correspondence already on file. Purchasing has advised of the availability of this paper and, as there is already a supply of blue paper, this colour is recommended'. The word 'blue' then has been crossed out - and this is a genuine correction in pencil - and the word 'pink' has been handwritten underneath. Someone obviously made a blue. It now reads: 'Purchasing has advised of the availability of this paper and, as there is already a supply of blue - crossed out, pink - paper, this colour is recommended, Signed B.J. Harding, Director, Management Services, 23 October 1980'.

The following circular, which is also genuine, is circular 80/89 addressed to typists and supervisors. It reads as follows: 'Some confusion seems to have arisen regarding pink drop copies for outward correspondence. Outward correspondence is classified as all correspondence sent out of the department. Memoranda which are interdepartmental correspondence are to have white drop copies, not photocopies. In brief, letterheads - pink copies; memoranda - white copies. Signed B.J. Harding, Director, Management Services'.

The third circular, which is over the photocopied signature and name of B.J. Harding, Director, Management Services, is circular number 80/81 addressed to all staff. It is headed: 'Use of floral paper for Management Service Circulars'. It reads as follows: 'It has been decided to use perforated floral paper on rolls for Basil's circulars. Apart from preventing confusion between Basil's circulars and papers to be filed, it will also serve as a quick means of identification of which paper to use in the toilet. Purchasing has advised of the availability of this paper and, as there is already a supply of pretty pink

paper, this colour is recommended. Signed B.J. Harding, Director, Management Services'. I cannot vouch for the authenticity of that one.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to turn to 2 more serious matters. One of the statements which has been made over many years relates to the abuse of unemployment benefits. I am extremely concerned about this because I am very concerned about the abuse of all government social services. It happens; there is no doubt about that. After Cyclone Tracy, the government very promptly introduced free airfares down south. People queued up in their thousands so that they could rejoin families down south. I personally know of a number of people who, by using false names, went on 3 or 4 of those trips because there were no checks being instituted. When I inquired about this, the people administering the scheme said: 'We know we are being ripped off but the problem is this: if we try to institute all these checks, we know that many people who genuinely need these things will miss out. We estimate that we are losing about 10% that way but we would rather do it'. Unfortunately, that happens to be the nature of the beast.

I know personally of the abuses of the supporting mothers allowances here in Darwin and I know of abuses of unemployment benefits. I know of all of these abuses, but I am getting a little sick and tired of hearing sweeping statements that people who do not want to work roll up to the unemployment office and line up for the next unemployment cheque. I happen to know a little bit about this area too. My wife is a vocational officer employed by the Commonwealth Employment Service and part of her duties is to look after this very matter. Let me assure all members that, despite abuses which are occasionally found out, the argument that people routinely abuse the system and get away with it with equanimity cannot be sustained by any facts whatever. They do not and that statement which is very fondly thrown out by people is never backed up with facts because, as far as it is physically possible to do so, the officers of the Department of Social Security and of the Commonwealth Employment Service keep a very stringent check on those matters. They are routinely followed up and investigated. It is not an easy matter to do as people suggest: simply roll up and sign up for your next cheque.

I have an abiding interest in the continuing environmental care of the Northern Territory. The reason I have that abiding interest in the environmental care of the Northern Territory is that I happen to live in the environment and I will be living in this particular environment for the rest of my life. I do not like seeing it abused. I asked the Minister for Mines and Energy a question the other day touching on the extraction of sand from Flying Fox Creek. I am absolutely appalled that this is being done and the way in which it is being done. Flying Fox Creek, as a great many Territorians would know, is one of the most desirable camping and fishing recreational areas on the Arnhem Highway. For years, it was used by the old Department of Works repair teams. There is a team sitting on Flying Fox Creek right now and there is some mustering and shooting of buffalo going on. The musterers are living at Flying Fox Creek because it is a delightful picnic spot and it happens to be a very good place for catching barramundi. It is a very attractive place which is easily accessible to people because the Arnhem Highway goes across it.

I personally used it as a camping place for years when I worked for CSIRO. I do not think I can remember a single occasion in the dry season when I have driven along that road, as I do frequently, that I did not see people camping there. Imagine my horror when I drove along there a few weeks ago and saw these extensive excavations of sand - ugly, horrible, enormous holes dug right on the banks of the creek immediately adjacent to the Arnhem Highway. I do not know but I would suspect that, if the Director of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission saw that, knowing he is a man who is intimate with that area and has

been for many years, he would be disgusted. It is obvious why it has happened.

It has been done by contractors at Ranger and I hope the honourable minister will accept this as not being an argument opposed to uranium mining. It is not. They were stopped from spoiling the billabong behind the homestead at Mudginberri Station. Without any thought, without any attempt to look carefully at another area, they drove to the easiest spot where there was good sand. The fact that it happens to be a beautiful recreational area and a good fishing spot for barra did not worry them. It was easy to get the trucks to. Immediately off the highway - I paced it out; it is less than 30 yards from the dry season watercourse of the creek - there are 2 enormous quarries covering many hectares of land. It looks awful.

If we are going to talk on the one hand about encouraging tourists to come to the Northern Territory and providing attractive recreational areas for our own inhabitants and on the other hand, without any thought or planning, we are going to tear these places to pieces, then we are going to cut our own throats, not just in the area of tourism but also in the area of the continued environmental protection of our Territory.

These matters have been raised again and again in the Assembly, particularly in connection with gravel extraction in the rural area of Darwin, and the Minister for Mines and Energy has constantly assured us that a composite plan will be developed for extractive industries that will prevent this from happening. He constantly tells us, 'Sorry about that, but it will never happen again'. Mr Deputy Speaker, it has happened again. I suspect that, if the minister does not give it some urgent attention, it will continue to happen again to our eternal detriment. When I stopped at Flying Fox Creek to take some photographs of this mess last weekend, there was a Darwin family camping there who expressed their absolute disgust and anger at the amount of despoliation of this beautiful place.

I would suspect that the damage is so extensive that it would be impossible to properly rehabilitate it now. I would ask the Minister for Mines and Energy to advise the Director of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission, if he does not know already, that it is being done. I suspect there is a great deal of business that goes across that gentleman's desk and he cannot keep tabs on every little thing. If Goff Letts went out there and saw what is being done to Flying Fox Creek, he would be disgusted. I would ask the minister to give the Assembly an assurance that it will stop and that some attempt will be made to rehabilitate the damage.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsey): Mr Deputy Speaker, some months ago a gentleman named Joe Lazar came to Katherine and apparently he bought the option on the Uralla Meatworks. A few weeks ago, he went broke. He took the Northern Territory for \$400,000 and the first tally of his debts was over \$500,000. How do we stop these fly-by-nighters from coming in? I had the Northern Territory Development Corporation check him out as best it could a couple of times. Some of his contracts for alterations to the meatworks were arranged by Elders-GM but that company said that it had nothing to do with it. It would be very hard to prove that it did.

This is the type of people that we are getting up here. One of the very serious things about this is that Mr Joe Lazar has also taken the Bessie Springs Meatworks on the McArthur River for \$44,000 and that operation may go broke too. I do not know what we can do about this. Surely there must be some way we can protect people.

I must admit that there is a personal touch here because he took me for \$8,000. I have had some experience with these small operators. In fact, a fellow named Mansfield took me for \$5,000 a few years ago. All I got out of that was about \$200. That must have been about the time of the change to decimal currency.

Getting away from that, I have many signatures on a petition which is not acceptable to the Clerk. It says:

To the honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned residents of Daly Waters and district shows that, if the police station is closed as proposed by the Northern Territory government because of financial cutbacks, community services will suffer, that the persons and their property will not be afforded the same protection, that the taxes paid by the Daly Waters and district residents are not furnished with the same entitlements and benefits as are taken for granted by city dwellers. We request the NT government to find funds to upgrade police services in the outback instead of restricting them.

There are signatures from people coming from Tennant Creek, Sunday Creek, Nutwood, Borroloola, Mallapunyah, Tanumbirini, Helen Springs, Brunette, Robinson River, Moroak, Kalala, Katherine, Maryfield, Dunmarra, Daly Waters, Goondooloo, Nathan River, Banka Banka, Kidman Springs, Darwin, Wave Hill, Camfield, Kununurra, Emerald in Queensland, Newcastle Waters, Amungee Mungee and Killarney. The concern of these residents is very real and I support them 100%. If services to the outback are going to be cut back, it will be over my dead body and I do not intend to die. People in the bush have little enough going for them. There is much concern in Darwin about a centre for the performing arts. Well, I am not concerned. I want that sort of money spent in the bush. That is where the production is and that is where the money should be spent. As far as I am concerned, and I have said this time and again, Darwin produces nothing yet we lavish all the taxpayers' funds on it. It is nothing at all to open an emergency gas turbine plant at Berrimah. It is a big event for Darwin. The money that we are going to make will be made in every place but Darwin. Darwin has not got much going for it as far as I am concerned.

These people around Daly waters are only typical of people in the outback. For years that police station has been there. I think it was there when I was droving and that would have been about 1951. People are used to this mantle of protection. It is their right. You have heard debate today about where the money in the police force is spent. It is not spent where it should be spent. It is not spent on looking after the people; it is spent on planning and things like that.

If the railway is not going to go through Daly Waters - the railway from Birdum was planned to go to Daly Waters, was surveyed and some of the earthworks were pushed up well before the war - we could erect a police complex at the turn-off to Borroloola on the Stuart Highway. I have said all this before but I do not mind saying it again. My heart is in it. My heart is in the outback and it is a pity there are not a lot more people like me to speak for the outback instead of people speaking about what we should do for Darwin. We could have this complex at the Borroloola turn-off.

The Police Commissioner said it would cost \$1m. So what? Is the Territory going to develop or is all of the development going to be in Darwin? I put it to you Mr Deputy Speaker that, with an 18-inch rainfall at Daly Waters, that is not marginal agricultural country; that is agricultural country. You will see your dreaded coffee bush there. They are going in for it in a big way at Mataranka.

If you read the press and if you refer to the remarks made by the member for Arnhem last year, you will see that the dreaded coffee bush has a real place in our economy. That is only one crop. What about when you find the ideal crop to grow in this 18-inch rainfall? It will be found but we will not have the infrastructure.

If it is going to cost \$1m to put a couple of coppers on the bitumen at the Borroloola turn-off, what would it cost to erect the free enterprise Highway Inn there with its own lighting plant, its own bore and 20 rooms - a full motel complex? What would it cost to put that up? I just will not wear this \$1m. If it did cost \$1m, so what? These people are entitled to police protection. Everybody else is. You hear it in Darwin where people only have to turn sideways to get to a telephone to ring the coppers. They want more and more. The Deputy Mayor wants them out at Casuarina and he should have them because up here we have 2 problems which they have not got anywhere else in Australia. We have got Aborigines and alcohol, mixed. I can assure you that we cannot afford to cut back on the police, particularly in the outback. As I have said before, it will be over my dead body that we close the Daly Waters police station. Transfer it onto the bitumen. That is certainly a proposition. But, for a change, think about the people with poor communications - only a radio-telephone. They produce the wealth that makes the world go round. Let us think about them for a change.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to heartily endorse the remarks of the honourable member for Elsey regarding the continuance of the police protection to the people who live in the outback. I have been concerned by the remarks passed to me by the people on the land. Perhaps they are not large station owners. Perhaps they do not live vast distances from each other. People down at Batchelor and Adelaide River way were concerned when they heard that there would be some cuts in the police force down there. To date, these cuts have not been made and I hope they are not made in the future.

It seems to be the 'be kind to police' week for several members in the Assembly so I will add my bit. The Tiwi people at Bathurst Island are very pleased that they have 2 full-time policemen over there and 3 Tiwi police aides. It was because of their active representations in wanting these police aides that they were given them. They are greatly appreciated by the community. The work they do in the 3 communities there greatly assists law and order in those places. For the information of the honourable member for Arnhem, in Howard Springs the police are not using floral toilet paper yet. They still use white toilet paper because my office staff and I have an arrangement with the police and it is white toilet paper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was very pleased to hear from the Minister for Primary Production that the Coastal Plains Research Station will not be closing down. I hope that he means that it will not be closing down at all and that the whole 10,500 acres will continue to be used as a research station if not for the full Bali cattle hybridisation program. I do regret most strongly the indecisiveness that has been apparent regarding this research station for some years now. This can be seen from the general feeling of depression in the whole establishment. I knew that area very well about 20 years ago when CSIRO had it. It was a beautiful place; it was alive and kicking then. Now it is at death's door. The people who live out there cannot have much job satisfaction because they do not know what is going to happen to them; they do not know what is going to happen to their jobs. There is a whole lot said these days about job satisfaction for people. I think it is only reasonable that the people who are actively serving the rural industry should get a little bit of job satisfaction.

There were 16 people working out there last year. Now there are 9 people. There are 3 operators, there is 1 clerk, there are 2 agricultural labourers, there is 1 mechanic, there is 1 technical officer and there is 1 agricultural

scientist doing special work. The only good thing about that is that there is only 1 clerk. This clerk also serves the Upper Adelaide River Experiment Station. So this is one particular case, the first to my knowledge ever to have happened in the Northern Territory, where a clerk must be fully employed because he is serving 2 experiment stations. We usually hear of how many clerks there are and their number greatly exceeds the people in the field. It is probably because there is not much work done at the station. I would like to see more life and enthusiasm put into the place. I hope that, with the new plans that the minister announced this morning for the encouragement of agriculture in the Northern Territory, this will also include this research station.

I would like to point out that, when the technical officer, who is the officer in charge, went on holidays, somebody had to shuffle the pack of primary production personnel to find somebody to replace him. There is nobody on the station to replace him. As I have said before, the Navy has the use of one square mile of land round the farm. There is also another buffer zone of about another square mile outside that. I greatly deprecate the fact that the Navy does not seem to be doing much with its land. The land has been cleared in previous years. The sucker regrowth is one of the best I have seen. Last year, it had one of the best crops of sida that I had seen for many years. Every private primary producer is supposed to rid his property of noxious weeds but it seems that the defence property, which is a Commonwealth responsibility, is a sacred cow. It does not have to follow the rules like everybody else.

I must say, however, that there is a great cooperation between the Navy and the people at the Coastal Plains Research Station and also between the Navy personnel, the people, the teachers and the children there. For the information of members - and I have not touched on this before - the stock numbers at the station are: 96 buffalo-Brahman in a comparison experiment, a seminal group of 20 Brahman-cross cattle, 94 Bali-cross cattle, a grazing trial of 24 Brahman-cross steers and 10 to 20 horses.

If the Coastal Plains Research Station did close, I would be very concerned from another point of view. The Middle Point School also serves surrounding areas apart from the immediate area. It serves the people who live at Lambell's Lagoon, those who live at Thompson's Kamfari along the highway and also children from Humpty Doo Station. I did hear rumours that this research station will be granted in some way to a private concern for private use. I would greatly deprecate this. While I do think that private agricultural production should be encouraged in the Northern Territory, it certainly should not be at the expense of the Coastal Plains Research Station.

I would like to see more encouragement and interest paid to hobby farmers. Many full-time farmers tend to look down their noses at hobby farmers. These are the people who live on their 5 or 20 acres in the rural area. I do not think anybody has ever done a survey on this. These farmers must provide quite a bit of income to people like the Delaneys and Loveridges and other people in business. They probably eat expensive eggs and expensive pork. They are doing what they want to do and they are buying pellets from these 2 establishments. They are buying other feed for their horses, cows and goats. They are buying fencing materials, seeds, fertiliser and chemicals. No experimental work has been done in this field which is wide open for such work. It may not be considered seriously by full-time farmers but it is a fact that more and more people are going into hobby farming. Rather than doing all the experiments themselves on their own little 5 or 20 acres, they would like a little bit of help from the government.

I think the minister said this morning that work would be done in the field of goat husbandry, pig husbandry and poultry. I welcome this very much. I am inclined to rate goats far ahead of pigs and poultry. To have reasonably priced

pork on the market, one has to have cheap feed. We can only hope that, with the success of the new farming ventures in the Territory, cheaper feed will be produced. Perhaps it would be an excellent idea to have experimental work done on pigs to determine the most suitable breeds. I am particularly interested in goats. I know there is a big market to the north of us for goats and goat meat. Before that is filled, there is a very big market locally for goats and goat meat.

If the Bali cattle program is stopped and somebody is looking for something to do, I would like to put forward an idea. It may not be practicable at the moment but I would like to see some thought given to farming native animals. People are already interested in farming crocodiles. I will touch on that briefly. A farmer, who does not live in my electorate, is interested in farming white cockatoos - growing the cockatoos, harvesting them and selling them, not destroying them in their native environment. I am interested in marsupial farming or harvesting. This might not be successful but I would like to see some consideration given to farming these animals rather than the indiscriminate shooting which we see if we travel through the bush very extensively.

I mentioned crocodiles a little while ago. I was pleased that the minister said that Professor Harry Messel will be leaving Beatrice Hill. Professor Harry Messel achieved some fame with his crocodile work up here if only from the point of view that he said crocodiles were on the decrease when everybody else said they were on the increase. By creating an interest in crocodiles, he may have started a nice little industry in the Northern Territory but I do not think it was in quite the way he intended. We have not seen any of his results published in the Northern Territory. They may be published in other places, Mr Deputy Speaker. However, his interest in the crocodiles may have contributed in a negative way to what will be their successful farming potential in the future.

Mr ISAACS (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I listened carefully to the member for Elsey's speech seeking support for police stations in the outback. All members of my party support the view that police services must be maintained. However, he ruined and fouled his own speech right at the end when he said to the Assembly that the Northern Territory has 2 things which the rest of Australia does not have: Aborigines and alcohol. Apart from that statement being factually absurd, I simply want to say that I condemn the spirit and intent of the remarks of the member for Elsey. I read at times the racist rot of the member for Elsey in the Katherine Advertiser and I even got a repeat burst of it in the National Times a week or so ago. I would have hoped that he would have learnt from his previous foray in this particular area which he made some time ago.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Chief Minister made what I regard an excellent speech to the Royal Commonwealth Society in London on his recent trip overseas. He extolled the virtues of conciliation, cooperation and understanding in dealing with the culture of Aborigines in the Northern Territory of Australia. I just wish that he and members of his party did the same at home.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, in August of this year, I represented this Assembly at a workshop of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group which was held in Canberra and I would like to report briefly to members on that meeting. The theme of the workshop was the relationship between legislatures and executives, lessons from home and abroad. This is a matter which is particularly relevant to the Northern Territory because we have much to learn in view of the comparative youth of our parliament. We would be wise to learn from and not to repeat the mistakes which other parliaments have made and to avoid the problems which they have experienced, particularly at a time of increasing complexity of modern government.

The speakers at the workshop included Senator Peter Rae of Tasmania who is well known as one of Australia's leading proponents of the committee system as a means of providing parliamentarians with access to knowledge. Other speakers were Dr Malcolm Punnett of the University of Strathclyde, who is a visiting fellow at the Australian National University at the moment, and Miss Adrienne von Tunzelman of New Zealand. It was generally agreed at the workshop that the great problem faced by parliamentarians is lack of access to knowledge which is readily available to government through departments and advisers. Of course, we have seen this today again in the course of the budget debate. It is impossible for parliaments to keep an adequate check on the activities of government, as is their duty on behalf of their citizens, if they are unable to gain access to information.

The committee system, which works so well in the United States, has been seen in both Westminster and Canberra and other Commonwealth parliaments as a means of allowing members to redress the balance which goes so much in favour of the executive. However, because of the different constitutional structure of the United States as opposed to Commonwealth countries, the committees have not worked so well in practice as was first hoped. This seems to be, according to Dr Malcolm Punnett, a particular problem in Westminster. However, the committee system seems to be working somewhat better in Canberra according to Senator Rae. He has a particular bias in favour of Senate committees rather than joint committees; it is his view that they work better in those circumstances. There are certainly many examples in the federal parliament where we have seen party divisions forgotten and members and Senators have worked together in committees and have frequently produced unanimous reports, something that would be very difficult to produce in the parliament as a whole. There was a recent example of this in the Senate Committee on Education and the Arts Report. Senate estimates committees have of course also replaced the unsuitable and inadequate examination of the budget in the committee as a whole. I have made reference to this today also.

Dr Punnett, a most amusing speaker who was very well received by the members, spoke on the dynamic nature of the Westminster system and pointed out the changing parliamentary situation in the United Kingdom in the 1970s which has led to government backbenchers flexing their muscles and thus increasing their power over the executive. The annual general meeting of the Study of Parliament Group was held at the same time. A Professor Gordon Reid was elected chairman and other members elected to other positions in accordance with the constitution which was adopted at the meeting. I have a copy of that constitution if any honourable members wish to see it. I was also pleased at the meeting - the honourable member for Stuart was there too - to meet the Speaker of the Papua New Guinea parliament, the Clerk of that parliament and also Mr Peter Wilkinson from New Zealand. Members will see that there was quite a wide representation at that meeting.

Members of the group did express a great interest in parliamentary development in the Northern Territory. They even discussed the possibility of holding a workshop in the Territory on some appropriate topic. There was also discussion as to whether a scheme similar to the parliamentary fellowship in the federal parliament could be organised for other legislatures. The Northern Territory Legislative Assembly was once again seen as a possible area where the appointment of such a fellow might be mutually beneficial both to a student of parliament and politics and to the legislature itself. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank members of the Assembly for allowing me the opportunity to attend this workshop on their behalf.

While I am on my feet, there is one other small housekeeping matter which I would like to raise, particularly now that we have the good fortune to have the Chief Minister with us again. It is nearly a year since he made a certain very

short statement in this Assembly. I have the Hansard in front of me - Thursday 22 November. It is entitled 'Gift of Ties'. The Chief Minister very kindly made a statement as to how the gentlemen members of the Assembly had been given very elegant ties bearing the crest of the Northern Territory. I note that male members of the Assembly have since received a subsequent tie with a number of smaller representations of the crest of the Northern Territory and they look very handsome. At that time the Chief Minister, who was kind enough to refer to us as charming female members, assured us that we would be receiving scarves since most of us do not wear ties. I would like to inform him that we are still waiting most eagerly for those scarves.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Jingili): I am afraid that I cannot think of scarves for the lady members of the Assembly in my every waking moment. If the member for Fannie Bay would like to jog my memory in a less formal and official way from time to time, then I could certainly follow the matter up. However, I notice that that is not the way of the member for Fannie Bay who prefers to make a federal case out of a small issue if she possibly can. Rather than make a phone call to say, 'Where are our scarves? What has happened to them?', which I would certainly follow up - and I will follow this up - we have to raise the rather trivial matter in the Assembly.

I would like to try to introduce a note of rationality into some of the comments that have been made this afternoon regarding the mantle of protection extended by the Northern Territory Police Force. I do this because I consider that a lot of the talk going on at the moment about alleged cutbacks in the police force are causing concern with people. Rather than the concern being alleviated, the concern is only furthered by the less than accurate statements that are being made in the Northern Territory about so-called cutbacks. The real facts are quite different. In 1977 the gazetted strength was 451. Last year, the gazetted strength was 540 and the actual strength was 538. As of today, the gazetted strength of the police force is 553 and, of those positions, 540 are filled. In addition to that, there are 12 cadets in training, there are police aides and there are numerous public servants - I think in the order of between 70 and 100 - who provide backup services for the Northern Territory Police Force.

In that same period of time, to help extend the mantle of protection to the people of the outback and to the people of the Northern Territory generally, the police have been provided with 2 twin-engine planes of a type superior to that employed in any other police force in Australia. They can be in strength in any part of the Territory within a matter of hours of receiving a call because those planes can land on virtually every strip that is available to aircraft in the Northern Territory. In addition to this, the police force has purchased modern vehicles - Range Rovers, Jeeps and International Scouts - and these are used for long-range patrols which I personally have discussed with people in the bush who have indicated their satisfaction. Indeed, I made a point of talking to people on the Barkly Tableland about these long-range patrols after the Anthony Lagoon 1-man, antiquated, outdated police station had been closed down. These people of the Barkly Tableland area are more than satisfied with the replacement of that police station by the patrols for the simple reason that the 1 man at the police station used to spend - and not from choice - a great deal of his time just keeping himself alive. Everyone knows that there has long been a policy - we inherited it - that 1-man police stations would be phased out.

The present Police Commissioner, who has my complete support and to whom I leave the administration of the police force within general policy guidelines, is a rational, sensible and logical man unlike, unfortunately, many of the people that he seems to have to debate with from time to time about what he is doing. Part of the debate is engendered by the fact that the Police Association has recently acquired an industrial officer. This is a good development. We on

the management side are pleased to see that the Police Association has a full-time industrial officer to put its case. In putting the case of the police, there will no doubt be things that will tend to be somewhat exaggerated because that is the nature of industrial advocacy. From time to time, it seems that the 2 extremes of the situation are put.

Unfortunately, I have not really briefed myself for this contribution this afternoon. From memory, I think there are five 1-man police stations left in the Territory. We have a policy of gradually replacing these 1-man stations with 2-man police stations. It does cost \$1m to replace them, whatever the member for Elsey chooses to believe. I cannot help him there. It may have to be over his dead body in due course but these 1-man stations will be phased out because we cannot keep men in what eventually will become intolerable conditions. We should not have to keep men in police stations on driving routes that have long been bypassed by progress and where they cannot make any effective contribution at all to maintaining law and order or extending the mantle of safety over people of the outback. I can assure you that I want to see people everywhere in the Northern Territory, in the outback and in the cities, as fully protected as we can.

The Police Commissioner has already made a possible suggestion. The problem is that you cannot make a suggestion without everyone getting up in arms. He suggested that the 1-man police stations in this area be replaced by a larger complex that is more relevant to today's needs. That was why the commissioner, with my full support, closed down Wollogorang and Anthony Lagoon because nobody goes to Wollogorang these days except to grow a bit of grass and very few people go to Anthony Lagoon.

I hope that people will try to see that, in fact, the strength of the police force has increased by almost 100 men in 3 years. Certainly, since I have been holding the executive responsibilities for police, their equipment has been improved immensely and also their capacity to respond to various situations that they might face, particularly in dealing with violence. I am pleased to see the opposition is beginning to recognise this increasing violence. I would hope that this increasing recognition by the opposition will lead to a more sympathetic attitude on its part to the problems facing the police in the administration of law and order in the Territory. The policeman has an unenviable task because, in many cases, the people whom he is dealing with are intoxicated or at the very least disorderly. Very few people whom the police deal with in that type of situation are likely to be in a reasonable frame of mind. I hope that, in future, we will see a much more sympathetic and understanding attitude coming from the opposition in relation to the problems of the police and a real attempt at understanding the difficulties facing this very fine body of men and women.

I would like to make one more observation this afternoon. The Leader of the Opposition rose this afternoon and was scathing and contemptuous of the member for Elsey because the member for Elsey said that he regarded the Northern Territory as having problems with Aborigines and with alcohol. That is certainly what I understood the member for Elsey to have said. If I may say this, I believe the Leader of the Opposition was being extremely hypocritical in saying that that statement was racist. I believe that the Northern Territory certainly has more than 2 problems but we do have deep and dire problems with alcohol, problems facing Aborigines with alcohol and certainly problems facing members of the white community with alcohol. We have big problems with Aboriginal people themselves, and the Aboriginal people recognise they have many problems. Every particular Aboriginal community has a myriad of problems. These are the problems the Northern Territory has to face. Whilst I certainly do not agree with the member for Elsey in many of his utterances, I believe that the Leader of the Opposition is sticking his head in the sand if he refuses to face up to the statement that the member for Elsey made.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would just like to make a couple of points about the Commonwealth Employment Service and a statement I made earlier. I would like it to go on ...

Mrs LAWRIE: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! The honourable member is a new member but he has to abide by the rules of the Assembly. The honourable member was about to refer to remarks made in an earlier debate this day. I believe that is contrary to Standing Orders.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member said that he was going to refer to it. He has not done so as yet and I will not let that happen.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to put on record that, in my short term of office so far, I have had dealings with about 4 employees of the Commonwealth Employment Service. I hold these people in the highest regard and that is a very sincerely held view. I have spent considerable time talking with these people about the problems of their job and some of the tricks which people supposedly seeking employment get up to. I am aware that, once someone has a job, he must do the job properly and not get sacked because he would not then receive unemployment benefits. However, if someone has not got a job, he is supposed to apply for a number of jobs within a certain period. If he does not bother to make that effort, he again will lose his benefits. There are a number of people who are going along to these interviews and presenting themselves in an offhand manner with a poor attitude. The people who interview these applicants decide that there is no way that useful service could be obtained from them. They must say: 'Sorry, I don't think you are suitable for the job'. They go back to the Commonwealth Employment Service and say: 'Well, I tried, but I didn't get it'.

The worst thing about this is that genuine people suffer. After an employer has had a run of interviews with people who obviously do not want to be employed, he gets sick of the Commonwealth Employment Service and will not register his job through it. This is grossly unfair. It is an unfair reflection on the CES staff. The fact that he will not bother to list his jobs with the Commonwealth Employment Service means that some genuine people, who are looking for jobs, do not get that opportunity. I have heard that people have been advised: 'Look, often the best way to get a job is to get out at 7 o'clock in the morning to a construction site or whatever and apply to the manager in person there because, if you come through the Commonwealth Employment Service, the employers who have learnt through experience may brand you as one of those who do not want to work and lose interest in you'.

I would like it placed on record that the Commonwealth Employment Service officers whom I have dealt with are held in very high regard and they take their job very seriously.

One last point. Yesterday the member for Arnhem spoke about a former principal of the Sadadeen High School. I do not want to harp on those particular problems. I would like it to go on record that the present principal of that school is doing a good job. I am very encouraged indeed with his efforts and the reports of his leadership. Sadadeen High School is in excellent hands.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, if a person applying for a position through the CES presents himself to a prospective employer in an offhand, untidy and unkempt manner, he is deemed to have failed the work test and is not eligible for unemployment benefits.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Future Power Needs of Darwin

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from the honourable the Leader of the Opposition a proposal that a definite matter of public importance be debated, namely, the Northern Territory government's failure to present satisfactory plans for the future power needs of Darwin. Is the proposal supported? The proposal is supported. I call on the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): On 24 April of this year the headline in the Northern Territory News read as follows: 'Major Power-Station Planned - Quick Start to Planning'. This resulted from a government statement in this Assembly that it would start immediate planning for a major new Darwin power-station fired by coal with an option for natural gas. The Chief Minister said in the debate that government planning was responsible. He said that it was working towards the deadline of 1986 and, if a new station was not phased in by then, Darwin people would not have electricity.

The headline in the NT News followed a statement in this Assembly by the Minister for Mines and Energy. He said at the time, and I quote from the Hansard: 'I believe that energy is perhaps the most crucial issue facing the Territory today. For 2 years, it has been the subject of exhaustive research and this government has refused to be stampeded into panic or half-thought-out decisions because the wrong decision perhaps would be disastrous for the Territory in the long term'. They are fine words indeed. After that 2-year program of research, the government announced its long-term plan for Darwin's power supply. The minister was unequivocal about the government's solution. He said: 'Initial planning will concentrate on the development of a 300 megawatt coal-fired steam power-station to be completed by 1993 with a first set being commissioned by 1986'.

The reason for raising this matter of public importance today in the terms set out - that is, the government's failure to present satisfactory plans for the future power needs of Darwin - is that, after making a firm commitment in principle in April of this year and after going to the people and receiving a mandate to build a coal-fired power-station, we now find the minister and the Chief Minister going overboard to push the nuclear power-station argument. The reason we have brought this matter on for debate today is to clear the air once and for all and to set the question of Darwin's power needs on a firm footing rather than up in the clouds or the heady heights of the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Chief Minister.

In the debate which followed the minister's statement in April this year, I pointed out that dependence on coal would have a number of problems. I said that the price of coal was increasing at virtually the same rate as oil and pointed to the fact that, over the previous 12 months, it had doubled in price. I also expressed concern over the availability of supply of coal from interstate sources and cited the problems that we would have with competition from overseas markets. For all these reasons, I said the government was making a great mistake in singling out coal as the major source of our future energy supply.

The Treasurer pointed out that the lead time in building a powerhouse was extensive. He said a powerhouse of the magnitude mentioned by the Minister for Mines and Energy could probably be built in about 4½ to 5 years at a considerable cost but normal lead time would put it into the 6-year bracket. The

Treasurer continued: 'Before starting to even design a powerhouse or select a site, one needs to know exactly, absolutely and firmly what sort of energy source one has for the powerhouse'. The Treasurer suggested that infrastructure costs for coal would not be that high for a single power-station or even a large one. This is an important point. It was obviously in response to our energy policy which we had released a couple of weeks before. I expressed concern about the extensive infrastructure costs of a coal-fired power-station.

The Treasurer said, and I quote from the record: 'We need unloading and storage facilities but the infrastructure costs of coal itself, the extraction from the mines, is already there and they are churning out millions and millions of tonnes for Australian export business'. He went on: 'The infrastructure costs are largely there; we are not paying for them to be installed just for our powerhouse'. Concluding the debate, the Minister for Mines and Energy said, and this is most important in light of what has been said recently: 'All energy has become expensive and will remain expensive. We must deal today with the facts of life, and the facts of life do not leave all that many options open to the Northern Territory. We have to live with the reality that we do not have gas and we do have coal'. The minister also said, and I bet he wants to forget it now: 'We do not have a big enough load base to even consider the concept of nuclear generation in the Northern Territory'. That is what the minister said 7 months ago: 'No nuclear power generation for the Territory'. In April, the government's commitment in principle was clear. It had decided on coal. It recognised the OPEC factor in the price of coal and also that very little could be done about it. It believed that infrastructure costs would not be too high and that a decision needed to be taken immediately.

Less than a month later, the Minister for Mines and Energy again said: 'Coal is the only alternative'. In a news release, he said: 'The construction of a \$300m coal-fired power-station' - it had dropped \$30m in its estimates at that stage - 'offered economies of scale and would enable the government to keep electricity prices at the lowest possible level'. In his policy speech 2 weeks later, the Chief Minister confirmed the government's commitment to coal: 'Queensland coal will be used to power the new \$400m power-station in the Top End'. It had now gone up \$100m. Nonetheless, the commitment to coal was there. With the election over and the government returned, coal was still the big energy source in September. On 3 September, while acting as Chief Minister, the Treasurer said that the government was committed to using coal and Territory gas and oil in its energy development program. He was responding to a pro-nuclear power statement from the Mines and Energy Department.

The Treasurer said in a news release: 'Nuclear power is very much a subject for the distant future. The short answer to the establishment of a nuclear power-station in the Territory was no'. That was in September but, a little over 2 months ago, the government managed a complete turnabout.

On Tuesday last, the energy minister made the following points in response to a question without notice: 'Due to circumstances outside our control, we will not be able to build a coal-fired power-station for less than \$300m or \$400m'. They are exactly the same figures which were quoted by himself and the Chief Minister before the Territory elections. There has been no change in the figures; they are still terribly rubbery. They are a reasonable approximation, give or take \$100m. But suddenly the coal-fired station is being called into question. He pointed now to infrastructure costs as being considerably higher than originally anticipated - never mind what the Treasurer told us - but never gave even a hint of what these costs might be.

The Treasurer told us in April that infrastructure was not a problem: 'It is already built by and large. They are mining it - how is it going to cost us?' Even optimistic. He was talking about getting coal out of the ground and onto the ships. As the minister knows, in terms of infrastructure, the major cost is getting it into the harbour, off the ship and then preparing it for use in Darwin. Infrastructure has gone from 'no problems', in the words of the Treasurer, to a problem significant enough to call the whole project into question.

Having raised the question of where does the minister go, he said: 'Only detailed studies will give us an opportunity to address ourselves to that problem'. What happened to the 2-years' exhaustive research upon which the government's initial firm decision was made? It has not costed the power-station to a figure better than \$300m or \$400m. It has not undertaken a study of infrastructure requirements or costs and yet it was able to say categorically to us in April: 'Coal is the only answer'.

The minister criticised the Labor Party for failing to cost its program. All of a sudden, the minister is enlightened on the cost implications of using coal as an energy source. He now says: 'Coal is increasing in price as fast as oil'. A shot from the blue out there. He is suddenly aware of what we have been saying and what he must have known for many months. So what do we do? Coal is out; we are going nuclear. The Territory is going to lead the way. Mr Speaker, its arithmetic on coal turned out to be pretty shoddy, pretty shaky, pretty rubbery. I wonder what its arithmetic on nuclear power is. If it is anything like that one, we had better scrap it immediately.

However, it goes on. On the ABC yesterday, the minister said: 'We now have to plan power-stations on a 20-30 year time frame'. Didn't we need to have that same kind of framework 5 months ago or has that changed as well? Didn't the 2 years of exhaustive research undertaken by it which the minister referred to in his April statement have just that point as a basic premise? Didn't it then have a 20-30 year time scale? The minister told his ABC interviewer that, in his view, a coal power-station would be built smaller than anticipated and only as a short-term answer. Apparently we would have a number - he did not say how many - of these gas turbine jet aircraft engines dotted around Darwin churning out juice. It is liquid gold. Yet that was going to be the solution to our power needs in the short term and he was ever hopeful that we would always have the nuclear option open to us. The minister went on in his interview: 'Truly, you cannot provide powerhouses in 5 or 19-year time frames'. That is despite the fact that he had just done so in relation to a small coal-fired power-station. He didn't tell us how big it will be or how long it will last us. He just says: 'Oh well, we have had a look at this; we are going to build a smaller one'.

The minister said: 'The nuclear power-station has not been finally costed but what has become obvious to everybody is that the only form of generating capacity that you have which can tie or restrict or limit the cost of fuel escalation at the powerhouse is nuclear'. There you are. He is at it again: a new power source for the Territory without any sort of costing except that, according to him, the cost of uranium will not increase. That is a rash statement - rash for one very good reason. Hasn't the minister reread the statement he made to the Assembly in April? Let me remind him of those words again in view of his statement now that the costs of uranium, of nuclear fuel, are not going to increase: 'Might I advise the honourable member' - that is me - 'that every energy base that is known to man today is in some way tied to the cost of oil from the Middle East. Coal is but one of them and uranium is

another'. The minister said: 'Nuclear is great because you get a supply contract for 20 years at a fixed price. Coal means only a 10-year contract. Then we are to use his brilliant phrase: 'Flying by the seat of your pants'. Well, won't we be doing that in 20 years' time?

The Chief Minister pushed and encouraged from overseas. He went to Vienna, the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency, but could not get an appointment to see the people there. 'It was a public holiday', he said. I do not know when the Chief Minister arrived there. I would have thought that, given his willingness to get the Territory involved in the nuclear power cycle, he would have made it his business - and he should have made it his business - to see the people at the headquarters of IAEA. He says that the Australian Embassy did not want to help him. I would like to know what the Australian Embassy says about that. It would be very interesting to get an answer on whether it was saying that it would not help the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory to get an interview with the headquarters of IAEA. Frankly, I think it is preposterous. I do not believe it.

Mr B. Collins: They didn't know who he was.

Mr ISAACS: They knew who he was; they knew exactly who he was. I would think that any Australian Embassy, whether it be for the Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or anybody from the Northern Territory who wanted an interview with the IAEA in Vienna, would organise it. I just cannot believe the Chief Minister, who sends telexes around as if they are going out of style, was not able to impress upon the Embassy in Vienna the importance and urgency of his meeting with those people. I just do not believe the Chief Minister tried hard enough. Nonetheless, the government is pushing us into nuclear power. We heard this morning from the minister that it does not have a site picked out.

So there we have it. We have the Treasurer, when he was Acting Chief Minister, committed to a statement in principle by his own government in April. He said no to nuclear power in just September of this year. We have a situation where the government chops and changes its view about nuclear power. In April the minister said that nuclear costs, just like any other costs, are rising as oil prices rise. Now he tells the ABC: 'The great thing about nuclear power is its fixed price'. He admits that he does not know what it is going to cost. In answer to questions last week, it is obvious that the Territory government has not even talked to the federal government about costs. It does not know what it is going to cost. It has not sought authorisation from the federal government about nuclear power. Today we have the final answer: 'We do not have a site picked out'. Remember that our time scale is June 1981. We have all the contradictions, all the unanswered questions yet we have a perilous situation, it appears, where we have to make a decision by June of next year.

Mr Speaker, we have been urging the government to take up seriously the question of natural gas. I want to be brief on this. The Minister for Mines and Energy made the point in April that the coal-fired power-station in Darwin would have an option to convert to natural gas. That is a commonsense approach. We have coal and we can see the problems. If we can get onto natural gas, let us keep that option open for as long as we possibly can. Everybody knows that natural gas in the Bonaparte Gulf and onshore in the Keep River area will not just be used for Darwin. Its major supply will be to the export industry. When the minister talks about infrastructure costs being imposed on the people of Darwin, he knows that he is not telling the complete truth because he knows that the bulk of the infrastructure costs will be apportioned to the export market and the other offshoot industries that will come from it. It is

important that the government takes its head out of the clouds. It is important that, once and for all, we put to rest this nonsense about our going nuclear. It might assist a few zany editorialists but we are talking about power for Darwin and power for Darwin's industries. I would ask the minister, in his response to this matter of public importance, to bury once and for all the garbage about nuclear power. They must get it out of their heads; it was not an option in April and it certainly is not an option now.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I listened with interest to what the Leader of the Opposition had to say. I would like to begin by saying that, if ever nonsense was being spoken, it was being spoken by the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke about using gas that has not been found, gas that does not have a cost and gas that cannot be delivered into a power-station in Darwin for the benefit of cheap power for the people of the Northern Territory. If you have a recipe to cook a pig, the first thing you must do is catch the pig. I will just spend a moment on this preposterous gas proposition because it is one of the most fraudulent propositions that any politician has ever put to the people of the Northern Territory. It is fraudulent in the sense that it is lulling people into a false sense of security and into a belief that there is something cheap out there waiting to be brought in and that it is only a matter of somebody with determination putting a hole in the ground.

I wish that that was the point at issue because, if that is all that is required, we could overcome that problem tomorrow. The problem is a little harder than that. All we have off the north coast of the Northern Territory is a gas find. That is all it is. The drillers put a hole down and gas came out of it. Anybody in the exploration game would tell you that that is most encouraging and a good reason to put another hole down but that is about all we have. I too am very keen to see the use of gas in the Northern Territory but there are a couple of hard, cold realities with which we have to deal. The first is that, with today's costs of finding the gas and bringing it to Darwin, it would not be possible to bring the gas for less cost than we are putting oil through Stokes Hill. Given that we brought the gas in, I cannot see the Commonwealth subsidising gas for the people of the Northern Territory although it is committed to subsidising the oil. Given that the gas were there and all we had to do was find it, we would need 7 years' hard work to drill the holes and build the pipeline to the shore - 7 years that we do not have - and then we would need to know how much of it we had and how we were to pay for it.

Of all of the issues that I will canvass today, the most ridiculous proposition that anybody can put forward is to fire a powerhouse with a feed-stock that does not exist. It is as simple as that. What sort of irresponsible people would be prepared to stand up and say: 'We told you so. If you had used gas all along, it would not be a problem'. If we even consider gas at this stage, there will be nothing but problems because we do not have any gas. While I would be the first one to give consideration to the possibility of using gas in a powerhouse if the price was right and if the supply was right, that choice is not available to me and nor is it available to the Leader of the Opposition nor the Australian Labor Party.

The reality is that, by 1986, we have to double the power supply to Darwin and we have certain options open to us to achieve that end. The most likely option is the establishment of a coal-fired station. I have never said that the coal-fired station proposal has gone and that we will have a nuclear plant. The Leader of the Opposition is carrying on as though we will have a nuclear station on every corner. I might be wrong in what I read into his speech this morning but I think that his attack on the government's power

policy is not so much an attack on the policy as the first shots in the Labor Party's anti-nuclear crusade.

Mr B. Collins: Not that again, Ian.

Mr TUXWORTH: Time will tell.

Mr Speaker, I would like to deal with the issue of the power supply in Darwin by taking all the emotion out of the matter and examining the alleged contradictions and the quotations that have been used for various arguments. We need an expansion of the power supply in this community by 1986. We need to eliminate the subsidy because it is not a reasonable proposition that any community continue to be mendicant for its power source and survival. In that is embodied the need to get away from oil. As another parameter, we need to provide for the people of the Northern Territory, and Darwin in particular, an economic power source for which the consumer can afford to pay and which industry can afford to use. When I say 'industry', I am talking about all the support industries that would look at the Northern Territory as a potential place to develop and expand and those industries that might walk away from us simply because of the cost of our power. They are not necessarily the great giants in industry but there are many support industries that would immediately ask: 'What is the power source and what is the cost?'

Another matter that we need to take into consideration is the power needs for 1986 for the community as compared with the needs and the potential of the community in the year 2010 or 2020. A further parameter is the issue of local resources or feedstock source. The honourable member has mentioned the phantom gas supply. We would need to consider whether we have coal deposits and whether those deposits are of adequate grade and sufficient supply to provide us with feedstock for a powerhouse. Hydro is another option, Mr Speaker. Mount Nancarrow, the Katherine and Ord Rivers are just 3 sources of supply.

Given all of those parameters, we must take some decisions that will provide us with the power we need at the price we can afford to pay. I would like to say that I do not think that there is any future for the people of Darwin or the people of the Northern Territory as a whole building their growth and their future on the goodwill of anybody else in another place for their continued existence. What will happen in 1985 when the government of the day in Canberra says: 'Gentlemen, the subsidy is finished. We wish you well in your endeavours. If you have trouble funding your electricity operation, that is a bit of bad luck'.

Mr B. Collins: Grant Tambling will fix that.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, this is quite serious and deserves more thought than the honourable member just gave it.

We have not only to build a power-station and a power supply sufficient for the next 20 or 30 years, we have to supply the power at a price which the community can afford to pay. The Department of Mines and Energy and the Northern Territory Electricity Commission are the 2 technical agencies that have been charged with the responsibility of bringing to the government's attention all the options that are open to it. Herein lies the problem. When the Department of Mines and Energy said that it was compiling advice on a nuclear station, it was alleged that something was being hidden from the people and from the press because the government was looking at it. When I say the 'government', I mean the government agencies. I knew they were looking at it. It is their job to advise the government on the options that are open to it.

It would be a dereliction of duty if they did not do it. These 2 organisations in the government, with all the worries and the criteria they have before them, have been building their planning around certain assessments and projections of infrastructure costs, feedstock costs, interest rates, inflation rates and a hundred other considerations. The proposals have been so complex that it has been necessary to computerise the program so that, with any one option, you can feed in the varying information to project 20 and 30 years down the line to predict where the people of the day will be if certain cost escalations continue at a given rate or if power is or is not available. The manpower to do that manually would be enormous. But with the use of the technology available to us today, it is able to be done relatively quickly.

In the compilation of all of these things, there is one thing that has come to the notice of the people working in that field: some options are now not as outlandish as was originally thought because of the changing situation in the world and there are some forecasts in the wind relating to future projection and supply and cost problems that would cause responsible people to think hard about some of the options that are open to them. One of the options that has been put by the technical people advising us is that the nuclear possibility is a little more real than we had originally thought. Because it was becoming a reality, I thought the logical thing to do if I wanted to be honest and open about it was to say that it is an option. With that view in mind, I was happy to sit down with my technical support advisers and go through the issues with the press so that they could be well briefed so that, if it broke, at least they would have a background knowledge of what was going on. I do not regret that. I think it was a good exercise because everybody learnt a lot from it.

The Leader of the Opposition, who is leading the anti-nuclear push on this occasion, is making the assumption in the public mind that there is automatically going to be a nuclear station simply because it has been floated and proposed as an option. I think that is totally irresponsible and possibly as posterosus as his gas proposition.

Another issue that I would like to come back to is the one of supply. As we are all aware, the oil situation has not improved at all. The demands now in the world by generating authorities for coal - which coal miners and governments of countries cannot supply - are absolutely enormous. Irrespective of the price of coal, I think we must have a good hard look at the capacity of the world, not just Australia, to supply the coal that is needed for energy.

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

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that the honourable member's time be extended.

Motion agreed to.

Mr TUXWORTH: The Leader of the Opposition argued that, because so many various things have been said relating to the provision of power in the Northern Territory, the government is in conflict and does not really have a policy. It is just hopping from foot to foot. I would reject that wholeheartedly. Because I said that I had not considered any sites for a possible nuclear power-station, I am to be flogged in a public place. All I have done so far is to provide an option for the consideration of the community and the honourable members. It is an option that is becoming real because of the changing circumstances. When we - and I say 'we' as meaning the Department of Mines and Energy and NTEC - first considered nuclear power, our considerations were

based on the size of scale of a nuclear powerhouse to get efficiency - and you are looking at a minimum of 900 megawatts to get power down to 2 cents a unit which is what you would hope to get power for in the existing circumstances - and the capacity of technology to provide a small unit that would give you a similar cost rating. The truth is that technology and the small units cannot give us a comparative costing.

Mr Collins: It decreases with size.

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member says that, as the size decreases, the cost goes up. When you consider the cost proposed today in nuclear generating units is 6 cents a unit of kilowatt hours for the provision of power, it is a bit different to 16. It is not as good as 2 but at 6 we could live without subsidy and have the basis to encourage industry to come to the Northern Territory because the cost of power would be relatively comparable with other parts.

The honourable member also threw in some wild accusations about how the Minister for Mines and Energy said that we would have turbine stations like the one at Berrimah dotted all over Darwin to supply a nuclear station. If ever anybody was being loose with the truth, I guess the honourable member was in the way he portrayed that. Let me just touch on that particular point because it is very interesting just how economics and circumstances change. The Berrimah turbine was built primarily as a reserve for the power-station at Stokes Hill so that, in the event of weather damage whereby Stokes Hill was unable to provide for the northern suburbs, Berrimah could cut in. I accept that Berrimah power-station is a very expensive unit to run. We do not run it any longer than we have to for obvious reasons. But one of the interesting things to come out of this is that, since we have had the Berrimah station available to use as a backup that can cut in minutes after Stokes Hill goes off the board, we have been able to reduce the spinning reserve at Stokes Hill to the effect that we save \$1.3m a year in fuel. In about 7 years, it will have paid for itself even if it never turns a wheel. We ought to give a little more consideration to some of the criticisms that are being tossed around.

I did say earlier, and I still think it is true, that all energy costs are relative. If oil goes, coal will follow, uranium will follow, they will all follow. One of the things that I was criticised for by the honourable member was for suggesting that we could get an uranium contract for 20 years but that the price would not go up. Again, that is being a little loose with the spoken word and I would say to the honourable member that uranium, coal and gas in the year 2000 will all be related to the cost of fossil fuels. One of the things that is important is that, if we can get a contract now for our feedstocks at a fixed price, it does not matter what all the rest do in the next 10 years. We would have our contract and our price. But it is becoming increasingly more difficult to get long-term contracts for coal. You certainly cannot get a long-term contract for gas that you have not got. I still believe that, if you sign today or in 1985 for the uranium feedstock at a fixed price, in the year 2010 or 2015 it will still be the same price and it will be considerably less than signing for a contract in those later years.

I am rather interested in the attack that was brought on by the opposition because I think it is not a considered, reasoned approach to the problem. I do not think that Darwin power supply is a political problem; it is above politics. The power supply issue will be there when we are all dead and gone. It behoves all of us to work towards a solution that will provide the people over a 30 or 40-year period with the power supply they can afford. The opposition is not taking a constructive approach. It is a bucket-tipping

exercise. The Leader of the Opposition's gas proposal is incredibly naive in the sense that any reasonable person would know that you cannot use something that you do not have.

The Leader of the Opposition has already eliminated the coal option. I would just refer honourable members to the opposition's energy policy which was announced earlier this year. There is no doubt that the Leader of the Opposition discounted the coal option. He said: 'The proven natural gas reserves are already sufficient to meet the Territory's needs well into the next century'. Where are they? The opposition pretends to be self-righteous and responsible in this matter. In all the time I have been handling this portfolio, I cannot recall any correspondence from the opposition seeking clarification of any particular issue relating to the energy scene or the need to use one particular source over another. I understand that no request has been made of NTEC. I cannot speak for the Department of Mines and Energy because I did not have a chance to ask them this morning.

You have heard the questions that are asked of me in this Assembly relating to this issue. They are not questions of concern which are searching for answers or alternatives. It is political one-up-manship all the way. No responsibility. We had a budget debate last week that went on for 3 days. My portfolio, one that is the most crucial item in the Northern Territory today, did not rate a mention. The member for Victoria River raised the question about the need to continue with consultants' fees for a coal-fired station. That was the only question that was raised.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, the Minister for Mines and Energy has set me an impossible task this morning. I cannot really think of anything to reply to. If you could make any sense out of anything the honourable member said this morning, Mr Speaker, then you are a better man than I am. Apart from the predictable charge that the opposition was simply attacking nuclear power again, the minister did not address himself at all to any of the inconsistencies that had been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition.

Before I get on with some specific matters, I would like to say this. There is a reason why the opposition has not, to date, raised any queries concerning the government's plans, if you can call them that, to solve the power needs for Darwin. The reason is that there has been a flood over the last couple of months both from the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy and from the honourable Chief Minister of totally and utterly contradictory statements concerning the power supply for Darwin. I can do no more than say this, Mr Speaker: I would ask members of the public who are seriously concerned with the power supply for Darwin to place all of the statements made in the Hansard by the Chief Minister and the Minister for Mines and Energy alongside their press statements and ABC interviews only as late as yesterday. What it adds up to is absolute nonsense. The Minister for Mines and Energy knows it and that is why he completely failed to address it during his reply to the Leader of the Opposition.

As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out - and I do not want to waste the time of the Assembly in going over it again - the Acting Chief Minister of the Northern Territory made a categorical statement in September this year that the short answer to a nuclear option for the power needs of the Northern Territory was no. Could you get a clearer answer than that? Only a totally one-eyed observer would deny, after examining the press releases of the minister and the Chief Minister over the last couple of months and particularly the ABC interview yesterday, that all options but nuclear appear to have been thrown out of the window completely.

The extraordinary part about this performance is that the minister says that they have not costed the nuclear power-station - although we on this side of the Assembly have a rough idea of how much these things cost - they have not looked at the siting of it and they have not discussed its feasibility or even its possibility with the federal government. They have not done any of these things and yet, during the interview that I heard the other day - and I have it taped - the minister said that he hoped to make a final decision on our options by June next year, 7 months away. That is an absolutely irresponsible statement which anyone in his right mind would discount immediately.

That brings us back to the fiasco where the Chief Minister and the Minister for Mines and Energy could not tell the difference between natural gas and LPG. I still remember that it was most embarrassing for the government. We find them now in exactly the same kind of throw-away-line situation in which they are seriously proposing the expenditure of upwards of \$1 billion. The minister knows full well that the setting up of a nuclear power-station does not just require power-station costs but all sorts of other costs as well. They have not studied its feasibility, they have not costed it, they have not initiated discussions with the federal government, they have not looked at sites and yet the minister said, in an interview just the other day, that he hoped to give a final decision on this option by June next year. That is a fairly extraordinary performance.

The opposition in this Assembly is a responsible opposition. Any responsible opposition would have to be a little bit concerned when we have 3 senior members of the government's front bench - the Chief Minister, the Treasurer and the Minister for Mines and Energy - in the space of 7 short months, making completely contradictory statements. I might add again, Mr Speaker, that the honourable minister is fully aware of what absolute nonsense those statements make when you line them up next to each other. That is the reason he failed to address any of them this morning in his reply.

I happen to know a little bit about one feasibility study that was carried out on the establishment of a nuclear power-station. I wonder if the minister is aware of it. Perhaps the federal government can give him some information on it. I know the Australian Atomic Energy Commission conducted a feasibility study on the establishment of a nuclear power-station in Sydney. In fact, the proposed site was Jervis Bay. They were investigating the feasibility of constructing a nuclear power-station which would feed into the largest electricity grid of Australia. It was thrown out of the window because it was an absolutely uneconomical proposition.

Mr Perron: How long ago?

Mr B. COLLINS: Obviously, the Treasurer must be aware of this study. I wonder if he would make the details of that study available to the public.

The Western Australian government employed an expert from the United States and honourable members may recall this gentleman being interviewed on ABC television last year. That gentleman visited Western Australia to examine the feasibility of establishing a nuclear power-station there. He discounted it. I remember some of the points which he made during his television interview. One of them was raised the other day by the Leader of the Opposition. As the minister knows full well, nuclear power-stations are designed to be most effective when they are plugged into a national grid. In the United States, the maximum efficiency that power-stations have reached is 50%. It is even less in other parts of the world. The minister should also be well aware that the larger a nuclear power-station becomes, the more efficient it becomes, and vice versa. The smaller the power-station is, the more the cost and the

inefficiency escalates. The minister knows full well that nuclear power-stations spend much of their time generating nothing except trouble. That has certainly been the track record in the United States and I have endless piles of information from the government accounting office which is rather worried about the economics. Perhaps the minister could have a look at the costs to the utility company when it had to buy its electricity, in the short term, from other utilities because of the Three Mile Island problem.

The minister knows that there are problems of waste disposal. That is an interesting point in itself. The minister said the other day that this problem has been solved in nuclear power-stations. I wish the minister would go to the United States and tell them that it has been solved because, at the moment they are going through a process of what they call consolidation in nuclear power-stations where they store their spent rods in ponds. They are now packing them closer together and there is a lot of arithmetic attached to this to avoid this thing called 'critical mass'. They are running out of space in these ponds so rapidly that they are having to move the rods closer together to make more room for them. As the minister knows full well, according to that body in the United States - a non-political body that goes from one government to the next, the government accounting office - the problems of solving waste disposal at nuclear power-stations are not solved by any means and, in fact, to quote again from that government accounting office document: 'They are not likely to be for at least the next 10 years'. So this throw-away line of the minister's that disposal problems at nuclear power-stations - what to do with the rods after they come out of the station - are solved is just absolutely palpable nonsense and the minister knows it. There are the cost problems associated with that.

There are the problems of buying the fuel stock. One of the comments that really amused me from the honourable minister the other day was that, because we produce the uranium in the Northern Territory, we are in a position to have some control over the price of our fuel stock. I would ask the honourable minister how much control has the Northern Territory government got over the price of bauxite and how much control has the Northern Territory government got over the cost of manganese. The multi-national companies that are producing this uranium will decide as they do now. It is the supply and demand on the world market that determines the cost. They will have news for the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy and it will be all bad.

The opposition in this Assembly did not seek to raise this matter for political reasons at all. We are worried, as many people are worried, about the totally inconsistent and contradictory statements of 3 members of the front bench over the last 7 months which, when you stand them side by side, add up to nonsense and the minister knows it. We failed to get an answer to those contradictions this morning. On the question of natural gas, we welcomed, as the minister would remember, his own option of having the Darwin powerhouse designed to use natural gas as an option. To quote again from what the honourable member said: 'The government carefully considered the possibility of an immediate commitment to the use of natural gas for electricity generation but an economic natural gas source for Darwin is yet to be proved. Natural gas resources in offshore sections of the Bonaparte Gulf Basin are possibly large enough to meet the anticipated demand for electrical energy in Darwin and the Top End for up to 70 years. However, much additional work needs to be done before a reasonably reliable calculation on reserves can be made ...'.

I would like to quote from another document. These pieces of information are the only things that the opposition has to go on. We occasionally get these little crumbs swept to us off the table of the government. This is from the Joint Northern Territory Electricity Commission Western Australia State

Electricity Commission Study into the Ord:

Section C - Gas Discoveries:

Since this economic feasibility study was commenced, a firm statement has been received by NTEC upon the availability of natural gas, particularly in the offshore Bonaparte Gulf area of Western Australia. The existence of the proposed Ord-Darwin transmission line with some spare capacity would facilitate transmission of this energy to Darwin. Proven plus possible reserves associated with Bonaparte 2 Well are sufficient to generate 17-megawatt hours for 9 years. Further exploration over the next 5 years may increase these reserves by a factor of 5 or more. The authorities intend to investigate the development of a generator plan based on this gas field. Preliminary estimates indicate a capital cost of \$15m for a 30-megawatt turbine, a transmission line and a substation for connection to the Ord-Darwin transmission line. Petroleum permit holders have indicated a base price for gas that would lead to a cost of electrical energy of approximately 2 cents per kilowatt hour. The accelerated exploration program being undertaken by the permit holders indicates that energy from this gas field would be available by the time the proposed Ord-Darwin transmission line is constructed.

Mr Speaker, I would suggest that, when we have made available to us documents such as that, when we have statements made to us by the government that they themselves are going to ensure that the proposed Darwin power-station has a natural gas option, it is perfectly proper and reasonable that the opposition should talk about natural gas. Although, as I pointed out before, the Chief Minister and the Minister for Mines and Energy do not seem to be able to tell the difference between that and LPG.

I am very disturbed that the government, which only 2 months ago in the person of the Acting Chief Minister, ruled out the possibility of nuclear power for the Northern Territory in a categorical statement, is now pushing it for all it is worth. That same government has admitted that it has not costed it, it has not looked at sites and it has not even initiated discussions with the federal government as to whether it is even going to be possible. That same government has indicated that it wishes to make a decision on this, quoting the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy, 'as early as June next year' - 7 months hence. I would say that we have a lot to be concerned about. I would ask that, if there are any more members from the opposite side who intend to speak in this debate, perhaps they could address themselves to the problem that was raised. It is not an anti-nuclear problem but a problem on which 3 members of the government have consistently contradicted each other over a short period of 7 months. I wonder if any other honourable member on the other side of the Assembly could address that problem because that is the problem the opposition raised this morning.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, the member for Arnhem made a point that the matter was not raised as an anti-uranium debate. Perhaps he should be liaising with his Leader of the Opposition a bit more closely because he finished with an appeal that we bury the very question of uranium. In fact, they have not said very much of substance in this entire debate this morning. It appears to be somewhat of a waste of time. We have heard a lot of the usual distortions that we have come to expect from the opposition. If it wanted an anti-uranium debate, then why did it not propose one? The debate is obviously just a political exercise.

The naivety of its thinking was summed up pretty neatly by a question from the member for Sanderson this morning who asked whether the Northern

Territory was considering off-peak rates. In a situation where we are generating electricity in the Territory 100% from oil, as most people would know, the more you generate, the more money you lose. It would be insane for a government to propose off-peak rates in that situation. Off-peak rates are quite clearly a way of getting more money for an electricity commission where it has spinning-reserve capacity and seeks to use it up during periods when electricity is not consumed to any great extent. In the Territory, of course, we need to turn off every generator we possibly can as soon as demand diminishes. That situation will stay as long as we are on oil.

The Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out that the government had made a formal statement in this Assembly earlier this year on where it was proposing to go at least in the next few years as far as the future supply of electricity for the Northern Territory was concerned. The opposition's response to that statement was that it had another alternative - it is its right to put it forward - and that was gas. Whilst it feels that our statement may have been irresponsible, we claim that its statement was even more so because, as the Minister for Mines and Energy has pointed out, it still has not got the message even today that the gas has not been proven. I wonder if it has ever stopped to think, within its own policy, what it would do if the gas simply was not there. It has its fingers crossed. It says that we should build a gas-fired power-station because it is the only way to go. It hopes that there are sufficient reserves in the Bonaparte Gulf and anywhere else it could dig it up. We all hope that that is the case. But it just has not thought about what would happen if that was not the case. The opposition must remember, as has been admitted, that for any large-scale gas discoveries in the Northern Territory to be brought on tap would involve a substantial export industry. We would not be alone in that field of competition. We have the North-west Shelf to compete with. We have also Indonesia to compete with which has fairly substantial supplies of surplus gas from the enormous, by world standards, gas production in that country. The Northern Territory is to come in there within 6 years, first prove the reserves, extract them and then set up a great international export industry in gas so that we can obtain a bit on the side to generate electricity in the Northern Territory. That is the option that has been put forward. It is fairly unrealistic but not uncharacteristic.

Much has been made about a statement I made. I cannot think of the exact words but honourable members did read it out. I believe it was in answer to a question from a reporter. I was Acting Chief Minister and I sought to set the record straight by saying, and I stand by it now, that the government had not made a decision to build a nuclear power-station. It has been repeated here again today. I did not rule out the question in my response. I sought to put the matter in perspective because I felt that people may have misunderstood or misinterpreted what the head of the Department of Mines and Energy was reported as saying. I am not sure whether he was reported correctly. I said that it was not an option in the short term and, by 1986, I still do not think that it would be an option. We would have to move fairly fast to have a nuclear power-station generating electricity by 1986. We are not that unrealistic. There obviously has to be an interim measure.

The Leader of the Opposition in the debate this morning - and I think it is part of the whole political ploy - stated that the Northern Territory government is now committed to nuclear power generation. That is not so. As he and others pointed out, there have not been any site investigations. We have not tabled information in this Assembly that is contrary to the earlier statement that was made. The opposition sought to draw all sorts of strings from press reports and say that we are committed but we have not done our homework properly. It is missing the point.

The member for Arnhem reminded us that he believes that they are a responsible opposition. I guess that we do have to be reminded that someone thinks that way. I am not sure of the timing - it would have to be 10 years or more ago - but there was an investigation in NSW into the potential of a nuclear power plant. We are talking about an area which has probably one of the world's largest coal reserves. That must create a disincentive for NSW to go nuclear. In addition, a study was undertaken at a time when I doubt that anyone in the world, except perhaps a few Arabs, could have foreseen the escalation of oil prices that was to occur. The situation is changing all the time but the NSW coal reserves are not changing significantly even though they are exporting coal.

This responsible opposition proposes a policy which, without considering the Northern Territory situation, absolutely rules out nuclear power. They will not consider it irrespective of what situation the Northern Territory is in yet they consider that to be a responsible policy. They do not even regard it as an option. It is these very policies which will not only keep the opposition in opposition for donkey's years but will stop them from being a credible force in Australia. Because they exclude uranium, they are stuck with a policy of having to scramble around for any other possible options irrespective of what price it will cost the community. They simply cannot consider what is likely to be, in the long term and on a large scale, the cheapest way the world has of producing electricity unless you have a geographical situation whereby a very large scale hydro scheme is available to you. That is certainly not the situation in the Northern Territory.

The Leader of the Opposition concluded his address and summed up the debate by a grandstanding plea for the Northern Territory government to leave the issue of nuclear power generation alone. To quote his words, he said: 'bury it'. He is obviously afraid of it. It may be the only option that we have in the long term but shallow thinking has led the opposition to oppose almost every important project in the Territory for the last few years. It began with self-government itself; it opposed that very strongly and still does from time to time. It opposes most of the initiatives of this government. It is an opposition which has stated that it will oppose for the sake of opposition. I recall that very clearly as one of the member for Sanderson's points in her maiden speech in this Assembly.

The opposition has taken a number of press releases over the last couple of months and has blown them up and distorted them to try to demonstrate that the government has some sort of conflict within its own ranks. That is not the case. It says that we are not only committed now but we are poorly committed because we have not selected a site for a nuclear station. This is the Leader of the Opposition's distorted interpretation, not ours. Forcing the issue of this debate today appears to me to be trying to stifle debate on the option of a nuclear power plant for the Northern Territory because, if it can get it wrapped up, signed and sealed with full stops on it that the government is not considering it is an option, well then it can rest easy because it will have the Northern Territory locked into that mindless ALP policy of not considering nuclear power under any circumstances. He will not get that satisfaction here today.

I have a small point but perhaps an important one. If the Leader of the Opposition cares to go through the statements made by the Chief Minister, to my recollection there was no statement in which he has ever indicated that the Northern Territory decided to go nuclear. In fact, he was reinforcing a point, as I understood it, that it was one of the options that should be very closely considered by the Territory. Indeed, it will be closely considered by the Northern Territory government.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 55)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is designed to further the government's objective of satisfying housing demands in the Northern Territory by the early release of its residential lots. Section 323 of the Local Government Act prohibits the selling, offering for sale or leasing of subdivided land within a municipality for residential or business purposes at any time prior to the completion of roads and drainage works. This bill envisages that the prohibition should be retained and that a penalty of \$1,000 and a maximum daily penalty of \$100 be prescribed for breaches of the prohibition.

The bill also seeks to empower the Minister for Lands and Housing to give his consent to offering or pre-contracting for sale. The effect would be that the relevant minister would have power to grant partial exemption from the prohibition where he is satisfied that adequate safeguards exist. The necessity for private subdividers to be able to arrange sales of land as early as possible should be apparent to members of the Assembly. Public demand for residential allotments is high. This demand for land is really a demand for housing. The amendments proposed here seek to allow this demand to be satisfied in the shortest possible time. In achieving this aim, the amendments are drafted to ensure that no unnecessary risk is borne by intending purchasers or by the government which will guarantee the completion of works to the satisfaction of the relevant municipal council in the event of default by the developer. To this end, adequate securities will be required of the applicant developer.

The primary intention of section 323 has been preserved and, indeed, enhanced by the addition of a substantial penalty which protects the interests of municipal councils by ensuring that construction standards meet the pre-determined criteria. Section 323 of the Local Government Act, in its present form, has proven to be an impediment to the forward contracting for the sale of residential land and the proposed amendment seeks only to remove this barrier.

This bill proposes to create a situation in the Northern Territory in which both sellers and buyers of land may carry out forward planning in confidence, a practice which is common elsewhere in Australia but which is leading to considerable difficulties in the Northern Territory as persons who wish to pre-contract for land which is being turned off, particularly in the northern suburbs of Darwin, are unable to do so lawfully. I believe that the government should move quickly to amend this situation and put us on a footing that is equal to that of the other states.

Debate adjourned.

PROHIBITED DRUGS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 52)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will allow the use of heroin to relieve pain in those who are terminally ill when other pain killers are no longer effective. This change

to the legislation is in response to an Australia-wide pressure from the medical profession as it is well recognised that, where a patient is terminally ill and in extreme pain, heroin may provide the only relief. This bill restricts the use of heroin very carefully. The patient must be terminally ill and in extreme pain. Only the Chief Medical Officer may authorise the use of the drug in these circumstances and stocks of the drug for such patients will be controlled most carefully and may be acquired on the authority of the Chief Medical Officer.

The bill specifies that only diamorphine hydrochloride can be used and all other salts of diacetylmorphine are prohibited by existing legislation in any case. The bill will enable relief to be given in terminally ill cases such as those suffering from cancer. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

APPROPRIATION BILL 1980-81 (Serial 25)

Continued from 20 November 1980.

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): Mr Speaker, it would seem as if the opposition, in addressing itself to the budget before it, has taken upon itself - as is its prerogative - to select 2 principal areas for attack. I suppose it is a problem for me in that both of them fall into my area of responsibility. Therefore, let us look at the merit of what the opposition has had to say and the realities under the Appropriation Bill. I would suggest that the reality and the opposition's version are miles apart.

The opposition dealt with 2 areas. The first area was that of education. Members of the public who would care to read the debates or the press coverage which was rather minimal - that is understandable having regard to the waffle spoken - would be under the impression that the cuts were in education rather than adjustments within very small areas. Mr Speaker, like most of the areas of the humanities for which government is responsible, there seems to be an underlying view held by the ALP that any area of education is a totally sacred cow. It feels that it is beyond the competence of any government, particularly a CLP government, to review, to weigh up and to evaluate in accordance with the merits of the circumstances of time in which government is dealing with these matters. Really what has happened is that this government - and the Dhupuma College exercise was an example of it - has now, with the settling down after self-government, had a chance to look at where its money is being spent and to examine the merit of that expenditure.

If one does an analysis - and I do not intend to tire the Assembly by going back through data and details of figures because one can use data and figures for a multitude of purposes and a multitude of interpretations - one would see that that area of expenditure generally defined as division 2 or administrative expenses in the field of education has vastly outstripped the 2 essential components of budgetary planning; that is, inflation and growth. Mr Speaker, when that occurs, one must stop and start to take stock. We have a position where the administrative expenses at school level, and indeed across the whole range of my portfolio, have vastly outstripped what one would reasonably expect to be required for the purpose of those 2 essential components of budgetary planning. It would be an irresponsible government that did not take stock of that position and do what it could, as a government responsible to the taxpayer, to try to find out why. Within that administrative expenditure also are electricity and water.

It is our luck to be gifted with hindsight and there would not be a member in this Assembly who would not have seen tremendous wastage of the taxpayer's money on almost every urban school throughout the Northern Territory. We have all seen, as I have seen, sprinklers spraying water onto the grassed areas of schools during the heaviest periods of rainfall. My own area in Alice Springs is as guilty as anywhere else in this regard. All of this costs money.

We have heard from the honourable member for Arnhem that neither of these matters are within the competence of the school to control. They have never been within the power of a school to control because the schools have never been given a controlling function in respect of those 2 areas. We ask ourselves who is responsible for this shameless waste of the taxpayer's resources. Coupled with that, we have had, over the last few years, requests from some school councils to take over responsibility for, among other things, the physical management of their schools. I would like to see this encouraged and fostered. Who is in a better position to monitor the activities of a contractor for grounds maintenance or the utilisation of electricity within a school? Certainly people sitting in the T & G Building in Darwin are not and, most certainly, the people sitting in what my colleague might call the 'Mines and Energy House' in Gap Road Alice Springs are not either. Surely it is the school council which is in a position to observe this sort of waste. It is not a matter of imposing a liability. It is more a matter of going back to the school council and saying that, since it has expressed a desire to properly manage the finances of the school, what better way to do it than to include the elements of services in the appropriations of that school.

That was construed by the honourable member for Sanderson in particular and, oddly enough, taken up by the honourable member for Nightcliff as meaning that there were no sums of money set aside in this budget for those functions within schools. I find it extremely surprising that the person who has demonstrated in this Assembly, above all others on the opposition, that she does her homework very thoroughly, should be so prepared to totally mislead people who may have heard or read what she said. That really is quite different. The parents are not being asked to provide those funds at all. They are part of the school-based funding. The department looked at what the expenditure was last year. With a little bit of guesswork, we had to determine a reasonable level, having regard to the unit cost of those services in schools, to appropriate for 2 schools to be managed by themselves. If a school is able to save in those areas, it can apply those sums of money to other areas.

The extraordinary comment came from the honourable member for Arnhem that schools - and he did not say they 'should' but I am quite sure he implied they 'should' - carry on regardless and, when they run out of money, ask the minister to close the schools. That is not exactly what he said but it is what he was actively encouraging. Of course, we would have a shambles of the first order on our hands if the honourable member's solution to these sorts of problems were put into practice. What he is really encouraging - and of course he will deny that he was encouraging it but he certainly was by implication - is a complete defiance of this parliament, and therefore himself, in the passage of appropriation bills by individual administrative areas of government. If you would extend that argument, it would simply mean that the Department of Health or any other department and every division within a department could simply say: 'To hell with this place. We will spend at the rate that we consider appropriate. When the money runs out, we will ask the government to close the hospital'. I know the honourable member will take great and pious umbrage at my reflection upon him - and it is not an improper one - but that is what using those sorts of words encourages. What happens is that, at school level, people think the Shadow Minister for Education believes that no regard should be had to the budgetary limitations placed upon government activities

by this Assembly.

In that area, let me say this. We have a wide variation in the appropriations for various schools, unlike the version put forward by the honourable member for Nightcliff by which we are led to expect that all schools were treated similarly or, as the honourable member for Sanderson would have us believe, they were not only treated similarly but received no money at all and the parents were asked to pay. The schools, which demonstrate by good management that in fact there is a shortfall in a reasonable level of expenditure, have the facility of the normal mid-year revised estimates. That is what we have that period of budgetary consideration for in this Assembly. There is nothing new about it. Those reasonable requirements at schools will be looked after. Nonetheless, I think there is a responsibility placed on all officers - and a principal of a school and his staff are officers of the public - to pay regard to the appropriations handed down in this place. I think it is quite mischievous to actively encourage any other attitude.

The fact is that the education budget was increased by some 14.5%. We had a series of statements from members opposite which sought to demonstrate that the government was on the wrong track in education. Some of them were based on a complete lack of information, some of them were a mischievous distortion of the facts and others were, of course, a result of absolutely no research whatsoever.

The question of school councils and associations being informed that the department will no longer be funding services has already been dealt with. The honourable member for Sanderson went on to say that the government proposes quite deliberately to downgrade the facilities which will be provided in new schools. At the same time, if ever a valid argument was presented to a legislature for the prevention in future of the extravagance which was seen under Commonwealth administration in the grand design of classrooms in schools, the honourable member put that to us herself. She indicated that, while she thought it was all very fine that her electorate was blessed with very sophisticated school buildings, she would not expect that to continue in the future. Let me make it quite clear that there is a difference between conversation pits set deep in the ground and ankle-deep carpet which really achieves nothing but developing the thigh muscles and the provision of educational facilities. Facilities are those things which pupils and teachers require for the purposes of learning and teaching. Those things are paramount in the consideration of this government's appropriations for schools and will be closely monitored.

It was suggested by the honourable member for Arnhem that a survey had been conducted by the Department of Education and that survey had established that some \$30 more per pupil was required for basic educational facilities. He defied me to say it was not true because he knew it was true. We heard him also say that he knew of his own knowledge that a certain document was true. This is just another case. He may not be doing his homework or he is being deluded by someone and is foolishly accepting it or there is some other more mischievous intent. Of course, what he has said is completely untrue. No such document exists whatsoever. What he did was purport that a document circulated by the Anula School Association and a document explaining the difference between Aboriginal schools' per capita allocation and those urban schools were based on research by the department and stated that primary schools need \$30 more per pupil. That is a complete and, I would suggest, mischievous distortion of the facts. He said that the survey done by the Department of Education was correct. Of course, it is not. I have both of those documents here, Mr Speaker. If anyone is in any doubt, I am quite prepared to table them. The honourable member took a school circular and a circular from the

Northern Division explaining per capita allocations and suggested they were official documents of the Department of Education based on research as to school needs. That was quite improper on the part of the honourable member.

The opposition is not there to say what is good about the budget; it is merely there to know it and, hopefully, in some cases, to be constructive. It has failed to mention the positive aspects of the budget. I have already covered the review. I mentioned earlier the variations which must occur in any budget from year to year and the trap we can get ourselves into by automatically assuming we need an increase over any appropriation from one year to the next. What this government has done over the last several budgets, and this is only the second one in education, is to follow the principle that it is best to identify those areas of need during any one fiscal year. That means the best part of 2 school years. That is exactly what this budget does. As a rapidly growing area, we are committed to a rapidly growing staffing bill. About \$2m was required this year for formula staff and staff to support them. The Northern Territory Teaching Service obviously required an allocation this year in order that it would be established before the beginning of the next academic year and also for the interim commission to do the planning. That again represented another commitment.

We heard the honourable member for Port Darwin talk about the music program. What is not commonly known is the salaries for the additional part-time music instructors add up to about \$149,000. For the first time, we have had the secondary correspondence scheme going full steam ahead. The cost increase to run that this year is \$86,000. Included in the directorate allocation is an establishment fund. I suppose that next year, as a result of having set it up this year and there being no need to set it up again next year, we will have howls from the opposition side that we are cutting on the budget simply because the overall amount is decreased. It is a matter of how you establish a department and, having done so, determining what is reasonably required to maintain that level or improve on that level. It is not a matter of the led-by-the-ring-in-the-nose syndrome of the opposition that you must always increase the appropriation automatically. It simply does not work that way. While I would dread to think of the financial management of the Northern Territory being placed in their hands, I am quite sure members opposite know more about financial management than that.

Mr Speaker, this year, we have had a vast improvement in student assistance. The improvements to the scheme, which was originally introduced by this government in the last budget, have included such things as an increase in conveyance allowance to parents from 7¢ a kilometre to 11¢, an increase in tertiary airfares from 2 to 3 per year and the extension of a scheme to all approved Territory students whose family home is in the Northern Territory, the introduction in 1981 of a tertiary assistance scheme by provision of an allowance to cover incidental costs and the introduction of a mid-term travel scheme which allows primary and secondary students boarding away from home in the Northern Territory to return home up to 9 times per year. That sort of policy was borne very much in mind by the government when it took the difficult decision to close Dhupuma College. 1981 will see the introduction of a means-tested secondary assistance scheme for students in years 8, 9 and 10 in Northern Territory schools. That is something that has never been done before, Sir, and I think you would agree that that is an extremely worth-while initiative. A scholarship scheme for students completing their matriculation in the Northern Territory secondary schools in 1980 will be introduced for the first time.

In Aboriginal adult education, we are proceeding with the \$3.28m stage 2 of the Aboriginal Teacher Education College at Batchelor. That is a general

TAFE college in addition to that function. Three additional staff will be appointed to expand the on-site teacher training program at a cost of \$57,000. There will be an increase in the intake of trainees at Batchelor at a cost of \$50,000 and the upgrading of the library at Batchelor at a cost of \$15,000. All of these were new initiatives which were clearly identified by the government as being of an essential nature. Increased funding was made available accordingly. A 44% increase in operational costs for TAFE is reflected in this year's budget. Again, the Community College of Central Australia, TAFE oriented, employment oriented, has received an overall increase of \$354,000 representing a 44% increase. Coupled with the Schools Commission grant, the overall increase to independent schools this year is \$839,251 of which \$434,251 is the Northern Territory component.

We turn now to COGSO about which much play has been made during this sittings. May I say that I very much value and respect the advice of COGSO. What I would like to see is the executive of that organisation reflect the views of parents a little more accurately because its information is vastly different from mine on the public attitude to the question of the dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme. If the honourable member for Nightcliff has not found one person who is in favour of the scheme, I am staggered that people are so anxious to see it commence. It really does not make much sense in logic at all.

Mrs Lawrie: It certainly does not.

Mr ROBERTSON: The words of the honourable member reinforce my own view that what she said does not make much sense at all and she agrees that it certainly does not. She can read the way that comes out in the printed Hansard.

There we have the function of education which I believe is going from strength to strength in the Northern Territory. We have many problems with it. It is a very expensive undertaking but let us never delude ourselves that the solution to education problems is to tip more money on them. It is a matter of 'how it is spent' and that is a quote from the honourable member for Arnhem 12 months ago.

Turning to land, what I indicated to the Assembly earlier was that we are considering not what has happened in the past but the Appropriation Bill that is currently before this Assembly. I do not think that any government in this continent has ever done more in a more positive way or committed greater resources than this government has to the solution of this problem which resulted from the very successful policies of this government in expanding the Territory. I agree with the honourable member for MacDonnell that, if anything will slow down the development of the Territory, it will be a lack of land. Let us look at the initiatives and what we are doing to resolve that problem. We did not hear a peep from the opposition, other than negative criticism, as to what it would do about it. We did not hear a peep about whether or not it considered that the private development system is contributing anything. It was simply a negative bash session which contributed absolutely zilch to knowledge and understanding but then, of course, those are 2 elements in which the opposition is rather deficient.

Let me briefly report to the Assembly what turn-off of land is occurring at the moment. We would all be aware that land means housing because you simply cannot have houses without land. It does not matter whether the houses are in the public sector or the private sector, land is the key. In Leanyer 1 subdivision, there are 236 lots being turned off. Most of these are actually starting to turn off now or have been for some weeks. In Leanyer 2, we have

330 allotments; in Leanyer 3, we have a total of 293; and, in Karama 1, we have a total of 371 lots. All of these are now being turned off and will roll off over the next 2 years. In Karama 2, we have a total of 143 lots being turned off and, in Brinkin, we have a total of 168 lots being turned off. Of those, a significant component from subdivisions, ranging from zero to about 40%, is being purchased back by the government for Housing Commission purposes.

In Alice Springs, we have 2 subdivisions being prepared by private enterprise at the moment, totalling 362 lots: one in Sadadeen and one in Araluen. In Katherine, we have the Transport and Works subdivision of which 14 lots were auctioned on 29 July and an additional 21 lots have been scheduled for auction on 3 December. In the Katherine east residential subdivision, we have 139 residential lots. The first will be turned off in May 1981. The turn-off of the Katherine east industrial subdivision is also due in June 1981.

In Tennant Creek, we have a similar position. I know the member for Arnhem, quite rightly, will ask about the figures for Arnhem. I have addressed myself repeatedly to the difficulties that we are facing there, not least of which is the non-availability of land upon which to develop. In Tennant Creek, the hobby farms are currently under construction and we also have 80 allotments in stage 1 of the Weaver Road subdivision which are due for completion on 3 July 1981. It can be clearly demonstrated that this government is doing more per capita within its resources than probably any other state or authority in this nation. Of course, that is only marginal compared with what we are doing and have been doing in the housing area. It is a fact that the Housing Commission, in terms of capital expenditure, is providing 28% more houses this financial year than it did last year, notwithstanding the increases in cost. That amount adds up to \$70.8m.

If we turn to the Housing Commission waiting list, and this is not something of which we can be proud but, when we take account of the resources available to the government compared with measures available to the rest of the country, it is quite a commendable performance indeed. In the Northern Territory, the average waiting time - and this takes into account very long periods in some smaller areas - is 1.3 years. In Victoria it is 3 years; in New South Wales, 4 years; in South Australia, 4 years; and, in Western Australia, 4 years. In completions per population of 100,000 people, the Northern Territory this year will lead the rest of this country. In New South Wales, the completions per 100,000 is 0.58; in Victoria 0.48; in Queensland 0.28; in South Australia 1.4; in Western Australia 0.61; and in Tasmania 1.96. In 1978-79, the Northern Territory figure was 3.97 and, this year, it will be 4.05. Quite clearly, we are leading the completions of public homes in this country by a ratio of well over 4 to 1 in most cases and, certainly, the best state in the Commonwealth by about 3.5 to 1. That is notwithstanding that our cost per building on these completions is higher than anywhere else in Australia. Quite clearly, this government is doing all it can be reasonably expected to do to solve that problem and solve that problem it will.

Mr Speaker, in addition to this massive turn-off of land which we have facilitated through our initiative and this very inordinate level of public housing construction, we are running the Home Loans Scheme. What more does the opposition want? It says there is a problem. This government does not just say there is a problem; it does something about it. Since the introduction of the Home Loans Scheme on 1 October last year until the end of the last month, the Housing Commission approved 884 loans. The total value is \$32.9m. That is in addition to the massive program which I have just outlined in this Assembly as a method of solving the problem. We are not just bellyaching about it; we are doing something about it.

By way of comparison, the honourable Leader of the Opposition addressed himself to the disparity between the Northern Territory Home Loans Scheme and that which can, admittedly, be reasonably offered by banks. I have noted his comments carefully. Of course, I will be looking into that matter shortly.

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

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I move that the Minister for Education be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the Assembly although I did not expect it. As I previously outlined, it is my view that only people who are responsible for the legislation before the Assembly should have their time extended.

To conclude what I was saying, the trading banks and savings banks in the Territory loaned \$24m for housing in the 2 years to March 1980. The Leader of the Opposition has made a very valid point that, given the sort of Home Loans Scheme that the Northern Territory has introduced, there is little incentive to go to trading banks. Since a spokesman for the banks took it upon himself, as is his right, to pass some comments by way of a letter to the editor of the Centralian Advocate, I must say that I fully accept that. The government in setting up the Home Loans Scheme wanted to give an impetus to home purchase and construction in the Northern Territory and, like any other policy, it is subject to some review.

What I objected to about the way the banks have gone about their business, and I am fully conscious that this is going into the public record, is the numerous people who come to me and explain the attitude of banks and their dealings with clients of many years standing. What it amounts to is not only unwillingness to lend money but advice to them as to how to go about getting it in a way that is totally to the advantage of the banks. Perhaps a person wants to consolidate various mortgages into a unit mortgage. That to me is the role of the bank: to debt restructure. These are the sorts of complaints I am receiving. Instead of the bank looking at it as a package and coming up with first mortgage finance on a house, which is low interest mortgage - 10.5% at the present time - the banks are saying they do not have money for that. 'We cannot give you \$25,000 for that purpose but, given your income, I know that that is all you will obtain from the Home Loans Scheme. But, it is \$25,000 short of what you need. Therefore, you shall go to the Home Loans Scheme people and borrow \$25,000 at government interest rates. We will lend you the balance on a second mortgage at the interest rate applying to that'. That is what upsets me. It is this sort of thing which, in addition to the very valid points made by the Leader of the Opposition, must force any government to review a policy which it entered into in good spirit and in good faith.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to be taken the wrong way by the banking institutions. I have friends in that field. It is the responsibility of the government to review these sorts of decisions. I do not blame the banks for it. After all, that is good business practice. It is not necessarily the sort of thing which gets people into homes in the Northern Territory at reasonable interest rates. There you have it. The Northern Territory government is applying more resources in these critical areas than any other similar government would be able to do in the Northern Territory. We are only able to do this by the careful husbanding of those resources available to us. We cannot achieve that by a blind following of the principles which seem to be held dear on the opposite side of this Assembly; that is, no matter what it is we are talking about, if it is in the interests of the humanities area, then we

automatically must increase our allocation.

Mr Speaker, I support the bill.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): I rise this afternoon to touch on several aspects of the budget. I believe that the impact of the budget in the rural areas, particularly in my own area, has been tremendous. Honourable members would know that Tennant Creek is no different from anywhere else in the Territory when it comes to a shortage of accommodation. I can only say that I am extremely pleased with the efforts made by the Housing Commission through its building program and through its Home Loans Scheme in the provision of accommodation in the town. I think its performance is all the more exemplary given the fact that it is contending with a growth rate that I think is far higher than anywhere else in the Territory.

As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, the meatworks which recently opened in Tennant Creek was designed to come into production at the rate of 120 animals a day. Within 9 months, that production level has been lifted to 400 a day and I believe that the meatworks are planning to kill next year with a starting figure of 700 animals a day. Consequently, the infrastructure required by the meatworks expanded incredibly and there was no way short of looking into a crystal ball that anybody could have foreshadowed the growth that would take place. When it first started off 12 months ago, the meatworks estimated that it would have 120 people on the payroll. It currently has 225 and looks like having more next year. That figure does not include the supporting industries such as the trucking organisations, Dalgety and the rest of the people who have come to town to support it.

On top of that, the Housing Commission, through the Home Loans Scheme, has tried to accommodate people who are moving in to support the smelter. As honourable members would be aware, the smelter is a project that will rise and fall with world prices. At the moment, it is up and the company is employing people at a great rate. It is expected that the workforce will increase by 400 to 600 people with the introduction of the smelter. Given the activities of the smelter, the meatworks and the normal growth of the town, I believe that the housing provisions and the land provisions are as good as can be expected with the efforts that are being made in that direction.

Borrooloola is a place that has been out of the way for many years. It is rather like Lake Nash in that it is on the edge of everybody's mind and receives the minimum attention. Remote areas such as this are at last getting a measure of government attention. The 60 people in that community will be provided with basic facilities such as housing, electricity and water. They have never had these on a community basis before. I think the move in that direction is to be commended.

The only program that we can improve upon in the immediate future that will enhance industry generally and also the profitability of the cattle industry and the meatworks is upgraded road networks to allow people to clear animals from their properties to the meatworks. When I say 'clear' animals, I mean transport them in such a manner that they are not 50% bruised and a loss to the farmer. If we are to obtain the best benefit out of our cattle industry, we need improved roads. Certainly, a great start has been made this year in my electorate.

The area that I would particularly like to touch on this afternoon is health. The 1981 budget for health services is made up of \$74m for salaries and payments in the nature of salaries. Administration and other services

have been allocated \$2.3m. On the recurrent expenditure side, the \$74m is split into 2 parts: one is for the operation of the Department of Health proper, with an allocation of \$70.1m, and the other \$4.1m is devoted to grants-in-aid for various community organisations, \$50,000 for drug education and \$6,000 for Australian encephalitis control.

During the budget debate, one of the honourable members opposite raised the issue of the amount of money apportioned to the various women's centres throughout the Northern Territory. The Dawn House facility in Darwin has been funded by the government. It has been funded because it can comply with the rules that the department has set down for funding organisations under the grants-in-aid scheme. Whatever honourable members may say, I am of the firm belief that, when we allocate money to an organisation, it is not unreasonable that the organisation account for every last cent of what it spends. Most certainly, that situation did not exist with some of the people who were benefiting from the hand-outs in previous years.

This year's allocation provides for 2 major items which did not appear in last year's budget. The first one is for the operation of the Casuarina Hospital for a full year and the second is for hospital maintenance services within the health system which were previously carried out by the Department of Transport and Works. It will be appreciated that, when these 2 major items are discounted, the overall increase of \$9.2m in this year's budget compares favourably with the expenditure in 1979-80 and will represent a noticeable achievement in cost containment.

I should say that the per capita cost of health services in the Northern Territory has fallen serially over the past 3 years from \$714 to \$671 to \$643. It is our endeavour to bring these costs down as low as possible in the interests of the taxpayer. The total increase in the Health Department's budget over the last year's expenditure was 13.5%. This is accounted for, in part, by an additional \$3.26m for the running of Casuarina and Darwin Hospitals over the provision for last year and hospital maintenance adds a further \$2.1m to the budget not provided for in 1979-80.

I should also like to point out that, of the total allocation, 64.2% is spent on personnel, salaries, overtime etc, 27% on administrative expenses, 3% on capital equipment and the remainder on miscellaneous items such as grants-in-aid. This section of the Health budget increased by 0.6%. \$4.1m has been set aside for this purpose. The major recipient of this money is the St John Council for the Northern Territory. The Territory owes a great deal to St John personnel who give unselfishly of their time. I am very pleased that St John has willingly accepted the responsibility for ambulance services throughout the Territory. As you know, it is also involved in raising funds from the public to supplement our assistance. I am sure honourable members, Mr Speaker, will agree that the \$1.56m provided by the government for this organisation is money well spent. The government also provides just under \$1.4m to missions throughout the Territory to assist with capital and operating costs of their health services. Once again, the government is appreciative of the work being done by the missions in this health field and we are very pleased to be able to assist in every way.

The Australian Red Cross is a major recipient of Health funds. The Territory government provides 60% of the operating costs of the blood transfusion service and, in 1980-81, this sum will be \$232,000.

A further major item is the allocation of \$195,000 to Aboriginal community councils' capital and operating subsidies. The government has provided

financial assistance from Health funds to the Numbulwar, Croker Island, Oenpelli and Peppimenarti Councils. The Aputula Housing Association also benefits. The amounts range from \$22,000 to Aputula to \$44,000 to Croker.

The government has also provided \$80,000 each to the Forster Foundation and to the Darwin and District Alcohol and Drug Dependency Foundation to these bodies in their battles against drug and alcohol addiction. Organisations interested in women's welfare, such as Dawn House, Family Planning, Pregnancy Help, Childbirth Education and the Aboriginal Womens Centre, will receive amounts totalling \$119,000. Other groups receiving financial assistance are the Territory Spastics Association, the Salvation Army Sunrise Centre, the Aboriginal and Islander Medical Service, the Salvation Army Crisis Centre, the Child Accident Prevention Foundation and the Missionary Franciscan Sisters.

Turning to the capital works projects, \$2,085,000 has been provided. An amount of \$70,000 is allocated for the uplift of 2 demountables in Alice Springs. One of these has been given to the Womens Centre for its accommodation and the other one will be moved out to Gillen as accommodation for the Health Centre there. In Alice Springs, we are providing on campus accommodation for medical staff at a cost of \$300,000. There is also \$700,000 for on campus accommodation at Casuarina. In Alice Springs, the conversion of the Liebig and Sonder nurses quarters to self-contained 3-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 1-bedroom flats is also on the program at a cost of \$580,000.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, could I state quite categorically that there is no question of financial or staff cuts in this budget and any talk of this would be quite wrong. However, what the Department of Health has to do is to seek higher levels of cost benefit and cost effectiveness so that we are able to improve and develop our health services through increased efficiency to obtain as great as possible a dividend for the community. We have the highest per capita outlay in Australia - \$660 per year for every man, woman and child living in the Territory.

I am particularly encouraged with the progress that is being made within the Health Department to have its organisation operate as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. As honourable members would notice, the amount of money that has been set aside is a very sizeable proportion of the government's budget. Anything we can do to save money in this area and still provide for the community's health needs is something that I am very conscious of striving towards.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, an aside made a moment ago by the honourable member for Nightcliff gave me a pointer as to how I should start my discussion of the bill. The honourable member for Nightcliff indicated that she considered it unfortunate that, if the public wished to become members of the St John Ambulance, they had to pay a subscription fee and, if they are not members but they avail themselves of the services of the St John Ambulance, they have to pay a fee despite the fact that the government is subsidising to some extent the operations of this very worthy organisation.

This brought to mind an increasing number of articles and editorial comments, especially in the Fairfax papers, that have concentrated on describing the Northern Territory as a mendicant area and its population as a cosseted group of people over the last several months since the Northern Territory commenced its campaign to have the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link completed. Obviously, with increasing development and the increasing attention that the Northern Territory will gain down south, we will come under the increasing scrutiny of critical journals such as those that I mentioned. I certainly

would not agree with the Sydney Morning Herald which I consider has adopted an extremely parochial attitude to the Northern Territory in the past. If its attitude to the Northern Territory is anything to judge it by, it is no wonder that it is having circulation difficulties and financial difficulties. The same applies to the Financial Review.

The fact is that people down south, not just newspapers but various learned institutes, commercial organisations and ordinary people in the street, will take an increasing interest in how their money is spent. The honourable member for Nightcliff keeps referring to the Northern Territory taxpayer with great respect yet the people who live in the Territory pay less than one tenth of the bill for running the Northern Territory every year. It is the Australian taxpayer who foots the bill and we must try to run as efficient a ship as possible so that we can keep convincing that Australian taxpayer, through the Australian government which reacts to the sort of criticism which we see in the papers about the Northern Territory as being a cosseted, hot-house economy, that we are bringing down budgets, spending money and obtaining the maximum value for the taxpayer's dollar here in the Northern Territory.

To take up one point earlier than I had intended, were we to ask for money to amortise a continuing subsidy on electricity - and this will become a bone of increasing contention between the Territory and Australia in the future - I think the Commonwealth would look at any reasonable proposition. It surprised me that the opposition brought that matter of so-called urgent public importance forward this morning because I referred to the Treasurer's speech on the budget and I see that there is a remark in the Treasurer's speech which refers to an amount of \$700,000 which is budgeted for planning and investigations for the proposed coal-fired power-station for Darwin. You might have thought that the appropriate time for the opposition to take up the matter of a future power source for Darwin would have been in a budget debate but it significantly ignored that item last week; there was absolutely no comment on it. I take the view that the exercise this morning was purely political and I think that that is borne out by the fact that this significant item of not less than \$700,000 has been completely ignored in the budget debate by the opposition.

Mr Speaker, the subject of electricity really causes me concern. I do not think that there is any subject that causes me greater concern. We can press for railways and obtain railways, we can start universities and we can get agricultural projects going. All these things can happen but, without electricity that we can generate and sell at costs comparable with elsewhere in Australia, then we are laughing at the moon if we think that we will attract industry to the Northern Territory. It is for that reason that a continuing debate goes on in the Northern Territory government, in the Northern Territory Cabinet, in the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy and in the Electricity Commission as to the future electricity options for the Top End especially. Are we to close off any of these options? I certainly would hope not because it is an active debate in Cabinet, in this Assembly and in the community that will help eventually to arrive at what may be a long-term resolution of the Northern Territory's energy problems. I take objection and issue with both the member for Arnhem and the honourable Leader of the Opposition that I have made any statement at all proposing a nuclear power plant. I have made statements as a result of my overseas visit and in the course of my overseas visit when interviewed.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): A point of order, Mr Speaker! We are talking about the budget. The subject alluded to by the honourable Chief Minister is in the context of the different debate this morning which was a matter of public importance and has nothing to do with the budget debate.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order!

Mr EVERINGHAM: I have made statements in the course of my overseas travels that what I have seen over there convinced me that the use of nuclear power to generate electricity results in safe, clean and cheap electricity. I totally reject statements made by members opposite that there have been any contradictory statements issued by me.

What are we looking for in the matter of electricity? We are looking for a very large source of electricity generation. The cost of generation today in the Territory I think runs at something like 13 cents. The cost of using coal we are told will not materially reduce that cost. What are the other options? We are told that we should be looking at gas and we certainly are looking at gas. We are looking at hydro, we have looked at tidal and we are looking at solar. Why shouldn't we look at nuclear? Obviously, it is the duty of the Northern Territory government, especially when we see what is happening overseas, to look at all of these things. We would be failing in our duty if we did otherwise. In France, for instance, electricity produced by nuclear means costs half as much as coal-fired power and significantly less than half as much as oil-fired power. Of course, France is in much the same position as the Northern Territory in terms of resources in that it does not have oil and it does not have extensive deposits of coal. For strategic purposes, it wants to keep that coal in the ground. The French are going all out for nuclear power despite what we have been told to the contrary. I might say that the British, who have been generating electricity by nuclear means for close to 30 years, have so far managed to accumulate enough nuclear waste to fill one average-sized suburban home.

Mr B. Collins: Why didn't you tell us all this this morning?

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am speaking to a relevant item in the budget debate. I have already made the point that the debate this morning was nothing more than unnecessary grandstanding. The opposition should have treated this item in the budget debate with the degree of respect that it apparently thinks it warrants; that is, if it had read the budget papers or listened to the Treasurer's speech.

We are told too that there are vast accumulations of rods. Those rods are accumulating solely because of a presidential political decision which precludes the reprocessing of these rods in the United States. In Britain and France, the rods are reprocessed and the remaining waste is stored. As I said, there have been power-stations pumping out electricity into the grid for almost 30 years and the English have managed to accumulate a very small number of tonnes of nuclear waste. Furthermore, the British and the French are quite convinced that vitrification is the solution to the waste problem. What is more, I do not believe that they consider it necessary to store it deep in the ground. I believe that it can be stored by more conventional means.

In any event, the sole burden of my argument this afternoon is to say that, where we are spending \$700,000 on planning for this coal-fired power-station, I believe that the Territory will probably have to have the coal-fired power-station but no responsible government could ignore an alternative and that alternative is being discussed publicly. Once again, we find the opposition trying to stifle debate. It is trying to say that the Northern Territory government must not consider the nuclear option. If that is not trying to stifle debate, then what is? Mr Speaker, the same obnoxious tactic, the same mud-slinging is tried on whenever anyone wants to say something about the racial relations - for instance, there was an attempt to stifle you, Mr Speaker - that is contrary to the opposition's point of view. The mud-slinging

starts, the obnoxious stuff comes out and we are told we cannot consider this option.

Just before I leave the topic, I consider that - and I said it back in April - the honourable Leader of the Opposition, in putting forward the proposal that Darwin's power be generated by natural gas in the foreseeable future, is taking the most irresponsible attitude that I have ever seen taken by any political leader. As I said at that time, if we went for natural gas now, we would be kicked out all right because there would be no power, there would be no refrigerators, there would be no fans and there would be no air-conditioners. There would be no electricity because there is no proven natural gas. The honourable member for Arnhem said there is. He knows as well as I that the amount of natural gas that is available in Western Australia to act as a booster for the proposed transmission line from the Ord to Darwin is, at the most optimistic estimate, a mere 30 megawatts. A more realistic estimate places it in the order of 10 megawatts. The honourable member for Arnhem knows that we are looking at something like 300 megawatts. That is the sort of twisted, distorted argument that is put forward. On the argument about Jervis Bay, the feasibility study was done 10 years ago and it was served up today as being accurate on point. How can one attach any credibility to the people who advance arguments of that sort at all? They certainly lose any credibility and respect with me when they continue to push these vehicles for the sake of cheap political gain. Why they are trying to create panic at this stage, one just would not know.

I thought I would say something about the police because there have been many fanciful stories passed around the countryside about the Northern Territory Police Force. We have been told that there are budgetary cutbacks and so on. I must say that, at a time when the budget is over \$100m in excess this year of that appropriated last year, it is extraordinary that we are talking in terms of cutbacks. Only the illogical people with whom we are dealing could speak in those terms. I would say that, although we are not in a period of budget cuts, we are in a period of what we might call excessive bids. Whilst I certainly do not apply that to the police, I think that some people who had excessive bids which did not necessarily succeed have been talking in terms of budget cuts. We were told by the honourable member for Victoria River - I think it was in a public place - recently that police in outlying areas are concerned that a restriction on patrols to no more than 10 kilometres from their bases will cause inconvenience to both police and outback residents. The article also quoted an incident at Hayes Creek when police had advised that they could not assist because of the 10 kilometre travel restriction. The police did attend to the incident at Hayes Creek and at no time was the police action affected by the travel restriction. Currently, the police department has implemented a policy of patrol radius limitations for the purpose of controlling the use of official police vehicles.

I might say also that the Police Commissioner has adopted, perhaps more wholeheartedly than any other government instrumentality, the government's energy policy. We see detectives driving around in Toyota Coronas whereas previously they had squad cars. I might say that it has not always been easy but the Police Commissioner sincerely adopts the government's energy conservation policies and these instructions have been put out, in his words, 'for good housekeeping'.

The patrol radius limitations simply mean that, if members are required to perform routine patrols outside the respective limitation which applies to their district, then prior approval is to be obtained from the divisional offices. The policy is under constant review but its introduction does not,

under any circumstances, prevent any police officer from attending immediately to any emergency situation within or without his district requiring police attention.

I am firmly of the view that the police administration is efficient. The allocation to the police in the time that I have been responsible ministerially for the force has grown from \$12m to in excess of \$20m this year and that is a considerable growth in that time even allowing for inflation. I mentioned the other day that the force is about 100 men stronger than it was at the time that the Northern Territory executive first became responsible for it. If anyone wants to talk about resignations from the police force, I can remember one of the first days when I was Majority Leader. I used to have to approve police resignations for some obscure reason. There were 14 resignations in one day and they used to go through like the sands through that hourglass. The police have a difficult job. Morale will always be a problem in a police force that is spread over such a large area. They will always have problems and their problems are not assisted by the hectoring and other lecturing that they receive from some of the honourable members opposite from time to time. That will always affect their morale. You will have wives of policemen who are posted to remote areas who simply will not go. Men resign for that reason and for all sorts of reasons. Women resign for various reasons. However, I believe the morale of the police force at present is as good as it has ever been and I honestly believe that the Northern Territory Police Force could not have a better commissioner than it has.

We also heard some hope that the Conservation Commission would be able to continue to do something of a fairly minor order. At the time, I made a note of it but I have lost the note. I am quite sure that the Conservation Commission this year is pretty well provided for. Its recurrent expenditure is of the same order as last year's. I am pleased to have the support of the Leader of the Opposition; I was very glad that he was supporting the government thrust so completely because the government recognised the need to contain recurrent expenditure so that we can build up the infrastructure which the Leader of the Opposition so rightly says we must have. However, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. If you want the infrastructure, then you have to hold down the recurrent expenditure. For that reason, the Conservation Commission's total budget this year is up in the order of \$3.5m. When you consider that its budget is in the order of \$10m, that is quite a massive increase. That increase, of course, is very largely accounted for - I think \$3m of it - in providing infrastructure for the Yulara Tourist Village at Ayers Rock. Those are the sorts of things that we should be doing and we will continue to do.

There is no doubt that many of the problems of the Northern Territory that are brought forward in this Assembly are legitimate problems. There is a lack of housing and a need to build more schools. These are problems of growth. All I can say is that I am thankful they are problems of growth and not problems of recession. This government will do everything it can to see that we continue to grow. Wherever you go, you find that growing communities experience growth pains. Who amongst us would have the temerity to say that he could have foreseen in 1976 or 1977 the extent of growth that has taken place in the Northern Territory in the last few years? The government cannot claim credit for all of it or even the major part of it. Certainly, we do everything we can to encourage growth. We have seen growth in mining, in fishing and in tourism.

The pastoral industry has got back onto its feet and so the Territory is on the go. We do not want to stop that; we want to underpin it. This government wants to underpin that growth by putting as much money as we possibly can towards the infrastructure that is necessary to see that it

continues - roads, harbour facilities, bridges etc.

That brings me of course to aerodromes. There was some criticism because funds are proposed to be devoted to the reconstruction of aerodromes in some Aboriginal communities. It was said, and I suppose it is a construction that one could put on it, that the Chief Minister has backed Northern Airlines' bad commercial decision to buy Metroliners with money to reconstruct these airstrips so that they can be used by Metroliners. All I can say is that airstrips have always been regarded as part of the essential services vote for Aboriginal communities in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs days. It is true that there is a considerable sum of money proposed to be devoted this year for the reconstruction of these aerodromes. If we asked them, I wonder how many of the communities affected would say to us, 'Do not proceed with the reconstruction of our airstrip'.

I have received representations from a considerable number of these communities over a period of years that they want a better air service. For that, they must have a better airstrip. The decision taken by Northern Airlines - and I have attempted to examine it as closely as I can - was an inevitable one. Its options were fairly limited. To provide the sort of air service that is wanted, it was required to purchase a turbo-prop-powered aircraft. There were 3 of those on the market and the performance of the Metroliner is the highest of the 3. Because it has the highest performance, it requires the best operating conditions. It is also a pressurised airliner and the other airliners that were available are unpressurised and cannot fly at the altitudes that are available to the Metroliner. It is quite all right to have the Metroliner on the Ayers Rock run but we are supposed to have a different sort of airliner on the Arnhem Land run. All I can say is that everyone knows - and Qantas is the finest example of this - if you want to run an economic fleet, you try to rationalise the number and type of aircraft that you have. If we want Northern Airlines to go down the drain, we will insist that it have 19 aircraft of different types, one for every different run. That would be just the sort of thing that honourable members opposite would be likely to suggest.

This is a growth budget. There is no doubt that the Territory is on the move. The complaints and the representations from the members opposite all indicate that and I have no hesitation in supporting this bill.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): I take the opportunity to touch on a number of points raised by various members in the second reading of the Appropriation Bill. The Leader of the Opposition said that we had the opportunity to do something constructive with this budget. He was referring particularly to employment, housing and welfare areas. However, he said we missed the boat. He described it as an 'anti-people budget' and said that crucial areas had not been given attention. I will look at a couple of the matters that he raised for particular attention and see how they turn out.

Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition said that the capital works program was insufficient and that it was only 14% of the total budget whereas last year it had been 17.6%. He is playing on figures to relate every budgetary allocation to the size of the budget itself. Budgets grow and sometimes shrink from time to time for various reasons. I think it is quite inappropriate to refer in these situations to a percentage of the budget. The Leader of the Opposition said that growth in cash was minimal in the capital works program. However, he chose to ignore the government policy which affected this year's capital works program inasmuch as this was the year that we have undertaken to have private subdividers turn off land for us in Darwin, and very successfully as well. This has meant that government funds did not have to be put towards this particular aspect. I am talking of some millions of dollars.

The repairs and maintenance program is, in fact, about \$23m, excluding roads. That is a substantial amount. The entire Housing Commission construction and maintenance program was ignored in the Leader of the Opposition's figures, as was NTEC's capital works program. The government construction at Jabiru is allocated \$10m this year - about 90% increase on last year. The Jabiru Town Development Authority received \$1m last year for construction. Nevertheless, we are told that government funds are minimal this year and, as a result, there will be all sorts of trouble. His comments in that regard are quite off beam.

The Leader of the Opposition also made a rather odd statement. He said that, because unemployment grew in the Northern Territory over the last year, that was a demonstration that our job creation policies had failed. We would dispute that fact. The Northern Territory does have high levels of unemployment and we have never denied that. I believe it has always had a high level of unemployment. Unemployment is very fluid. Indeed, if the Territory was able to employ all the unemployed in the Territory tomorrow, I believe that, in 6 months or 12 months, we would be back with figures equalling the national average or even higher than the national average. It is the nature of unemployment in this country.

Mrs Lawrie: Who has been in charge of the country for the past few years?

Mr PERRON: Not the Northern Territory government.

Mrs Lawrie: No, your mates in Canberra.

Mr PERRON: Are we discussing the Northern Territory budget or otherwise?

Mrs Lawrie: We are discussing the Northern Territory budget and what you can do about unemployment locally. It seems to be precious little.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, nothing that the Leader of the Opposition or any other members in the opposition ranks say can take away from the fact that there have been thousands more people employed in the Northern Territory every year. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the numbers of employed persons in the Northern Territory show that, from July 1979 to June 1980, the workforce increased by 2,800 persons. The CES figures indicate that, from August 1979 to July 1980, another 12-month period, unemployment actually fell by a mere 24 persons. The figures demonstrate clearly that unemployment numbers are not a measure of economic viability. The Territory is getting on with economic development, is creating jobs and is maintaining a high unemployment level. I don't think that that factor is relative. As a matter of fact, the member for MacDonnell, again without proper instructions from his leader, admitted that unemployment in the Territory was largely imported. He also admitted that things were really happening.

The Leader of the Opposition said that we were only fiddling with payroll tax calculations and implied that we were insincere in this regard because it is a growth tax and we are still going to get substantial revenue from payroll tax. That attitude to tax cuts is simply astounding. Of course payroll tax is a growth tax. That is why it has been so difficult for the states to cut back on it. That is why it has been an attractive tax to always increase. The Leader of the Opposition simply dismissed a 10% across-the-board cut in payroll tax as fiddling. The Territory is the first in this country to take that sort of initiative and he says it has virtually no effect because the Northern Territory is not forgoing revenue. We are quite clearly forgoing revenue. I mentioned in the budget debate that we would be forgoing something like \$1m,

possibly more. Admittedly, we are getting more in payroll tax than we did last year. That is the growth tax aspect of payroll tax. But it is absolute nonsense to try to dismiss it as merely an insincere attempt at dressing up a budget. Payroll tax is growing in the Northern Territory because jobs are growing, wages are growing, investment is growing, population is growing - every sector of enterprise in the Territory is growing. The Northern Territory's move in payroll tax in this regard is the most progressive that has been made by any government in Australia in order to further stimulate the private sector into creating more jobs and more growth.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would suggest that a similar attitude should be taken to cuts in personal income tax or company tax. They are growth taxes as well. Would that be just fiddling and should governments not even bother making percentage reductions in those taxes because that would be insincere? Payroll tax and stamp duty are major indicators of economic activity. In the Territory, in both areas, it could be termed hyperactivity. In July 1980, monthly payroll tax receipts grew by 67% over the July 1979 collection. Stamp duty collected in the September quarter this year was 60.3% above the same period for last year. I doubt that any other area in this country could come anywhere near those growth figures. They are remarkable figures and it is a sign of the remarkable things that are happening in the Territory.

The Leader of the Opposition forecast last year when speaking to the budget that the Territory could not possibly keep that high level of spending on roads because we had put a substantial amount of money into it and that there simply had to be a crash in the road-contracting industry; it would simply collapse and it was an irresponsible move of the government. He quoted that our road spending has fallen 11.3% this year. I have had officers of Treasury try to almost twist the figures to work out how the Leader of the Opposition arrived at some of his figures but we cannot seem to come up with them. In fact, construction, repairs and maintenance on roads in the Territory - and they have to be lumped together, particularly if we are talking about the effect on the industry because the same contractors are doing repairs and maintenance as are constructing roads - came to \$45m in 1979-80 and will be \$47.5m in 1980-81. It is not a large increase but it is an increase. It is not an 11.3% reduction in spending on roads. The government is continuing its high-level commitment to roads and talk of contracting companies collapsing is absolute nonsense. If they do collapse, it certainly will not be a result of any short-fall in government funds allocated towards roads.

On the subject of housing, we were told last week that we should be condemned. We failed to address the emergency accommodation situation and ignored the low-cost accommodation sector. The Minister for Lands and Housing has given some figures on housing and I think I could best sum up by saying that this government spends more money per head of population on public housing than any state in Australia and I include Labor states, those people famous for looking after the person on low income - supposedly at the expense of the rest of the community.

I would also suggest that we spend a greater percentage of our budget on housing than any state. I accept that that is an argument that I said the Leader of the Opposition should not use - percentage of total budget. But we have, in fact, provided \$8m more this year for housing than we did in the previous year - that is direct. On top of the disproportionate expenditure on public housing construction - as the Minister for Lands and Housing pointed out, we build at least twice the accommodation units of any state in Australia and the figure goes up to 14 times in the case of Queensland - we constructed government staff housing and funded the most generous home loans scheme in

Australia. Further than that, funds are directed towards accommodating persons in emergent circumstances through areas like the Department of Community Development which last year paid out \$43,000 in grants to people who were in straitened circumstances.

Honourable members might say that it is fine for the Housing Commission but it is not addressing the situation of a low-income earner who is really in desperate need of accommodation. Well, 25% of all Housing Commission tenants are entitled and, in fact, are receiving housing rental rebates which enable them to pay as low as \$7 a week rent for a quite comfortable standard of accommodation.

The Housing Commission has one of the shortest waiting lists for accommodation in Australia. It is not simply good enough to just dismiss those figures or to say: 'That is beside the point'. If your waiting list is one week old, then someone will have to wait a week for accommodation. If it is pouring rain and their children have the flu, that simply is not good enough. It is quite obvious that no government can possibly accept the responsibility to house every single person who chooses to come to the Northern Territory without making arrangements for accommodation. That seems to be the view that has been purveyed in the Territory for months and months over this emergency accommodation situation. In fact, a great deal is done. Organisations are funded all over the place to house people in emergent circumstances. Sure, we cannot meet all their needs. I do not believe that we ever will be able to, and I do not believe that it is the government's responsibility to meet every one of those person's needs.

We have put a lot of our resources into assisting the private sector - into home loans - to encourage people to buy houses or to have houses built. All of this relieves the pressure on Housing Commission accommodation which in turn can keep housing lists fairly short. In the 11 months from December 1979 to October 1980, 89 units of accommodation were allocated by the Housing Commission. At around about 2 or 3 persons per unit of accommodation - and I am putting that figure in myself because I do not have one - we are talking about housing possibly up to 6,000 persons per year through the Housing Commission. Admittedly, the Housing Commission is building about 600 new units each year which means there is a high turnover of persons in ordinary Housing Commission accommodation. That is no doubt reflected partly by people who are going into the private sector and buying their own homes and is a result in part of this government's initiatives. It is all helping to provide more and more accommodation for those persons who are unable to afford it elsewhere. There are still people without adequate accommodation as I am sure there are all over Australia. When you are in a situation where the population is growing at 5% or 6%, I do not see how you cannot expect some problems in the area of accommodation. We do far more already than anyone else in this country in this regard.

The Leader of the Opposition used some other interesting figures. He stated that, of loan approvals under the Northern Territory's Home Loans Scheme only 40% of them were catering to people on \$260 per week income or less. Apart from that being wrong, I ask how the Northern Territory government is supposed to loan 100% of its loan approvals to persons in this very low income bracket if indeed they do not apply. You can only process applications that are made by individuals. If the figure happens to be 40% or 89%, provided those persons who are eligible are getting their loans approved - there is no shortage of funds as the government has undertaken that this loans scheme will be funded - then I do not know what we are supposed to do about turning 40% into 100%. In fact, the figures are that 72% of loans approved in 1979-80 were made to

persons earning less than \$260 per week. It is 72% and not 40% as we have been told by the Leader of the Opposition. In the period 1 July 1980 to 31 October 1980, the percentage of persons on \$260 per week and less getting loans approved is 66% of the total. Again, where the 40% came from goodness knows. That figure was plucked out of the air. I guess we should not expect anything else; the opposition has been doing it for years. One just gets a little frustrated with it over a period.

The Leader of the Opposition had a few words to say about the welfare situation. He said that we should provide more details about where we have distributed the grants and subsidies of over \$1m. I can provide that information if honourable members care to write to me or ask a question on notice. I do not have the information prepared in detail before me for the budget debate.

There was some criticism of the decision not to fund the Northern Territory Council of Social Services. The honourable Leader of the Opposition said that this organisation has had an excellent record since 1972. From his point of view and the ALP's point of view, it may well have. Let us just have a look at the list of those organisations who are members. The honourable member for Fannie Bay had a particular interest in this area. She supported the organisation and suggested that it should continue to be funded by the Northern Territory government. This worthy organisation which, no doubt, has done some valuable work in the past is primarily, although not exclusively, a co-ordination agency. It has as members the Aboriginal Advisory and Development Services, Aboriginal Resource Centre, Brown's Mart, Childbirth Education Association, Chirstchurch Cathedral, Corporation of the City of Darwin, Crisis Line, Darwin Family Centres, Dawn House Womens Shelter, Darwin Youth Refuge, Department of Community Development, Environment Council - I am not quite sure what the Environment Council has to do with NTCOSS's functions - Family Planning Association, Handicapped Persons Association, Health Department, Homemaker Service, Natural Family Planning Council, NT Council for the Ageing, Migrant Resource and Settlement Centre, Scouts Association, Somerville Homes, St Mary's Child Family and Welfare Services, the Toy Library, YWCA and YMCA. Mr Speaker, 20 out of the 25 organisations I just read out are being funded by the government to the tune of in excess of \$1m and therefore we are contributing to the types of services that those organisations provide.

The member for Fannie Bay said that the Northern Territory government should help NTCOSS so it can support the government. I can only suggest that some of its support I can well do without. The honourable member for Fannie Bay also went on to some extent - in her support for NTCOSS and some of the work it has done in the past - about the survey that it had done in the Mall. It was a well-publicised survey seeking persons to register who felt they were in a homeless plight. Quite a number of people did go up to the desk and register that they were homeless. I am advised that, on the day of the survey, the Salvation Army had quite a number of empty beds in its emergency accommodation unit at that particular time. In fact, last weekend, 15 out of 25 beds in the Salvation Army emergency unit for accommodation were vacant. That was last weekend so I do not think that the situation is as bad as has been made out.

The Leader of the Opposition was concerned because he said we do not fund the Darwin Youth Refuge and that it was operating at \$1,000 a month loss. The information I have indicates that we are funding the Darwin Youth Refuge to the tune of \$52,000 per annum. If it is running at \$1,000 per month loss on top of that, I do not have very good words for the management.

The Leader of the Opposition said there was a critical need for grants-in-aid to be increased. I would like to run through a list with the names of organisations that we are funding. I will not give details of the amounts funded - although I will respond to more detailed questions on notice - because some groups are funded from various sources in government. There are varying amounts for different reasons and they can be taken out of context. I would like to point out, in response to broad statements that the Northern Territory government is not putting sufficient funds towards grants-in-aid to help institutions which are working in the welfare area, that those people being funded this year - and most of them were funded last year - are: St Vincent de Paul, YWCA of Darwin, Catholic Church Alice Springs, St Mary's Child and Family Welfare Service Alice Springs, Somerville Homes, Darwin Family Centres, Salvation Army and Brown's Mart. The Aboriginal organisations which are being funded are: Yirrkala Danbul Community Association, Milingimbi Community Council, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, and the Bamyili Community Council. Groups funded from the Department of Community Development Community Welfare Division are: Handicapped Persons Association of the NT, Northern Territory Association of Special Education, the Bindi Centre Alice Springs, Aged Persons, Australian Red Cross Old Timers Home Tennant Creek, Australian Inland Mission, Old Timers Home Alice Springs, Northern Territory Council for the Ageing, Northern Territory Pensioners Association, Tracy Lodge Aged Persons Hostel, Australian Red Cross Old Timers Home Katherine, Alice Springs Emergency Home Help Association, Australian Red Cross Darwin Branch, Home Help Service, Tennant Creek Pensioners Association, Crisis Line and YWCA on behalf of the Darwin Youth Refuge.

In addition to that, there are other groups funded by the Department of Health and my colleague, the Minister for Health, indicated some of those. To run through them quickly: Dawn House Womens Shelter, the Forster Foundation, the Darwin District Alcohol and Drug Dependence Foundation, Family Planning Association, Natural Family Planning, Pregnancy Help Incorporated, Childbirth Association, NT Spastics Association, Salvation Army Sunrise Centre, Aboriginal Womens Resource Centre and the Salvation Army Crisis Centre. These are just a few of those authorities. There are others that are funded by the Department of Health.

We were also advised during this second-reading debate that the government had done a nasty thing in that, after the elections, it had decided that its 50% airfare concession to pensioners every 2 years was a sneaky ploy. I notice that the ALP did not support our policy in this regard. Indeed, it never put up anything to parallel it. It chose to criticise the Northern Territory government which always has intended that the eligibility period would commence from July this year. It is mentioned in the budget debate. This government has moved quickly to introduce almost all of its election promises and some are still in the pipeline. We have nothing to hide whatsoever in regard to our commitment totally to assist pensioners to stay in the Territory as residents by allowing them government assistance to travel interstate from time to time. Whilst criticising the timing of the implementation of our scheme, the opposition does not even propose a similar scheme. Perhaps it does not want pensioners to stay in the Territory.

We are told that the 5-year plan to improve conditions and capital works on Aboriginal communities was not addressed properly in the budget. Members opposite just have not been reading the details. When the 5-year plan was tabled in this Assembly earlier in the previous Assembly, it was stated that it would cost \$25m a year for 5 years and that special assistance from the Commonwealth would be sought. We are still talking to the Commonwealth but, to date, the answer has been no. This government has put in something like

\$14m per annum for that program. We cannot pick up the entire amount; that is simply out of the question. Did we receive any support from the opposition in our bid to the Commonwealth or any calls for Commonwealth funding to address the needs on Aboriginal settlements? No, we simply have criticism in this Assembly. That is about all you could expect.

The Leader of the Opposition wanted an explanation why the Treasurer's Advance was lower as a percentage of total budget this year than it was last year. Again, I do not think that it is proper that we should set the TA in relation to the overall budget. It may relate from year to year but that is not how it is set. The Leader of the Opposition argued that we should probably have a smaller TA and use the usual transfer system which is available to us under the Financial Administration and Audit Act to transfer funds from one area to the other when we have circumstances that warrant the use of TA. This simply is not acceptable. In transferring funds from one area to another under those sections of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, you must have savings or you must curtail programs. The tabling of those transfers in this Assembly from time to time are where there have been savings and reallocations of funds. TA is largely designed to cover contingencies such as increases in fuel prices or wage indexation work value cases. One which may put pressure on TA this year is drought relief. We have not allocated any specific amount to any specific department. How can one estimate what demands on drought relief funds one will have? That is the type of funding.

The Leader of the Opposition said that, if we used the normal transfer system in lieu of TA, we would have the transfer funds tabled in the Assembly regularly and be given an opportunity to scrutinise them. I have been tabling transfer funds in this Assembly for nearly 3 years. I do not think anyone has scrutinised any of them yet. I do not think that that was a very good argument.

There was another suggestion that we should use Class A trust accounts. These do in fact represent the working balance of departments. Most of them have very large turnovers and working balances are used to fund the ongoing operations of organisations such as the Department of Transport and Works which spends in the vicinity of \$150m a year. To think that when an emergency arises you can simply dip your hand into trust account working balances is simply an insane administrative practice. Government would grind to a halt from time to time if that practice was adopted. Where I referred to the New South Wales government going around all of its statutory authorities grabbing the amounts they had in accounts, I was referring specifically to reserves which had been set aside by those authorities over the years for various purposes. In fact, they had socked away quite a substantial amount. Rightly, the New South Wales government sought to get its hands on some when it needed it. That is a different thing to talking about working balances of trust accounts.

The sales tax on freight rebate scheme was questioned. By way of explanation, I will read a couple of comments on how the scheme is progressing. Advertisements were placed in Territory newspapers calling for registration of Territory wholesalers and correspondence has been entered into with registered wholesalers to obtain satisfactory evidence of the amount of sales tax paid each month and the percentage of this amount attributable to freight.

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

Mr EVERINGHAM: I move that the Treasurer be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): As Treasurer, the percentage rebate to be applied to each named registered wholesaler will require my specific approval. Provision by each registered wholesaler each month of accepted evidence of payment of sales tax to the Australian Taxation Office will be required. Monitoring of the effects of the scheme by inspectors will be undertaken and a reassessment of percentages for rebate purposes annually or as applied for by the wholesalers concerned in changing circumstances will also be undertaken. By way of clarification, the scheme is not intended to cover sales tax on goods imported into Darwin.

The Leader of the Opposition did not propose a single alternative measure in the budget to that put forward by the government. He said that it was an 'anti-people' budget but he failed to tell us what the ALP would do other than one initiative to set up a state bank which would solve everyone's problems. He did not tell us where it would obtain money. Unfortunately, banks require money before they can disburse it to anyone at all.

The honourable member for MacDonnell spoke at some length about housing. He suggested, without being definitive, that the government institute some policy changes to overcome Housing Commission waiting times. He suggested 'a realistic commitment'. He did not quantify it. I do not know if he is suggesting we double or treble the Housing Commission's allocation. If he is, why did he not tell us where the funds are supposed to come from. He is probably not looking for solutions; he is simply looking to criticise.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay said that the information provided was completely inadequate. I do not know what we are supposed to provide. They are in opposition after all and, if they want complete access to the entire government so that they can do their homework, then they will have to work a little bit harder and obtain much more support from the electorate and maybe they can get into government.

Mrs O'Neil: What about the accounts committee you promised last year?

Mr PERRON: The honourable member mentions the accounts committee. The very same people who would be on an accounts committee or an expenditure committee are sitting in this very room supposedly having done their homework. Why does the opposition claim to need the entire Northern Territory Public Service to propose an alternative budget if it is supposedly an alternative government. Can it not propose tax cuts? It does not take a great brain to work out populations and the turnover of people and funds nor does it require the whole of the public service to decide whether you put more money into housing or less money into housing or whatever. It seems to me that it wants someone to do its work for it.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay was critical of the hit-and-run visit by the South Australian Symphony Orchestra. I do not know that there are many people who went to see them who would agree with her that we should do cost benefit studies before having such groups come to the Northern Territory. I thought it was very well supported. If we are to go to cost benefit studies in areas such as art funding, we probably would not have any such performances. I thought the idea was that the government was trying to have Territorians participate in some of the benefits that other Australians are able to have even if it is uneconomical.

The member for Nhulunbuy was critical of police allocations and the Chief Minister has dealt with that matter. He complained about housing in his electorate. If the member for Nhulunbuy really wants to do some good for his

community, he should start lobbying for an open town. Why should Nhulunbuy residents face poor competition in business because there is not enough land for businesses to establish and inadequate access to the rest of the Northern Territory? Second-rate land tenure and a tenuous right to enjoy beaches and recreation spots nearby is all they can have until the land tenure system changes. Surely the member for Nhulunbuy should be working to ensure that his constituents have the same opportunities across the board as other Territorians and not just stick with the old problem - which I admit is a problem - of housing in Nhulunbuy.

The member for Sanderson wanted swimming pools in schools. She did not tell us who was going to pay for them or run them, but then again that is one of the attractive parts of being in opposition: you have not responsibility to implement anything. What it costs does not really matter.

The Marriage Guidance Council is funded by the federal government to the tune of \$54,500, a 20% increase over last year and, in fact, that is twice the increase that any other state in Australia received in funding from this source.

The honourable member for Nightcliff was saying that we were wasting our money printing little yellow books. I will review whether we will supply them in future if that is the way honourable members ...

Mrs Lawrie: Have a good look at exactly what I said.

Mr PERRON: I will. In particular, the honourable member for Nightcliff demonstrated that narrow attitude which people have who believe that all problems result from government action or inaction and that all solutions to all problems should be found by the government. The member for Nightcliff felt that I would be furious at the phrase used in the explanatory documents of the Department of Community Development under 'Welfare Services'. She quoted: 'Community Services seeks to act as a catalyst for community self-action'. She was quite beside herself because she believes, as many others do, that there is no possible self-action other than criticism of government. She thought I should have been enraged at that statement because that implies in her mind that my department is encouraging people to lobby against the government. It just did not even dawn on her - excuse the pun - that the self-activation of organisation may in fact mean that some of them should be assisted to stand on their own feet. It did not even dawn on her. She was just so blind to the other aspects of the meaning of self-activation. She said that I should move quickly to have it stricken from the record.

Mrs Lawrie: I did not.

Mr PERRON: Not at all. I think they should increase their endeavours in this regard.

In summing up, the financial arrangements which enabled this budget to be introduced provided a greater growth in available funds than is the case elsewhere in Australia and, in addition to that, we have instituted tax cuts in the Territory. Every indicator that we can find in the economy in the Territory indicates that it is moving ahead at a remarkable speed. There are, in fact, growing pains and steps are being overtaken to overcome the problems that confront us. Still, this budget will continue the high levels of government activity right across the board to assist Territorians generally to get on with the job with perhaps a little bit less attention to the handout mentality which we seem to have heard so much about in this Assembly and in the press over the last couple of months.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Appropriations for divisions 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19:

Mr ISAACS: Mr Chairman, I asked in my second-reading speech if the Chief Minister could give an outline of the proposed expenditure for the Information Service. I would ask the Chief Minister to outline that expenditure?

Mr EVERINGHAM: As I said earlier, it was not a time of budget cuts but of excessive bids. The Information Service's bid for funds was \$613,000. It is natural enough. Every department heard there was an extra \$100m around to be split up this year and they think this year that they will realise all their dreams and so they put in for as much as possible. Ministers may trim this; departmental heads may trim it. In fact, it was trimmed to \$490,000 before it went to Cabinet. One does not know what other departments are putting in so one can only trim it in a subjective fashion. Cabinet, in fact, cut the amount down to \$390,000 from the original bid of \$613,000 and it is made up as follows: Northern Territory shows and displays - \$15,000; freelance journalists, photographers and graphic artists - \$41,000; audio-visual productions and films including press kit materials - \$40,000; purchase of photographic and audio-visual equipment - \$10,000; printing and publications - a booklet on Government House - \$15,000; pamphlet on Legislative Assembly members - \$2,500; pamphlet on the ministry - \$2,500; government directories - \$10,000; new promotional book - Horizons - \$15,000; and the Northern Territory Digest - \$15,000. I might mention that the Northern Territory does not have, as far as I know, one hard-covered promotional book prepared by the government despite the fact that every state has. In an attempt to keep costs down, all of our promotional books, although they are of good quality as far as I am concerned, are nevertheless soft covered and have a limited number of colours. To continue: manual of information sheets - \$10,000; stickers - \$35,000; flat booklets for July - \$10,000; insignia information folders - \$7,500; book - Way of Life - \$7,500; colour-slide press kits - \$12,500; black and white press kits - \$12,500; the 1980 self-government anniversary school kit - \$74,000; VIP presentation folders - \$10,000; and miscellaneous printing - \$10,000. That sub-total comes to \$249,000. Travel and subsistence is \$25,000 and incidentals are \$10,000. The total is \$390,000.

Mr ISAACS: I am pleased that the school kit cost \$74,000. The point of my question was that I was concerned that, since the Information Service has responsibility for publication and PR work and also each of the other departments sees that as part of its function as well, there should be no duplication. I would ask the Chief Minister what steps are taken, if any, to ensure that duplication does not exist in the various public relations areas?

Mr EVERINGHAM: As much as possible is done in this regard. The Information Service has the function of co-ordinating the dissemination of government information on policies, programs and the like. Of course, other departments do have requirements for their own publishing and information services. The Education Department and the Health Department, because of their specialised needs, have areas that prepare special educational publications and special health publications. The Department of Primary Production has a journalist who is responsible for the production of a journal for people in the rural areas. Recently, the Tourist Commission appointed a public relations officer but I think that appointment is justifiable. Certainly, the Conservation Commission has had from time to time a journalist seconded to it to prepare a special publication and do some other specialist work. As far as possible, I keep an eye on the duplication of any of these functions and we are very anxious to

keep costs as far down as possible whilst still maintaining a high standard of information to the people of the Northern Territory.

Mrs LAWRIE: I address a couple of questions to the Chief Minister. Whilst I realise it is difficult for him with the variety of responsibilities he has to shoulder to answer all the queries raised in the debate, the second reading of the Appropriation Bill is a specific area where members can bring to the attention of the relative government ministers specific concerns which are expressed by them in many cases on behalf of their constituents and other people of the Northern Territory who live outside their constituency but prefer to approach that particular member. With the greatest goodwill, I advise the Chief Minister that I refuse to be misquoted by the honourable Chief Minister. I did not intimate that the money which was allocated within the Northern Territory government was solely the concern of the people of the Northern Territory inasmuch as they perhaps were the only people contributing. May I reiterate what I said in regard to the advice in committee to the particular clause dealing with the Chief Minister's Department: 'We are certainly not appearing to get the best use at the moment out of the dollar raised in the Territory and from other Australian sources'. Now, I would like that on record as the Chief Minister this afternoon has chosen to ignore my particular comment.

Mr Chairman, I would ask the Chief Minister to reply to the queries I raised in the second reading regarding the inscrutability of the Chief Minister's documents. I did say: 'In dealing with a sum of \$746,000' - which I saw documented under sub-item 10 on page 23 of the explanatory booklet - 'there is a whole list of things under sub-item 10. We find "Minister, Members and Staff". I think that is it. I am talking about travel for honourable ministers - \$746,000. I would like to see a little breakdown of that \$746,000, getting close to \$1m, and of course I shall be seeking the information on notice'. I went on to say that I could be wrong about whether or not that was the particular item in the budget covering ministerial travel. I would ask the Chief Minister to indicate to the Assembly whether I was correct or whether I was wrong and, if I was wrong, to indicate to me the item in the Department of the Chief Minister's allocations which covers ministerial travel both at home and abroad. There is some interest abroad, pardon the pun, in this particular item.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I do not think there is any secret that sub-item 10, division 12, 202 relates to funds for travel by ministers and their staff and the Leader of the Opposition and his staff. It includes fares, charters and travelling allowance. The sum allocated for that is \$500,000. The rest of the sum, \$246,000, making a total of \$746,000, is made up as follows: electorate office expenses and rental, \$90,000; telephones, \$93,000; office machines, \$20,000; service charges, \$13,000; furniture and fittings, \$20,000; and incidentals, \$10,000.

Mrs LAWRIE: I thank the Chief Minister for the explanation. Could he also reply to my query about the \$54,000 on page 22 which is allocated for consultancy. I did say that it would be nice to know where that is being spent and for what purpose the consultants are being engaged. I also said it was a fairly small amount given the other figures mentioned today. Nevertheless, I thought enough about it to bring it to the attention of the Assembly in the second reading and I would have welcomed a reply in the Chief Minister's speech.

Might I also ask for a little more information on the allocation of \$1.5m for sub-item 9 on page 22: 'Ministerial Staff, Establishment - nil'. I do not

think the Chief Minister was present at the time and I do not make that statement as any kind of reflection upon him. The proceedings of this Assembly are broadcast and, from time to time, members have to leave the Chamber to attend to other duties but are still aware of what is being said. Honourable members opposite were interjecting whilst I was speaking and the point of their interjections was that those people do not appear because they are under contract and are not public servants. I did reply to the interjection which does not appear in Hansard. I said that it is still taxpayers' money being spent on the employment of these limited tenure or contract people. I would have appreciated some indication as to the areas in which they were allocated. It may be that that covers the staff who work for all honourable members as their electorate secretaries and who, by and large, do a magnificent job. However, the salaries for 19 members' electorate secretaries would not total \$1.5m. It is quite clear that there are other people engaged and I seek an explanation as to the areas of their appointment and engagement. If the Chief Minister is not able to provide the information at the present time because his advisers have not brought it to his attention that the information was sought, I will certainly accept an assurance from him that that information will be tabled within the life of this sittings. I would welcome either his response immediately or his assurance that the information will be forthcoming.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I can certainly provide the information as to the consultants' fees immediately. I lost the drift of what the honourable member for Nightcliff was on about because of her long rambling question, but I think it could have been encapsulated in how many staff do the ministers and the Leader of the Opposition have working for them and what are their salaries. I think I have already provided the information for the Leader of the Opposition in answer to a question on notice. I cannot provide it in detail off the top of my head. Consultants fees are: cross-cultural communications project, \$45,000; consulting anthropologists, \$35,000; and a consultant for Aboriginal training needs, \$15,000. This is a total of \$95,000. These are the consultants fees.

As for ministerial staff, I will obtain information on the numbers and the salaries and I will provide it in writing to the member for Nightcliff.

Appropriations for divisions 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19 agreed to.

Appropriation for division 25:

Mr ISAACS: I did not give notice to the Chief Minister of this but could he provide, at a later date, the amount being paid to various consultants in the Department of Law. I know that there is one in relation to the consolidation of the criminal law code and I am aware of a number of other consultancy arrangements with the Department of Law in regard to specific projects. I would ask the Attorney-General to provide us with a list of those consultants.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I would not have any precise knowledge at the moment of the consultants presently employed by the Department of Law for the simple reason that within the terms of consultancies fall such items as counsels' fees. The Department of Law is retaining counsel somewhere in Australia, usually in Melbourne, Sydney or Canberra, almost every week and these fees, unfortunately, add up.

As to the consultant on the criminal code, Mr Connelly of Brisbane, I do not think he has been concerned with that since 1979. I doubt that there would be any fees for him included in this. I will obtain a list and send it to the Leader of the Opposition.

Appropriation for division 25 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 30 to 38:

Mrs LAWRIE: I have a question of the Minister for Transport and Works regarding his budget allocation. Since the election of this present government, has the minister initiated any survey, inter-departmentally or otherwise, on whether it would save money to have a flat water charge for people, certainly in the urban area of Darwin, rather than the present system of levying a basic water rate plus excess charges plus reading meters plus a variety of billings being sent out?

Mr DONDAS: I have thought about it but that is as far as it has gone.

Mrs O'NEIL: I am interested under the section relating to transport to find out some details of the proposed Northern Territory government contribution for restoration of Mandorah Jetty - \$275,000. I wonder if the minister can tell me who else is contributing to that restoration, when it is intended to proceed and any other details he might have.

Mr DONDAS: As far as I understand, the Commonwealth government is also contributing about \$200,000.

Mrs O'NEIL: On page 17, Department of Community Development, there is reference to works in progress - \$28,000 for an extension to Dundas House. The minister will be aware of this as the former Minister for Community Development. When I have gone to Dundas House, it has been pretty empty. I wonder if the minister can tell me the purpose of those extensions for which \$28,000 is proposed to be expended?

Mr DONDAS: I think it is a bit much to expect me to be able to carry around in my head every capital works item programmed for other departments but I do remember the Dundas House operation because I was involved in its formulation in early Cabinet discussions on the capital works program. As I understand it, Dundas House is used for the training of various wayward children who would be kept at our institution at Malak. They would be brought into town and trained in various skills to enable them to find employment. As far as I am aware, the present Minister for Community Development has the same understanding that Dundas House will be used as a skills training centre for juveniles.

Mrs LAWRIE: I ask the Minister for Transport and Works if he can give us some indication of the reasons for the cost of \$70,000 appearing on page 26, under proposed new works, for the uplifting of 2 demountables from Alice Springs Hospital. Perhaps the minister could indicate why the level of expenditure is seemingly inordinate and excessive.

Mr DONDAS: It depends on the size of the demountable. I can only give her an answer relating to an experience I have had with a community organisation with which I am involved. The organisation was successful in obtaining one of the demountables from the Darwin Hospital. I believe the cost to transport it from Myilly Terrace to Marrara, with volunteer labour, is some \$20,000. I believe also that the Royal Australian Navy made an application also to the government for one of the hospital demountables and their cost to move a demountable from the hospital out to Coonawarra was \$180,000. The \$35,000 to uplift a demountable may not be excessive.

Mrs O'NEIL: I ask the minister a question relating to the Department of

Education expenditure and perhaps the Minister for Education can answer it if the Minister for Transport and Works cannot. There is an allocation of \$64,500 for the provision of primary cyclone shelters at area schools in Darwin. I would be interested to know at which schools it is intended to provide those and how many shelters there will be.

Mr DONDAS: On behalf of the Minister for Education, I give the member for Fannie Bay an undertaking to provide her with that information.

Mrs LAWRIE: I address my query on the capital works program to the Minister for Transport and Works. It relates to the works in progress allocation for the Supreme Court building in Darwin for rehabilitation of air-conditioning and associated building works - stage 2. The allocation is over \$0.5m. It is on page 30 of the capital works program. I ask if he could indicate if stage 2 includes the physical extension of the present buildings for which his department has funded 2 private architects - without apparently asking the advice of anybody other than themselves - who have produced a series of plans all of which have been scrapped. I ask the minister if he could indicate just what stage 2 means. Does it include the funding of the private people who have travelled around Australia being paid for by his department and who produced a series of plans none of which is being implemented or is that a stage 3 about which we wait to hear with bated breath?

Mr DONDAS: I am unable to provide the honourable member for Nightcliff with that information. However, it is not unusual for the department to retain local architects in the Darwin area for Darwin work and Alice Springs architects for Alice Springs work. I believe that there were special problems associated with the court house. Since the cyclone, I would hate to think how much money has been spent on it but nevertheless there are peculiar problems associated with the construction of the court house. I believe the Chief Minister would be in a far better position to advise the Assembly as to what the \$560,000 relates. I am not aware at this stage of stage 3 funding or development.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I may be able to throw some light on the query of the honourable member for Nightcliff. Whilst what I say cannot be definitive because the Chief Justice must have some say in what happens to the Supreme Court building, I was involved in this matter from the very outset as President of the Law Society. It was originally proposed in Commonwealth times by the Chief Justice and the then Attorney-General's Department to extend the Supreme Court building over the area of open space opposite the Darwin Hotel. My understanding is that, since then, the Northern Territory government has agreed to the construction, in due course, of the lower courts building, the plans for which are being prepared. The immediate need for a second stage of the Supreme Court building has been obviated at least for the time being. I certainly am aware that plans were prepared, at least in a conceptual style, for a second stage of the Supreme Court. However, if anything has been done since then, it would be a matter of some surprise to me as Attorney-General.

Mrs O'NEIL: I ask the minister a question about the capital works program relating to the Department of Health. Last year, the Assembly allocated - and it was the Assembly which allocated it - \$960,000 for the construction of a community health clinic at Dripstone. I wonder if the Minister for Transport and Works or the Minister for Health can explain why this does not appear as work in progress on the capital works program for this year?

Mr DONDAS: The member for Fannie Bay is quite right. It was included in last year's capital works program. In fact, it had got to the stage of the

contract being let regarding the construction of the centre. But, with the opening of the Casuarina Hospital and the proposed future development of the Sanderson Health Centre, a Cabinet decision was made to delete the Dripstone Health Centre from this year's capital works program.

Mrs O'NEIL: I also ask a question about an item that appeared on last year's program for the Nightcliff Primary School, stage 2. It has also disappeared and I understand that there has been some reference to it in the Assembly. I do not think most members know what has happened. I would like to know why that is not also in work in progress.

Mr DONDAS: I believe that the Minister for Education has had funds reallocated to those particular programs and it would be in order to place a question on notice to the Minister for Education regarding the Nightcliff Primary School.

Mrs O'NEIL: I now ask a question about the Department of Lands' section of the capital works. There is an allocation of \$45,000 to relocate a Telecom conduit in my electorate at Parap. Can the minister explain this to me? Where is this going to happen and also why is it this government's responsibility to relocate a Commonwealth government facility?

Mr DONDAS: I find it very difficult to answer the question. In some cases, it is the responsibility of the Northern Territory government to relocate the Telecom cables by virtue of the fact that the land is being handed back to the Northern Territory government. I believe a question of that nature should be directed to me in writing and I will certainly follow it up.

Mrs O'NEIL: I am sure the minister is not suggesting that I should not use the only time that is available to ordinary members in the Assembly to find out details of proposed expenditures which we are being asked to vote upon very soon. The minister might be expecting a question about the Parap fire station for which money has been allocated for 2 years - \$834,000. Is it the government's intention to proceed with that project?

Mr DONDAS: No, the government is not proceeding with the Parap fire station. It is coming off this year's capital works program. I believe it was included in the estimates by error. However, it has been now taken off the program and I believe that we will be providing additional funds to the Daly Street Fire Station. This particular decision was made following the recommendations of the Williamson Report which stated that the Daly Street Fire Station, the Berrimah Fire Station and the Casuarina Fire Station would certainly cover the areas of Darwin and the northern suburbs and it was no longer necessary for us to proceed with the fire station at Parap.

Mrs LAWRIE: I ask this question of the honourable Minister for Transport and Works and, if he cannot supply the information, perhaps the honourable Minister for Primary Production might be able to assist. There is an amount of \$236,782 for the upgrading of the quarantine depot at Dinah Beach. Could the minister indicate the extent of the upgrading given that I thought we would have an entirely new quarantine facility?

Mr DONDAS: Just from memory, funds were committed last year in the capital works program for the construction of the quarantine station at Dinah Beach. I believe that the funds being expended this year are for associated works. However, I believe that the Minister for Primary Production might be able to provide the honourable member for Nightcliff with a bit more information.

Appropriations for divisions 30 to 38 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 39 to 43 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 45 to 49:

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, the honourable member for Fannie Bay made reference to the stage 2 development, the phantom stage 2, of Nightcliff Primary School which was a high priority last year and which did not appear on the capital works program this year. The minister and other members by now will be aware that a sum of \$780,000 has been allocated for a stage 2 rebuilding which has been examined by the members of the school council in concert with officers of his department. Could the minister assure the Assembly that that allocation of \$780,000 will cover the proposals as put to us, with his permission, I assume, at the last council meeting, which include the stage area and the covered way given Nightcliff Primary School's history of musical and dramatic presentation?

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I find it somewhat difficult to comment on the last part of that question because I am not thoroughly familiar with the architectural solutions to the problem as envisaged by the school council. I am informed by my department - I think it is one of those times that a minister can say he was informed by the department because I was not at the meeting - that the departmental officers reached agreement with the school council members of the Nightcliff Primary School. That agreement in spirit and in fact will be carried out. The reality of these sorts of things is that one will find that, while that is the tender target and it is believed that all of the necessary stage 2 development can be achieved for that amount of money, the rise and fall fouls up one's sums at times. It certainly will not be a lesser expenditure. If we are going to have reasonable control of capital expenditure and know where we are going, I hope it is not higher.

Mrs O'NEIL: I refer to the funds being made available to independent schools which the papers tell us are determined on 20% of the average Northern Territory government school running cost per student. I would ask the minister if that 20% is determined on the average of all Northern Territory schools or the average per student of urban schools because I believe all the independent schools are in urban areas and we know that Aboriginal schools have a higher per capita expenditure.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is very good to hear a member of the opposition recognise that the per capita cost to Aboriginal schools and small schools is much higher in fact than that which relates to urban schools. This is the first time it has been admitted by the opposition particularly in debates pertaining to the dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme. The answer to the question is that it is based upon the average cost of educating a child in the Northern Territory and that is self-explanatory.

Mr B. COLLINS: I would like to refer to this problem of school-based funding which received some coverage in the debate. Before I get on to the specifics of that, I would like to correct the minister in a statement which he made earlier today which was just as inaccurate as the last one he made. Quite frankly, I could not be bothered making a personal explanation. The problem of schools having to pay their own bills is causing considerable concern whether the minister is prepared to admit that or not. He said this morning that I was encouraging school principals to be irresponsible and to work outside their school budgets. That, like so many of the things the minister says, was totally incorrect as he will find if he turns to what I did in fact say. I was referring specifically - and this brings me to the question I wish to ask the minister - to the problems schools have where they have been

asked to economise in their budgets, have requested the department to give them guidelines to assist them in doing this and have received absolutely no response from the department on the particular problem.

Mrs Lawrie: That's right.

Mr B. COLLINS: Yes, it is correct. I do not want to waste the Assembly's time by reading it out but it is in fact what I said. I referred to the problem of a principal - and this in fact happened - who was so enraged by the continued failure of the department to give him guidelines on economising with his budget that he did in fact say to the staff that he was so sick and tired of getting no response that, if the department did not respond, he would ask the staff to continue their school year with restraint. If they ran out of money and if the department was not prepared to help with these guidelines, then he was not prepared to implement them.

I would ask the minister, and it is obvious from his reaction that he is not aware of the answer, whether the department has responded by supplying schools with guidelines so they can work within their budgets and with suggestions to charges they can levy which they have not to my knowledge done so far.

Perhaps to save a little time, I will deliver these questions now for the minister to make a note of them. Has the \$5,000 funding for musical instruments which was contained within the total budget appropriation to the schools been fixed or do schools have to spend that \$5,000 out of their total budget allocation on musical instruments they may not want or need? I would also ask the minister for a reply on the question that I raised in my budget speech on the trade course at DCC. I would ask him that particularly in the context of the \$1.5m which has been budgeted for the Industries Training Commission. Perhaps the minister could establish whether this is correct or not: I have been informed that the boilermaker-welding course at the Darwin Community College, which requires \$27,000 to operate next year effectively and not reduce any of its courses, has in fact been supplied with \$16,000. As I said in my budget speech, that is \$11,000 short of that amount. Is this in fact correct? In view of the fact that \$1.5m has been allocated to the Industries Training Commission, it is a little nonsensical if it is correct that up to 50 part-time students - and these are the people who will be affected if the courses are curtailed - will be denied the opportunity of doing that in the next year. Is that correct or not? If it is correct, would the minister take some action to encourage the Darwin Community College to redress that situation?

The third problem I want to raise with the minister only came up today when I received a copy of the guidelines that have been sent to schools in respect of the \$500,000 allocated in the budget for dollar-for-dollar subsidies. As the minister would know, most school councils have had their final meetings for 1980 already. I know 2 schools in Darwin that last week had their final meetings for the year. Most school councils will not be meeting again until February next year when school goes back after the long break over Christmas. In the guidelines, any applications for allocations of this half a million dollars allocated for the dollar-for-dollar subsidy must be submitted by close of business on 20 February 1981. I would like to point out to the minister that, given that most of the school councils which will be submitting these applications have finished their business for the year and will not be meeting again until February next year, this may in fact cause them some difficulty.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, the honourable member started off by a little bit of a play on who said what. Let me make something quite clear in relation to my comment on his comments about school principals having no regard to the appropriations of this Assembly. If he looks at the words I used, he will find

that I said: 'By implication he could be seen to encourage it'. There is quite a difference.

I do thank the honourable member for his questions. He asked about the guidelines for the charging for school facilities. Once again, the honourable member was not entirely accurate in what he said. The charging of a nominal amount for school facilities has been happening in the Northern Territory for years. Indeed, on my understanding, circulars have been sent out for a period of 4 years. Guidelines have always been made available to schools. It would seem to me that there has been a break somewhere in the system and that is something I can track down. There is no question that this is an area in which the department has been involved in an advisory way for some years. I might point out that, in no circumstances, are these charges to be seen as being economic charges. By that, I mean a charge equivalent to the cost of using the facilities because that would act in direct defiance of the government's wish that communities use the facilities. I would not like to see school facilities denied to community groups.

The honourable member said that the \$5,000 for musical instruments was contained in total school budgets. Again, this is incorrect. It was not although I do recognise that a circular sent out by the northern region could very well give that impression. For that reason, this matter has come somewhat unstuck. It is very difficult to be a minister and try to explain a matter like this without doing the almost unforgivable: being critical of officers. Nonetheless, the message was obviously received wrongly and the impression was gained that the \$5,000 for musical instruments had something to do with school-based funding. It did not; it was never intended to. The funds for musical instruments were intended by me - and I accept responsibility for this coming unstuck - to be retained by the Department of Education as a sum pooled between the northern and southern regions and letters sent out to secondary schools which conducted significant music programs asking if they wanted any musical instruments to upgrade the standard of the instruments available.

Where this amount of money has been notionally provided to schools, I will arrange for a circular to be sent out to those schools and they may spend it in any manner in which they see fit. It is just a shame that a good system has come unglued. Those schools which do not run musical programs have been advised that, in their one-line allocation, they have this \$5,000. It would be quite unfair of me to ask for the money back. I do not think that would be a very popular or sensible move.

I have no idea how much the Darwin Community College, in its wisdom and in accordance with its own priorities, has allocated to the boilermaking-welding course. I have an assurance in writing from the Principal of the Darwin Community College that that course will not be cut, cancelled or altered in any way. It will be held at last year's levels. The Darwin Community College has been at all times a most responsible organisation in its bids to government. As a result, its bids are respected by government. I think that its trade courses particularly are running as economically and as efficiently as possible. Certainly, in the revised estimates period for these essential careers-oriented trades courses, we cannot afford to have these courses suffer. Of course, this is one of the problems of a substantially independent statutory corporation such as the community college. That answers in part the question on the \$1.5m devoted to the Industries Training Commission.

In relation to the dollar-for-dollar subsidy scheme and the closure of applications by February, can I simply say that the honourable member has raised a very valid point. I will have it thoroughly checked out. I will ensure that no school council or school is disadvantaged as a result of its

absence over Christmas.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, I am not seeking in any way to be tedious about this but I am very aware of the fact that a great many teachers read the Hansard. Certainly, many school principals do. I would just like this pinned down a little more tightly. I understand that a number of schools have received advice from the department - I am not suggesting that it has been put in any dogmatic form but the 'inference', to use one of the minister's favourite words, is there - that they should economise - and I support this - in areas such as electricity, water and so on. The minister is aware that some of the consumption of power is occasioned by the after hours use of the school by other bodies. From attending many meetings, I know that Casuarina High School is extensively utilised by all sorts of people after hours, as many other schools are. To the best of my knowledge, principals have been advised by the department that one of the ways in which they must make these economies is to charge these people for using lights and air-conditioning. This relates to what the minister said a minute ago because I feel that it needs to be spelt out if it is not to cause any problems between the schools and the department. The minister said a minute ago that he does not expect schools to make economic charges for power. It is my understanding that school principals have been told this is precisely what they must do and that is why they are seeking specific guidelines so that, if the boy scouts use air-conditioning, they are to be charged what it costs the school to supply that service. To avoid any confusion, I wonder if the minister could spell that out.

The other fascinating area that perhaps the minister could give some guidelines on was foreshadowed both in my second-reading speech and in that of the honourable member for Nightcliff. I would be interested in knowing just how the minister intends to differentiate between money raised in the dollar-for-dollar scheme by, as he terms it in his guidelines, 'voluntary school fees' and money which is raised in another manner such as a personal donation of cash to the school.

Mr ROBERTSON: Dealing with the last point first, I am not going to give an answer to that without considering it very carefully because what I say here as a definitive answer will stand. I want to give some consideration to that one. Usually, accepted voluntary fees or school fees - let us call a spade a spade if that is the way parents view them, and with some justification - are usually the result of a letter sent home saying, 'You owe \$30 to school contributions'. It is patently clear to anyone what they are. I would like the opportunity to think this one through because both the member for Nightcliff and the member for Arnhem raise a very valid point. These sorts of things have a very bad habit of becoming unglued wherever there is confusion.

The normal term 'economic charge' relates to a charge having regard to everything contained in a building. The economic rent of a house includes the value of the house. The question of what it costs to use the basketball courts for 4 hours with 12,000 watts of light going is very easy to work out. I do not think it is so easy to work out the realistic cost for the person using the hall of an air-conditioned school and you must turn the air-conditioning on for the entire wing in order to turn the hall on. That is a far more difficult calculation. It is a matter of guidelines. I do not believe that it is practical to say that all costs must be recovered. I do not think it is physically possible to even calculate them. Therefore, it would be my view that these charges should remain of a token nature but still have regard to a realistic inflationary component over those nominal fees which are charged now. Certainly, my personal view - and it was the same when I was Minister for Community Development - is that schools belong to the community and the public should not be denied, through a financial vehicle, the use of schools for community purposes.

Mrs LAWRIE: The Minister for Education made a couple of comments today which seem at variance with the comments he made the other day. He will be aware that I listen most closely when anyone mentions school fees which, of course, do not exist. The other day the honourable minister, by way of interjection, recognised that so-called school fees were no more than the parents' voluntary contributions. Once we used to contribute by way of plant stalls and fetes, but now many people have pressure put upon them by the various schools to pay a levy. This is an attempt to deny the parents an option. I feel very strongly about this because I feel it is proper now, in consideration of the Education Department's budget, for the minister to state whether an adequate education is free and available to the children of the Northern Territory in government schools. If it is, then what is called a 'school fee' has to be recognised, not only by the people and by the members of this Assembly but, most importantly, by the hierarchy of the schools, as no more than a request for a contribution. The reason I ask for this assurance is because children whose parents, for one reason or another - and I could produce a hundred - have not paid the contribution have tremendous pressure put upon them by principals of schools. The degree of pressure depends on the attitude and the goodwill of the principal concerned. A letter which might be sent from one school, such as the one read out by the member for Arnhem the other day, may not necessarily be sent by another school. I think this is grossly unfair. Do our children have sections of their educational program withheld upon threat if their parents have not paid their fees?

The other day when I was speaking to the Appropriation Bill, I deliberately stated that it was the prerogative of the Minister for Education in this Assembly to indicate to schools the way in which the education program should proceed. I did that at considerable risk to my neck and I do not give a tinker's cuss because, when we are talking about government-funded schools, the people through their government have a legitimate interest. It is in that context that I invite the honourable minister to reply to my request for information as to whether a basic and adequate, by definition, education is to be provided by the taxpayer to the children of the Northern Territory. If a particular school wishes extra money for extra programs, it is its right of course to attempt to raise the money in any way it sees fit. But that is not basic education.

Mr ROBERTSON: I do not want it taken the wrong way but it seemed to me that the honourable member was making a speech rather than seeking the answer to a question. It did not sound much like a question at all. The question of what is a level of funding such as would provide a basic, free education to children is an extremely vexed one. The department is conducting currently through schools, through the auspices of 2 officers, a survey to try - I think in vain - to define just what that is. It is something I do not think anyone has really addressed his mind to: just what is the amount needed. What is certain, however, is that it would not matter how much the government provided in school-based funding, schools, as is their right, would always seek more. The so-called school fees are a voluntary contribution. That is the legal position as I understand it.

I suppose, with a financial ability to pay and having regard to the methodology developed over many years by schools right throughout our system and I dare say world-wide, it is probably in a way a compulsory voluntary contribution. But it certainly is not, on my legal advice, enforceable at law. In other words, you cannot sue for it. The reality is that it would not matter how much the government provided, school councils would always want to do that little bit extra. By what vehicle they do it is up to them. In order to discourage the use of the school fee system, the government is encouraging - to use the term I used in the press release - people to roll their sleeves up

and do the work by way of normally accepted community fund-raising activities which I find far more desirable and far less dangerous than the practice of sending out circulars saying that you have to pay school fees. Should I stop a school from using this method when its own council is determining the method? Should a minister be involved in saying, 'You can't do it?'. What the minister can do is say, 'You shall not recover it in a court of law'. He does that by simply not sponsoring legislation in this place to make it enforceable. But it comes down to a question of how autonomous should school councils be in matters relating to the non-provision of education and courses. It is a very dicey subject as the honourable member recognises. I think I will simply have a look at what she had to say and give it serious consideration.

Appropriations for divisions 45 to 49 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 50 to 53:

Mr ISAACS: Mr Chairman, I will put the 2 questions I have to the Treasurer together. The first is in relation to a public accounts committee. Will the government be sponsoring a public accounts committee in the life of this parliament? If that is not the case, when would we expect the government to sponsor its establishment? Secondly, I have a question in regard to a number of loans taken over from the Commonwealth and in particular the loan relating to the meatworks at Katherine. Could the Treasurer inform the Assembly what the position of that particular loan is and what steps are being taken with regard to repayments?

Mr PERRON: All I can say on the question of a parliamentary accounts committee is that the government is not looking at it at this time. The loan to the Katherine meatworks was inherited by the Northern Territory government and, as I understand it, repayments would be paid to the Northern Territory government. However, I have sought recently quite a lot of information from the Territory Development Corporation on outstanding loans. If the Leader of the Opposition writes to me, I can provide information to him on the subject because I certainly do not have it here with me. As I understand it, it is a debt owed to the Northern Territory.

Appropriations for divisions 50 to 53 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 55 and 56:

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, I rise to raise with the Minister for Lands and Housing a question which I first mentioned in the second-reading debate. It is the problem which is exacerbating the critical housing shortage, in Darwin in particular, and that is bond money and rent in advance. The Treasurer was frantically scribbling notes whilst I spoke and yet no mention was made of this by any member opposite in the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I am asking the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing if, given the housing shortage which was acknowledged here today by both sides of the Assembly as a symptom of growth and a variety of other things, he can give an indication as to whether he will move to introduce legislation which will significantly alter the necessity for bond money and rent in advance so that people can get into private accommodation which they can afford once they are there? I make the point - and I think the honourable members for Sanderson and Fannie Bay have made it in the past - that they cannot afford to get into the flats or the units. If they were able to get in without this payment in advance and this deposit of bond money, then they would not be in the desperate circumstances in which they presently find themselves.

The Treasurer, who seems to have a hankering for his old portfolio of housing, was at great pains today to castigate members of this side of the Assembly for, as he so glibly put it, apparently wanting the government to house everybody. No one expects that. It is in some ways desirable that society should be ultimately responsible for the housing of all members but it is not feasible in our modern world. But what we do appreciate is the need for a variety of forms of assistance to people for housing and the government knows this. It has offered a diverse program of housing schemes and loans. But the one problem which I see as the key to an immediate alleviation of the housing shortage - not the unit shortage but the inability of people to get into the units - is the barrier which exists to their getting into premises: the bond money and the rent in advance. I would hope that the minister would not say they should go and borrow it because these people are not in a position to offer security to lending institutions. In fact, the Chief Minister has been fairly critical of the lending propensities of banks in recent times. If they did have that ability, they would not be worrying about going on the housing list. Can the minister give some indication to the Assembly as to his government's feelings on this subject?

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I suppose the best way to handle the thing would be to refer it to the responsible minister. It certainly is not in my portfolio. The Tenancy Act is in the portfolio of the Treasurer. I think there was something odd about what the honourable member said. She makes the assumption that there are spare private flats and housing units available for these people who cannot afford to get into them. That is not the real position at all. I think the honourable member's argument would be valid if there were a lot of vacant flats and houses around. Of course, what she is saying is that they are unable to compete when one comes up. People who are in that financial position are really, by and large, a responsibility of the government. They are not normally the sort of people one would expect to see in \$100-plus a week private accommodation units. The question of the legal position on that is one for my colleague and not myself.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, I thank the minister for his response. I advise him that some of these people are awaiting an allocation of Housing Commission accommodation which takes, at the present time, 18 months. They are prepared to await their allocation for 18 months. They do not wish to apply for emergency housing. They can afford \$100 a week. They cannot afford the \$500 and \$600 to get into the premises to pay the \$100. That was the point I was making.

Mr EVERINGHAM: A point of order, Mr Chairman! We are in committee to consider items of expenditure. We are at the present time - as I understand it - debating philosophy in respect of bond money.

Mrs LAWRIE: The point of order raised by the Chief Minister was that we are debating funds allocated under the portfolio of the Minister for Lands and Housing. That is quite correct and the minister has a finite amount of money under the allocation to the Northern Territory Housing Commission which appears there as division number 61. My debate was on alleviating the problems of housing people by the Northern Territory Housing Commission. That was the point of my observations. If the Chief Minister does not like it, that is his problem, but I hardly see it as a point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, may I briefly respond to what the honourable member was saying. It will be recalled by those honourable members who were here at the time that I was the minister responsible for the introduction of the Tenancy Act. I made it clear in this Assembly and in public statements that the government would be closely monitoring the activities of the private rental

sector in its operations under that act. I am quite sure that responsible officers within the government service will note the comments the honourable member for Nightcliff has just made and undertake the appropriate investigations. I would use the opportunity again to warn the private sector that, while I am a great believer in the lack of government controls over their activities - and I believe that the removal of rent control has been significantly successful in the tremendous number of private flat developments we have seen come into Darwin since the repeal of that repressive legislation - I would repeat my warning of 2½ years ago that they should not think that that is a carte blanche to rip people off.

Mrs O'NEIL: I believe that last year the member for Sanderson pointed out to the committee the excellent example which the Northern Territory Housing Commission set in the detail it provided in its explanation to its appropriation. I once again point that out to the minister and other members and congratulate the Housing Commission for the fine set of explanations it has provided to this allocation of \$50m. I wish that other departments and commissions would take its example.

Appropriations for divisions 55 and 56 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 60 and 61 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 62 and 63:

Mrs O'NEIL: I ask the minister about an item on page 51, an allocation to the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia. It is \$3,500, not a large sum. Nevertheless, this is a new allocation. I ask the minister if this organisation is active in the Northern Territory and what it intends to do with the money.

Mr TUXWORTH: The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia has recently established itself in the Northern Territory. It sought the support of the Northern Territory government financially in this move. I might add that the establishment of this particular organisation received a great deal of support from the medical fraternity who believe that it plays a great role in the prevention of accidents among children which in turn is reflected in hospital costs and charges to the community in looking after children who are harmed. In view of the enormous costs that we have in looking after children in Northern Territory hospitals, I was of the view that an establishment grant of \$3,500 this year was quite reasonable.

Mrs O'NEIL: I would also like to ask the minister for some details about the administrative expenses in the Health Department. There is a sum of \$4m under 'Hospitals Administrative Expenses' entitled 'General Services' and another \$5.3m under 'Operational Expenses'. Can the minister give us a brief outline of the difference between those two?

While he is on his feet, there are 2 allocations, 'Department of Health Administrative Expenses, Hospitals' and 'Department of Health Administrative Expenses, Health Services'. Under 'Health Services', there is \$758,000 for payroll tax but there is no such breakdown under 'Hospitals'. I wonder if there is a reason for that.

Mr TUXWORTH: I dealt with some of the points the member raised earlier this afternoon in my second-reading speech. The \$4m relates to grants-in-aid but I cannot give an answer on the \$5m. I would have to take up the issue of the payroll tax with the departmental people and obtain a specific explanation for the honourable member. As everyone is aware, we have a principle of

charging payroll tax because it is shown as a Northern Territory earning for federal compensation benefits. If we have done it in one section, it is almost certain that we have done it in others.

Mrs LAWRIE: As the Sanderson Community Health Centre does not appear on the capital works program and the Outpatients clinic is demonstrably not adequately servicing the needs of people in the far northern suburbs, what measures is his department taking to provide outpatients facilities and immediate treatment for people seeking assistance from his department?

Mr TUXWORTH: I received a question yesterday about this particular issue. While I do not have an answer for the honourable member at the moment, I expect to have a reply for the Assembly tomorrow on the issue of outpatients services at the Casuarina Hospital.

Appropriations for divisions 62 and 63 agreed to.

Appropriations for divisions 65 and 66:

Mrs O'NEIL: I wonder if the minister can inform me how much money is being spent on books and equipment for the Library Service. We used to have a breakdown on this.

Mr PERRON: In amongst this material provided to me by the Department of Community Development, there is a breakdown of expenditure on library services. I would be quite happy to extract it and provide it to the honourable member for Fannie Bay but I cannot provide it at this time.

Mrs O'NEIL: I thank the minister and I look forward to obtaining that information. I will also be asking him for details on the allocations of \$6m and upwards to local governments. I presume that he does not have the information with him and I appreciate that he will obtain it for me. However, I point out to the Minister for Health that we are being asked to vote for or against these allocations now, not after we obtain information from ministers later.

Mr PERRON: To expect detailed information on costings considering the range of portfolio responsibilities of ministers is quite unreasonable. Honourable members have had the opportunity to peruse these explanatory documents for a couple of months. As a matter of fact, that in itself has been the subject of some criticism. In that time, they could have collated their questions on detail and asked them through other channels. To expect ministers to have every conceivable breakdown here in front of them is totally unrealistic.

Mrs O'NEIL: I thank the minister. There are 2 answers to that. One is that, if the information was provided for us in the yellow book as, for example, the Housing Commission provided it, we would not need to ask the questions. Secondly, it is the role of the committee of the whole to examine the budget. I will vote for or against it when I have sufficient information in front of me. Frequently I do not have sufficient information in front of me to make a reasonable decision on behalf of my constituents.

Appropriations for divisions 65 and 66 agreed to.

Remainder of bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

PAY-ROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 26)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): This bill does 2 things: it increases the threshold again by 10% at a time when employers become subject to payroll tax and, secondly, it clears up some doubt as to whether benevolent institutions are liable to payroll tax. Certainly, we support the measure whereby the threshold is raised because this will ensure that the employers are not penalised as a result of inflation acting upon their wages bill.

However, the point that I made in the budget speech is still valid: it simply tinkers with the system. Although I support wholeheartedly the views of the Treasurer in seeking to abolish payroll tax, it is pie in the sky when you consider it on a nationwide basis. It simply means that we are talking about a tax in Territory terms of something like \$21m but, in national terms, we are talking about a tax raised by the various state governments in excess of \$2 billion. If we are to abolish it, as we would all like to because it does work in a regressive way, what will happen is that somebody will have to pick up the tab. I do not see it as a matter which will be accomplished. Mr Speaker, as I say, certainly we welcome the increase of the threshold which is to ensure that employers are not penalised by the effect of inflation on their payroll. That is all it does. It will keep pace with what we understand to be the rate of inflation for the next 12 months.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has missed a fundamental point that was raised in the debate on the Appropriation Bill: we have not touched the threshold. In the past, this government has twice extended the sum, called the threshold, beyond which employers are liable for paying payroll tax. This bill will reduce by 10% across the board the total payroll tax bill of any employer in the Northern Territory. That is very significant because the concept of pushing back a threshold is to relieve every small employer from paying payroll tax at all, although there is an area where there is a gradient scale and payroll tax is imposed. In this move, which is unprecedented in Australia, what we will effectively do is reduce payroll tax from 5% of payrolls to 4.5% of payrolls right across the board. It is a very innovative measure, certainly a leader in this country as far as payroll tax is concerned, and I am very disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition who usually follows this type of thing closely has missed that point altogether and is still speaking of a 10% increase in threshold which, in itself, certainly would not result in the forgoing of \$1m in payroll tax alone. It would be a far smaller sum than that and certainly far less effective as far as an incentive to employers to invest in the Territory as distinct from elsewhere in Australia.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

New clause 4A:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 3.1.

This inserts a new clause after clause 4. This clause provides for the making of applications for a refund of tax under section 20A of the principal

act which deals with refunds in respect of prescribed services, localities or classes of employees. Regulations have been prepared to prescribe apprentices as a class of employees for which tax will be refunded. The present amendment to the act is to ensure that the necessary information is made available to the Commissioner of Taxes so that any refund under section 20A can be made as soon as possible after the end of each financial year.

New clause 4A agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to take part in the debate on the Address in Reply to the Administrator's speech. As the Minister for Transport and Works, I am looking forward to the challenging and definitely exciting period over the next 4 years. I fully endorse the comments made by His Honour the Administrator in regard to the role played by growth and development in the Territory. I firmly believe that my department plays a special role in those areas and I would like to outline some of the many activities we will be pursuing during the next 4 years. We are all aware of the importance of transport to the Territory and His Honour the Administrator has already identified a number of important initiatives which will be pursued in the next 4 years.

In roadworks, we are all aware of the development and the upgrading that is taking place on the Stuart Highway, especially between Elliott and Tennant Creek. There are roadworks with bridges at Attack and Morphett Creeks. There are works on the Victoria Highway and a possible realignment. Discussions are taking place with the Western Australian Transport Department regarding an alignment of the future Victoria Highway from Western Australia to the Northern Territory with Katherine being the point of meeting. There is the \$9m program to upgrade the Barkly Highway over the next 3 years. I believe that that will be a significant part of the development of the Northern Territory. We will have better access to South Australia, Queensland and the other eastern sea-board states. Most members will be aware that stage 1 has been completed and tenders are being called for stage 2. Hopefully, by 1982, stage 3 will be constructed and there will be an all-weather, sealed road from Alice Springs to Ayers Rock which will certainly help the development of tourism in that area, particularly the Yulara Tourist Village.

Unfortunately, the member for MacDonnell is not here this afternoon but I am quite sure that he would be happy to know that the Jay Creek-Glen Helen Road has been sealed all the way up to the gorge. The tourist traffic in that area will also appreciate it. Mr Speaker, you have placed quite a lot of pressure on me in the last few months to ensure that the Department of Transport and Works places some emphasis on the Edith Falls Road. As you know, we hope to be able to provide some financial assistance to upgrade that road. The Plenty Highway will go into stage 2 this financial year and we hope to be able to continue to commit funds in that area for the continuation of the road to the Queensland border. There is also the Tanami Road. Tenders closed on 20 November for the Mainoru Road to Bamylili. That will certainly make that area and the Katherine area much better.

Regarding urban roads, members will be aware of the construction, and I might say the speedy construction, that has taken place at the corner of Bagot

Road and the Stuart Highway. I believe that the contractor there is really moving along well and is taking into consideration that we do not want to inconvenience our general motoring public. I believe that that will be finished in about 18 months and it will certainly make it much better for everybody concerned. Most of us are aware that the Frances Bay connector road is almost completed. It is in the final stages of its sealing. That will certainly take some of the traffic off the Stuart Highway, especially towards the port area.

Air transport is a very important facet of the Territory way of life. In regard to Northern Airlines, the new regional airline, I am not saying that we have not had teething problems. I believe that these will continue for some time but I also believe that, in the long term, Northern Airlines will play a major part in the development of all the isolated Territory centres. I believe that we, as a body of elected people, have to be a little bit more patient with Northern Airlines' operations. It has taken over an organisation which received a large subsidy from the federal government and the Northern Territory government has indicated to Northern Airlines that it will not be receiving any subsidy from us. We all have a responsibility to try to work together to ensure that we do eventually get this regional airline off the ground. The Aviation Act has passed through this Assembly and gives the Northern Territory full responsibility as far as aviation matters are concerned. I believe that that will be a very important part of the development of the aviation industry, particularly the legislation on charter licences. In the future, the government will be looking at making more charter licences available to people in areas that have a need for them. That will ensure a greater development of those areas.

We are all aware of the tremendous amount of work that our Chief Minister has done over the last 3 months in convincing the federal government that we should have our Alice Springs-Darwin rail link. We have that commitment and we can only look forward to the construction of that rail link in the next 7 or 8 years which of course will provide more benefits and a great deal of enthusiasm to people wishing to come to the Territory. In the long term, it will serve the development of the Northern Territory to a degree that people in the Territory require.

We have also a need to maintain shipping links. Negotiations are still being carried out with the Australian National Line to maintain an eastern seaboard-Darwin sea link. In some areas, we do have problems with the Australian National Line and I will be discussing those problems with the officials of ANL and the federal government later on this year. I believe that State Ships of Western Australia is putting on another 2 ships to service the Fremantle-Darwin run. I believe that, over the last 40 years, State Ships has certainly played a very important part in the development of Darwin. The 2 ships will be converted to carry cement and the company has now negotiated an area of land with the Port Authority for the establishment of another cement company. That company from Western Australia is called Cockburn Cement. It will be transporting cement to Dampier and to Darwin. With the ship that is already on the link now, the 2 ships will certainly serve us well, especially in the wet season. However, we must make some definite arrangements with ANL in the next few months to ensure that the east coast-Darwin shipping link is maintained.

My department has the responsibility for the motor vehicle registry. The Motor Vehicle Registry, especially in the last couple of years, has certainly excelled itself in its performance. I can remember the delays that took place at Goyder Road previously. The Motor Vehicle Registry has moved into automation and information regarding drivers' licences and other things relating

to motor vehicles is quite readily available at very short notice. There are other areas that we have to examine regarding improving the facilities there. I have asked my department to look at the feasibility of issuing identification licences through the Motor Vehicle Registry. There are many other programs in that area. I have not had a complaint regarding the operation of the Motor Vehicle Registry for at least 2 years and I do not think other members have had too many complaints either.

The duplication of a water main between Darwin River Dam and Darwin is being built. The Water Division is carrying out proper investigation into future water supply sources for Darwin and Katherine. The water will be available in 1982. In Tennant Creek, plans are being made to augment the existing water supply. The member for Barkly will be interested to know that he will not have any water in Tennant Creek for a couple of days while they connect a new supply. Water restrictions will be applied. Nevertheless, it is part of the program to upgrade the water supply to Tennant Creek and other areas. The existing water supply for Alice Springs will be augmented. We have discussed earlier in the sittings the recreational lake in Alice Springs. The Water Division has played a pretty important role within the department in providing proper services to people living in the Northern Territory.

In the Transport and Works Division, we have the land-backed wharf and the construction of the small ships facility is in its mid-term stage. I believe that a contractor will be handing over part of stage 1 very shortly and the other section will not be long. It has gone to tender now and contracts will be determined soon.

The museum and art gallery is about 60% to 65% completed and it will be opened in about May or June next year. The structure will provide a fine service for people in the Darwin area. We had discussions regarding the marina complex during the sittings. I hope that, by the end of the month, stage 2 of the marina complex report will be ready and we will make a final decision on whether to go ahead with the marina development in the selected location.

Another service provided by the Department of Transport and Works is the Government Printing Office which moved into its new building since the cyclone. It has performed admirably. It provides a very valuable service to this Assembly and to other government departments. At the moment, discussions are taking place between the Government Printer and private enterprise whereby, in some cases, the Government Printer may make some equipment available to private enterprise so that companies do not have to tie up very large sums of money in capital equipment. This is an example of a government instrumentality working with private enterprise in a small community.

The fire brigade is not without its problems but these are being resolved at the moment. The federal minister for Industrial Relations has agreed to allow Sir John Moore to appoint a chairman for the Fire Brigade Arbitral Tribunal. A first meeting should occur next year. We have had some problems in relation to rank structure and it is the government's intention, generally, to accept the recommendations of the Williamson Report. The Bush Fires Council has requested the Chief Minister to make arrangements to transfer it from the Department of Transport and Works to the Conservation Commission. In light of the Williamson Report, the government will have to review that particular proposal. The Chief Minister will be having discussions with the Bush Fires Council very shortly.

The Road Safety Council is another responsibility of the Department of Transport and Works. The Road Safety Council has embarked on a new promotion

program. I was asked a question by the member for Sanderson last week in relation to the expenditure on the program and how long it would run. I believe that we have a responsibility for maintaining such a program. In the long term, the Road Safety Council will certainly play its part in the reduction of accidents on roads. Our death toll is not decreasing at the moment and that is very unfortunate. If you compare the figures for this time last year to this year, you will see that they have risen. Overall, the general accident rate has decreased and the Road Safety Council has played a role in the reduction of the accident rate.

In terms of the future, we must strive for value for money. The Treasurer, the Chief Minister and other members on this side have stated that, during the term of this government, we will strive for value for money. We must pull together and strive to ensure a stable sea link, whether it be from the east coast or the west coast or even from overseas. Road programs must continue, not only for the tourist industry but also for the mining industry and the pastoral industry. With continued expenditure in those areas - and we will have our rail link by 1987 or 1988 - I believe that good foundations for the development of a very prosperous Northern Territory are being laid.

Airport facilities have always been a problem not only in the Darwin area but also in Alice Springs. Within the next few years, we should strive for far better facilities. As most of you would be aware, discussions are taking place at the moment between the Commonwealth Department of Transport and the Northern Territory government on the location of the airport terminal. These discussions are proceeding in a reasonable manner. Unfortunately, I am unable to tell the Assembly what stage these particular discussions have reached but, once a commitment is made by the Commonwealth for the siting of the airport, Darwin will gain airport facilities of which we can be proud. We must push the federal Department of Transport for a better airport in Alice Springs. While Alice Springs only has 17,000 people, the daily traffic that commutes through that airport is increasing weekly. Unless we take positive steps now to force the Commonwealth to provide better facilities there, we could be in trouble.

I also believe that we must press the Commonwealth to support better communications, especially in isolated areas. I believe the satellite that it intends putting up in the next couple of years will certainly help people in isolated areas. Whilst we are waiting for the federal government to put up the satellite, we should be pressing it for better communications at Nhulunbuy, Groote Eylandt and the other Territory centres. The member for Barkly can be trusted to apply pressure for better communications in the Borroloola area.

Mr Speaker, in replying to the Administrator's speech, I feel very privileged to rise today and would certainly pass on my regards to the Administrator. He will be retiring very shortly and I would convey my kindest regards to him.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to represent in this Assembly the only electorate named after an opera singer. Her name was Fannie Carandini. Not only was she an opera singer but she was also the daughter of an Italian count, Count Jerome Carandini. He was the tenth Marquis of Seranzo. He came to Hobart in the 1840s and married Mary Burgess. That lady was a singer and they had several daughters, one of whom was Fannie who also became a singer. The Carandinis were holding concerts in Adelaide the month before the South Australian Surveyor-General, George Goyder, and his party set out in 1868 to found present day Darwin. It was clearly with fond memories of this delightful lady, Fannie Carandini, that the members of Goyder's

party set out. When they arrived here, they named Fannie Bay after her.

It is not quite the same as being called after a part of the Netherlands or after other explorers, but I do think it is a little different. Ever since Fannie Bay had that rather unusual start with its nomenclature, it has played an important role in the history of the Northern Territory. Although it is now a very different place from the rain forest covered shores and cliffs that Goyder's party found, it has always played an important part in Territory history. It was the site of the famous or infamous Fannie Bay Gaol, the original Darwin airstrip where so many fliers landed and the Chinese market gardens at Parap which did a marvellous job of feeding citizens of Darwin until the then Health Department closed them down because they used that excellent Chinese fertiliser, night soil, to do the job. Of course, it played a role in the defence of Australia during World Wars 1 and 2. People can still see the gun emplacements at East Point. Today, Fannie Bay is the microcosm of Australia's oldest inner city suburbs despite our tiny size. It has some of Darwin's most affluent citizens and some of its least advantaged. It has some fine houses on large allotments and some very small Housing Commission flats to which we have referred earlier in this sittings. It has also some of its newest residents - the Vietnamese refugees who are living in the former Baptist Hostel which has been renamed Tamarind House - as well as some very old Northern Territory residents. It has some excellent public facilities and some very neglected ones.

In Fannie Bay, we not only have an image of something that happens in all Australian cities but we have also repeated the problems and mistakes which have taken place in other cities. We have, for example, built the Kurringal Flats, a version of Sydney and Melbourne Housing Commission tower blocks, without any of the justification that those cities had - the shortage of land and the need to replace slum dwellings. We have also the connector road which creates hazards for inner-city dwellers in order to provide more ready access from outer suburbs to the city. There are problems with this road and I am certainly hoping the Minister for Transport and Works will look at redesigning the intersection of the connector road with Ross Smith Avenue and Phillip Street where there are already serious problems and accidents occurring.

We also have further problems - once again, typical of inner-city suburbs - in incompatible land uses and the existence of nightclubs and noisy hotels in residential areas. It is little wonder that town planning advertisements are probably better read in Fannie Bay than anywhere else in the Northern Territory. I believe this community spirit, this feeling of local identity and this desire to maintain what is best in the area, is something which is very desirable and to be encouraged and not denigrated as sometimes happens. If people choose to do their best and work to maintain a pleasant place to live, then this is to be commended and I am proud to represent those residents in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, along with the Minister for Transport and Works, I would like, in speaking to this Address in Reply, to express some sorrow not only on my own behalf but also on behalf of the opposition at the imminent departure of the present Administrator, Mr England, and also Mrs Polly England. They have graced the position. They have done the people of the Northern Territory proud. They have always acted with dignity, certainly with hard work and an overwhelming sense of duty. We have been pleased to have them in the Territory and we are sorry to see them go.

MR EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in reply I too would like to place on record the appreciation of the government for the services of His

Honour the Administrator and Mrs England. I suppose the career of the Administrator could be encapsulated in 3 words: farmer, soldier, parliamentarian. But what a breadth of experience of life those 3 words convey and how many people indeed have the good fortune, if one may term it that, to gain that breadth of experience.

His Honour came to the Northern Territory as Administrator late in life when his active career had terminated - obviously at his own instigation. He had retired from the federal parliament where he had been the member for Calare for many years. He represented that seat ably in the federal parliament. Before that, he served in the Australian military forces both in Australia and overseas during the Second World War. Both before and after the Second World War, I understand, he farmed in the Grenfell district of New South Wales, although he was born in Brisbane and lived part of his early life at least in the northern rivers district of New South Wales. So His Honour has quite some experience of different types of country in Australia.

He was appointed Administrator of the Northern Territory in mid-1976 at a time of particular significance for the Northern Territory when anyone taking on that task would be faced with considerable difficulties presaged by the expected constitutional development that had first of all been instituted in terms of the fully-elected Legislative Assembly in 1974, then the reports of the Joint Parliamentary Committee and everything that that entailed. In coming into this job, His Honour knew that he was certainly not taking on an easy task and he has, I believe, discharged that task with distinction. It certainly must not have been easy to be dealing with younger people with very fixed ideas who believed that they knew what was best for the Northern Territory when one could look back on life from all the years that His Honour had passed through with his breadth of experience. Nevertheless, relations have always been good and His Honour has certainly made himself widely accepted in the Northern Territory community and he has been ably supported by Mrs Polly England who, with her friendly manner, I believe has endeared herself to many people. His Honour's work was recognised by Her Majesty with the Order of the Commander of St Michael and St George in the 1979 New Year Honours List and I think that this is a relatively small - with great respect - recognition of the long years of service that His Honour has given to the people of Australia as a soldier, as a parliamentarian and finally, to cap off his career, as Administrator of the Northern Territory. I am sure, Mr Speaker, that all members on this side of the House join me in recording our very sincere thanks to John and Polly England for a job well done and our best wishes for the future.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 24)

Continued from 18 November 1980.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): As a result of the motion the other day, I move that the bill be recommitted to the committee of the whole for further consideration of original clause 5.

Motion agreed to.

In committee:

Clause 5:

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Chairman, by some stroke of mismanagement the other day, we finished up with 2 clause 5s. I now seek the support of the committee in

defeating the original clause 5.

Original clause 5 negatived.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

DANGEROUS GOODS BILL
(Serial 9)

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the opposition, I support this particular bill. There has been some discussion, as I am sure the honourable minister will be aware, among some sectors of the community as to what this bill attempts to do. Some people are worried that there will be unnecessarily restrictive provisions as to the carriage and storage of dangerous goods and some have even alleged that industry would come to a standstill if we passed this bill. I suppose in a way these fears arise simply because there is no indication in the bill as to what type or range of goods will be prescribed as being dangerous. However, we on this side of the House accept the minister's assurance that the goods that are to be prescribed by this bill will be in accordance with the internationally accepted standards which have been developed by, amongst other bodies, the United Nations.

I think that this bill is fairly timely in that it takes up the question of the control over conveyance by all forms of transport and the storage of materials which are commonly used in industry which may be dangerous not only to human beings but also to plants, soil, watercourses and so on. In more industrialised communities, we do find that occasionally one reads about the dangerous situation that arises where there are spillages of chemicals or where there are materials that are highly flammable with which insufficient care was taken. These sorts of incidents have often caused loss of life and extensive damage to the immediate vicinity in which they have occurred. Certainly, we commend the provisions of this bill whilst accepting the assurance of the minister that in all respects the classifications will be as prescribed by the international organisations that he has mentioned.

There is of course one category of materials which will not be so classified - radioactive materials for which we have in the Territory a separate act altogether which covers the carriage and storage of that material. Because of the increasing industrialisation of the Territory, I think that it is incumbent on us to make provision for the safe carriage and storage of materials which are useful in industry but can nevertheless be dangerous.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Clause 7:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 15.1.

Mr Chairman, this clause is drafted too widely and it has some doubtful constitutional validity. The amendment takes care of that.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10 agreed to.

Clause 11:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendments 15.2 and 15.3.

These are drafting amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 18 agreed to.

Clause 19:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 15.4.

This affects clause 19 which makes it an offence to both sell and purchase dangerous goods in certain circumstances. The defence available under subclause (4) should be a defence in respect of both actions. Its application to purchasing was inadvertently omitted and the amendment is to correct this omission.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 28 agreed to.

Clause 29:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 15.5.

Again, it is a drafting amendment to make the wording in clause 29(1) consistent with clause 28.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, this particular clause relates to the dumping of dangerous goods. One hopes that there will be some well-defined areas - as a matter of fact, this bill requires that areas be gazetted - that are chosen and that they will be suitable for the purpose. In the recent past, we had a sulphur dump in the rural area. Whilst I am certainly not suggesting that sulphur is as dangerous as some of the goods that we are proposing to control by this bill, I think that that particular incident did highlight the question of the suitability of the areas that are chosen to dump these goods. We have also already enacted a section which relates to a person abandoning goods. If we require them to refrain from abandoning dangerous goods in order to protect the immediate facility or indeed to protect humans who might inhabit the area, then we must ensure that they are well-defined and suitable sites at which people who responsibly wish to dispose of these goods can do so.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Chairman, the member for Sanderson touches on 2 points and I think they are quite distinct. The first one relates to the dumping. In this particular instance, we are referring to the provision of dumping as it

would apply to abandoning and clauses 27 and 28 of the bill take care of that in the sense that dumps can be established by notice in the Gazette. Again, there are approved areas and specific directions that relate to dumping. Again, I think this is a little different to the issue of storing such things as sulphur.

Clause 29, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 30 agreed to.

Clause 31:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 15.6.

Again, this is a drafting amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 31, as amended, agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

LEPROSY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 6)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, this is a very simple bill. It merely removes the prohibition on people being within 400 yards of a leprosarium. This matter has received much comment in the Assembly and has had the general support of all members on previous occasions. In effect, it will allow the public to use the East Arm Road, the boat ramp at the end of that road and the waterways beyond the boat ramp. The opposition supports the bill.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, in rising to support this bill today, I would like to pass some remarks regarding the incidence of leprosy in the Northern Territory. I think everybody is aware after reading the report on the control of leprosy in the Northern Territory that the Northern Territory has the highest incidence in Australia.

I would like to comment now on one of the world's foremost authorities on leprosy, Dr John Hargrave. He is employed by the Department of Health in the Northern Territory. He has extensive knowledge of leprosy. To my knowledge, he has lived here for about 20 years and, during that time, he has worked consistently for the control of leprosy. He has travelled extensively to other parts of the world and I think he has done work in India and also in the south of the United States. He is a personal friend of mine so I know quite a bit about his work in the Northern Territory. I would like to comment today on his gentle and understanding approach to the people in whom the disease of leprosy has been found. Due in no small part to his work, there is a much lower incidence of leprosy in the Northern Territory now than there was in 1951. This is due to his compassionate understanding of the disease and of the unfortunate people who contract leprosy. It is a fact that it is mostly Aboriginal people who contract leprosy in the Northern Territory. I have heard of the respect and love that his former patients have for him because of his comprehensive understanding of not only the disease of leprosy but also his added interest in Aboriginals and their way of life.

One of the worst parts of the disease of leprosy is the disfigurement which it brings. All of our media laud beauty and youth. Everyone tries to

stay young and beautiful and the older you get, the harder it gets. If you are not young and you do contract leprosy, you are doubly cursed in our society. The Aborigines treat leprosy differently to Europeans and they also treat the aged differently. In an Aboriginal community, age is respected and acknowledged in a down-to-earth manner. The same philosophical approach is held towards people who have leprosy or who are disfigured. These people are not shunned like they tend to be in European society. They are helped in their community.

There is a much more sensible approach to the disease of leprosy these days than there has been in the past. I think this is very heartening for those unfortunate people who have it. Luckily, there are not many of them in the community. I think this stems in no small part from our Christian upbringing and from our reading of the Bible because, in the Bible, unfortunately lepers were treated with utter contempt and with utter disregard. They were put into complete isolation and I think that, in times long ago, leprosy must have been confused with a lot of other things - namely, things like eczema, ringworms, scabies, syphilis, yaws, tinea, melanosis or even birthmarks. It is a known fact that the great incidence of leprosy occurs in dry countries where, due to unavoidably bad personal hygiene, there is not much chance of keeping clean. These diseases then spread more than they would in other places.

I would like to comment also on a certain section in the principal act which places a practically impossible responsibility on police officers. I refer to section 30 which says that a police officer can detain and take into custody people suffering from leprosy. On the surface, this might seem pretty ordinary because police are asked to have knowledge about other matters in the community but it would make it very difficult for the police to be certain if a person had leprosy. I have obtained some information from Dr Hargrave because my knowledge was not extensive. To detain a person who has leprosy, people must have quite extensive knowledge. This will be found in people of the medical profession, both doctors and nurses. For the information of members, a police officer must be able to distinguish whether a person has leprosy or ringworms, birthmarks ...

Mr B. COLLINS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! We do appear to be getting a long way from the boat ramp; a lot further than 400 yards, I would suggest.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member will confine her remarks to the amendment.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, as everybody seems to know the hard work that police officers have to do in the community with leprosy patients, I will turn to the amendment.

I would like to bring to the notice of honourable members that this may have been brought about by somebody who lives in my electorate. It was brought to my attention and I publicised it in the media. The Catalina boat ramp at East Arm could not be used even though it was a perfectly good capital investment some years ago. It was going to waste because it was within a certain distance from the East Arm Leprosarium. I am very pleased to see that this amendment has been introduced because it is a more sensible approach to the disease of leprosy and it will help amateur fishermen in the Northern Territory.

Mr DOOLAN: Mr Speaker, I would like to make a brief comment which is perhaps not applicable to the bill, but it is applicable to the disease of leprosy. Most Australians agree that the banana republic of Queensland is somewhere back in the middle ages in many respects yet the word 'leprosy' has not been used in Queensland for at least 4 decades. All references to leprosy

in Queensland were deleted in the 1940s and the words 'Hansen's disease' were substituted. The nearest we get to leprosy is that the hospitals where these patients are confined in Queensland are still sometimes referred to as leprosariums.

The very word 'leprosy' conjures up pictures of disfigured and dreadfully maimed people and there is an awful stigma attached to it. It gives rise to feelings of revulsion and fear and yet it is a disease which is not contagious to any marked degree. It is really extremely hard to contract, despite close association with sufferers. Many people do not realise that, even in this century, leprosy is pretty prevalent in Europe and it is a world-wide disease. As the member for Tiwi said, biblical stories tell us of sufferers ringing bells and shouting out 'unclean' to let the populace get out of the road when they came through. In fact, there was no need for it. As she said, it was often other diseases. Tertiary syphilis causes great disfigurement and was often mistaken for Hansen's disease. There is no doubt that this disease can cause dreadful disfigurement but nowadays there are few people in this advanced condition in the Northern Territory.

For anyone who is not aware of the symptoms, many sufferers are really hard to detect. No doubt, you have seen plenty of them and some of them are not disfigured at all. They have nodules on their forehead and a thickening of the eyebrows like scar tissue. As the disease advances they have a leonine expression and arthritic fingers but they are not terribly disfigured. We do not see many people like that nowadays. It will not doubt be said that the disease will always be called leprosy, but I do not agree. The public may be slow to change but, just as it did in Queensland, 'leprosy' will gradually disappear from our vocabulary and be replaced by 'Hansen's disease'. Neither the medical profession or lay people in Queensland now refer to leprosy any more.

I spoke to Dr John Hargrave about this today and, whilst he said that he does not have any particularly strong feelings about it, he certainly has no objections to it. Dr Hargrave told me that what he does object to very strongly is the word 'leper'. Hargrave also asked that I bring to the notice of the public that East Arm is no longer referred to as the leprosarium. It is East Arm Hospital and it provides treatment mainly for disabled persons. He said that there are hardly any active patients in the Territory at all and most Hansen's disease sufferers are now cured. Finally, in case some members are not aware of it, there have been quite a few European Territorians in East Arm from time to time. Some of them are still living with us. I would therefore ask the Minister for Health to give some serious consideration to having the word 'leprosy' deleted and 'Hansen's disease' substituted. It is an archaic word which is no longer used in many places.

Motion agreed to: bill read a second time.

See Minutes for amendment to schedule agreed to without debate.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 16)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 17)

CONTROL OF ROADS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 18)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the amendments will enable councils, within the meaning of the Local Government Act, to control and administer the air space above public roads and malls by vesting in the councils title to that air space as registered proprietors. Councils may make application to government for titles as registered proprietors to land underneath the road or mall. Title is duly granted to the council to the air space above and the ground space below to a specified height or depth as granted by the minister. Fee simple title to the councils of the air space to a certain height means that the council becomes the registered proprietor to the air space and thus requires entitlement to develop and use that space.

As a corollary to this ability to utilise air space above public roads and roads within the designation of sections 306 and 307, the amendments provide for the leasing of such air space to developers on the approval of the minister. The bills will enable the utilisation of the air space above any public road or mall when the council in question has acquired title to that air space.

Specifically, the legislative changes were proposed to enable the utilisation of air space above a lane in Darwin City as a multi-storey car-park. The Corporation of the City of Darwin will also be empowered to hand the job of air space utilisation to a developer or private company. The bills are therefore proposed with application to a specific project. However, the bills will enable like ownership and utilisation of air space above any road or mall of which a council is a registered proprietor.

I am informed that the bills have precedents in South Australia and New South Wales, where local authorities have been given the power to lease space over public thoroughfares. The necessity to use air space over public roads arises out of a shortage of serviced, developed space for such functions as car-parking. The same situation has developed in Darwin where space for large-scale inner-city parking was found to be at a premium or simply not available. The proposal and intention to provide more inner-city car-parking space in Darwin will help to sustain in the central business district small businesses which believe their livelihood may be threatened with the advent of more suburban shopping centres. The West Lane multi-storey structure will have to comply with all the normal building regulations and, hopefully, will be designed to cause minimal visual intrusion upon the Darwin skyline and above-ground total design. Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the bill.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, the main reason for these bills is to enable the Corporation of the City of Darwin to develop a high-rise car-park. Of course, the bills also open up a number of doors to a number of other development options. I will deal with those later.

I would like first of all to touch on the matter of parking which was the reason for the introduction of these bills into the Assembly. Parking has always been a problem and I guess it will remain that way for many years unless adequate planning provisions are made. The problem has been of concern to aldermen, to residents, to shoppers and to property owners in any developing area. Unless provision has been made in the initial planning stages, there will be problems relating to vehicles. It may be in the provision of roads to have vehicles moved from point A to point B or it may be in the provision of

parking facilities once those vehicles have arrived at their destination.

There are very few major growth areas that have not experienced similar problems to those that we are experiencing today. Of course, Darwin's problems are magnified somewhat because the business area is built on a peninsula. The office accommodation, which plays a vital part in the whole viability of the central business district, is also situated close to the retail outlets. Figures that have been produced indicate that between 10% and 15% of the total population of Darwin moves to the central business district each working day. The traders are indeed fortunate in having this captive audience. I have mentioned that on other occasions. It is perhaps one of the few pluses that the central business district trader has going for him at the present time.

It is ironical, however, that the office worker, who provides much of the retailer's income, is the one causing the parking problems for the casual shopper. There are no easy answers to the problem; certainly, decentralisation cannot be considered. To do so, in my opinion, would destroy the central business district. It is the highest rated area in the Northern Territory and many millions of dollars have been spent in the provision of office accommodation and various commercial and retail outlets. We have also tried to educate the public to use public transport. Unfortunately, we have not been successful in this regard. Nevertheless, we must continue to try to make the public aware of our public transport system and try to encourage the public to use it.

Another complication has been to identify the parking requirements. These requirements vary considerably. We must provide parking to satisfy the office worker, the shop assistants and the general staff members. In most cases, these people require all-day parking. We must also provide for those people who come into the city to service the business from outside the main central business district. Finally, and most importantly, we must provide parking facilities for the casual shopper - the person who wishes to shop during normal business hours. It is this last parking requirement that concerns me the most because, if we are not able to provide a similar parking package to the people who use the central business district as is provided in the suburbs, then the central business district trader is definitely at a disadvantage. I refer here to the type of parking that we all wish we had plenty of and that is free parking. In all of the other shopping areas outside the central business district, customers are provided with free parking in close proximity to the shops that they wish to visit. To be fair and realistic, we must look at providing a combination of free parking areas and paid parking areas in the central business district.

When looking at providing parking facilities, one must do more than just agree that we have a problem in this particular area. There are hundreds of cars which need parking space and it is the council's responsibility to provide parking areas to meet all needs and that includes those of the casual shopper. It must look particularly to the effects that the various forms of parking will have on people in the areas that are under consideration. If a trader is disadvantaged and closes his doors because the customers cannot find suitable parking, then it is no good to anyone. That form of parking requirement will disappear altogether. I realise that someone must pay for the provision of parking facilities such as the multi-storey car-park that is to be built.

However, there are a number of options open which will enable revenue to be raised for this purpose and still allow for limited free parking areas to be provided. I wish to touch on 2 of those options about which many people commented to me. The first point is to do with parking meters. I feel that,

because of the limited time available whereby revenue will be required to come back into the council and also because of the uncertainty of the whole parking package, parking meters should not be introduced at this particular stage. It would be a pointless exercise to have parking meters installed and then, after a very short period of time, have them removed for one reason or another. I will not go into detail but there are many methods whereby councils are able to receive money for on-street parking without installing parking meters.

The second point I would like to raise relates to the council's proposal to have retail outlets on the ground floor of the proposed parking station. We have here a situation where more shops will be provided in the central business district, not because there is a demand for more shops but because it is a means of raising revenue. Free enterprise to a large extent works on supply and demand. If we start to fiddle with that principle, then many people will be hurt. I am not against the council moving into this area of revenue raising - it is an accepted revenue raising area in other parts of Australia - but I believe we must be consistent with the world around us. If there is a demand, then I have no objections at all. I think that the people of Darwin would prefer to see a facility such as a library positioned on the ground floor of this parking station.

The only other point I would like to comment on as far as parking is concerned is the question of from what section of the community should revenue be raised for the building of this particular facility. Should revenue be raised from the shoppers, from the people who use the car-park, from the property owners or should it be raised by increases in council rates right across the board? The answer lies in a combination of the options that I have just mentioned. The property owners in the central business district have indicated to me that they are quite prepared to contribute but what we must be careful of here is to make sure that the rate of contribution is based on a formula which in some way relates to the parking requirements of each particular property.

There is a very strong argument that the council should levy right across the board. I am very pleased to see that the central business district is at last being recognised. It was poorly done by for a number of years. The future of the whole area was threatened on occasions, particularly by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission when it considered the decentralisation of the government offices from the central business district out to the northern suburbs. There was also the very real threat to the central business district of the lack of acceptable parking. I am very pleased to see at long last that we will have a facility provided here that will cater for another form of parking.

I mentioned at the start that other development options could be considered once this amendment has been passed. I refer here to companies, such as the company which owns the Darwin Plaza, which own properties on either side of a lane. These companies, with the agreement of the council and the approval of the responsible minister will be able to develop the air space above that particular area. I feel that, as the city grows and further development takes place, the council will have other occasions when it will be asked if the developers could use the air space above the roads. These amendments to the principal act, I believe, could solve many of our problems.

The only other matter I would like to raise is the timing of this particular debate. I mentioned in the debate on the Mall bills that perhaps priorities to business could have been looked at more closely which would have enabled the installation of a high-rise parking facility to be debated before the laws were changed. I support these bills. The amendments are in line with modern

development needs and they also make sure that access is retained by the public.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, in rising to support these bills, I intend to be very brief because the last 2 speakers covered the main points. They will allow the council to apply to the Minister for Lands and Housing to have a certain mall or road vested in them in fee simple. This will then allow the council of its own volition, in partnership with a company, or a company on its own to build in the air space above a road. There is a provision that the road cannot be cut off and that vehicular traffic could still proceed along that road. This is a very necessary part of these bills. Also there is protection for private landowners who own land on either side of any road or mall which is vested in fee simple in the council.

Alice Springs is a growing town. I hate to think that the day will come when we will have high-rise parking facilities. I hope that it will be a long time before it comes. These bills provide for the opportunity to build in the air space in the future. At the moment, the traders in the Todd Street semi-mall are complaining about the lack of parking facilities for their customers. They feel as though they are losing out badly to people who are shopping in other areas where parking is provided to a much greater extent. It may be a long time off before any thought is given to building a high-rise parking facility. I certainly hope it will be a long time but this does lead to other possibilities. There may be times when it may be desirable to use the air space across a road or mall. I commend and support these bills.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

In committee:

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 16)

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move the amendment 13.1.

The purpose of the amendment is simply to improve the wording and to place it in the principal act in a more precise way.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 13.2.

It was not the government's intention to have such an amendment as this inserted in the principal act. However, it has been found that the documents prepared by the Darwin City Council and upon which the tender has been based indicate several pillars in the middle of the road. These become extremely difficult gadgets to run into and they also pose certain traffic difficulties. It is now proposed to take the southern half of the road which will be under a cantilever and which will be permanently open to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The northern half of the roadway abuts the ramp going up the proposed parking station and it is necessary to close off ramps from time to time, particularly when parking stations are full, otherwise we would have cars bumper to bumper all the way up the roadway. This causes the difficulty. The amendment will allow this construction to go ahead by approval from the minister. I would indicate to honourable members that it will not be my

intention while I am minister responsible for this area to so approve again. Nonetheless, in all of the circumstances and having regard to West Lane, I do not think any great inconvenience will be caused to the public. Of course, I would not want the councillors to think that any previous application under this section would be entertained with any degree of approval.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 17)

Bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

CONTROL OF ROADS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 18)

Bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bills passed remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Earlier today, I was asked a question by the honourable member for Sander-son regarding the bus service to the old Darwin Hospital. The reason for the alteration to the bus service relates to the opening of the new hospital at Casuarina and the closure of the intersection at Smith Street and Lambell Terrace during intersection reconstruction. During the roadworks, a partial service was provided by route 6. As the roadworks have now been completed, all route 6 buses will service the hospital. This service will be supplemented by route 4 which will be re-routed past the hospital commencing next Monday. I am confident that this will provide adequate service for the Darwin Hospital.

Mr ISAACS (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, on Thursday of last week, a very fine person and a person who has contributed greatly to the Northern Territory died. I refer to Mr Doug Scott who died in Sydney. Doug was born in Narrandera in New South Wales. He was a very fine sportsman as a young man and he played first-grade rugby league for the Penrith club in Sydney. He has almost a life-long association with Aboriginal affairs in terms of commitment and, in Sydney, prior to his coming to the Northern Territory, he was the Manager of the Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs.

He came to the Northern Territory in the middle of 1975 and held various positions within the community. He was the Manager of the Central Australian Aboriginal Medical Service, the Director of Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, the Regional Manager of both Darwin and Alice Springs for the Aboriginal Hostels Group Limited and an executive member of the Aboriginal Publications Foundation and he represented the Northern Territory on that foundation. He was a member of the Housing Needs Committee under the auspices of the NT Housing Commission and, at one stage, treasurer of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service.

Doug Scott was a reserved man who had integrity and great commitment. He was an Aboriginal man who devoted his life to the most pressing problems of Aboriginal people, that is, health, housing, legal rights and education. He was a very great man. His death is a very great loss to his cause. He is survived by his wife, Georgette, and his son, Clarke, to whom I extend my sincerest condolences.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the funeral is tomorrow and, under normal circumstances, I would have attended that funeral but the sittings of the Assembly have precluded that. However, because of the contribution made by Doug Scott to Aboriginal people, and especially Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, I have asked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who had a very close relationship with the late Doug Scott, to represent me at the funeral tomorrow.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsley): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to add my condolences too to those of the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I did not know Doug Scott well but I met him quite a few times in Katherine and I found him to be very sincere chap. It was a shock to me when he died.

The words 'Aboriginal' and 'alcohol' seem to touch the Leader of the Opposition on the raw. Aboriginal alcoholism has been the subject of 26 debates and I understood that the member for MacDonnell, the member for Victoria River and the member for Arnhem were going to start another practical committee to do something about it but that seems to have fallen by the wayside. The fact is that these are 2 of the problems that touch very greatly on the police force, particularly in Katherine. Katherine has 28 or 30 policemen. That is more than Mt Isa which has 6 or 8 times the population of Katherine.

What I wish to speak about today is the remarks about racism and racial rot in the Katherine Informer, that well-known Katherine paper. It was about this time last year that the honourable member for Victoria River called me a racist when I mentioned the trouble in Katherine. I do not think that I am a racist and I used to shy away when people called me a racist. I remember rising in this place on 3 successive days speaking on the adjournment. On each of the first 2 days, I was really roasted in the NT News because the editor was Jim Bowditch. It took a bit of guts to get up on the third day and the only reason I did it was that I knew I was right. On the third day, Mr Bowditch gave me a good press and we had a pretty fair relationship from then on.

Racism takes many forms. A good friend of mine in Katherine, Sylvia Wolfe, came out to Australia because she was a Jewess and her family would not let her marry the man she eventually did marry. They kicked her out 12 years ago. She has never heard of them or seen them since. That is one kind. I remember being on TV with my old friend Smiler Major and another old friend, Charlie Perkins. It was Charlie's show and he gave us a pretty good rubbing. At the end, I nailed him. I said, 'Mr Perkins, are you a racist?' He said: 'Well, I put my people first but I am not a racist'.

We should start putting Australia first. We have the most divisive, discriminatory legislation - the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act - that ever came out of a communist doctrine. I have copies of another document. This 'Full Human Rights for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' is a program adopted by the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of Australia in June 1967. It says:

For such a policy to become a reality, Aborigines and Islanders should have inalienable possession of their remaining tribal areas, of the land now set aside as government or mission settlements or

a better land where these are unsuitable, ownership of mineral and other natural wealth located on their lands and economic aid to enable them to develop rapidly as modern communities. Preservation and development of their own cultural heritage is a necessary condition for the progress of any community of people. The belief that will develop forms of organisation, ways of doing things, languages, family and community relationships should be determined by the Aboriginal and Islander people themselves.

There is another form of racism and it is strange that the ALP should bring these things up. This shows the black power flag on the ALP election poster for Mr Maged Aboutaleb. We are talking about racism. It is a one-sided argument. We see the magazine Bunji - a recent publication - with a white machine operator out in the uranium country driving over Aboriginal children. I did not hear any cries of racism about that. The offending article in the NT News was reproduced in the Darwin Star. I did not hear any outraged comments about that. You would think once would have been enough; they would not have wanted to have it again. Racism is something that is being dragged across the track to protect what is happening in the Northern Territory.

I am not a racist; I am a realist. What is happening in Katherine is bad. I have said this before and I will say it again. You have people with no motivation wandering around. They get drunk, sober, and then get drunk again. They throw cans anywhere and lie anywhere. On Saturday afternoon, I drove past the Crossways and I saw a fight start. The gentlemen kicked off their thongs and they sparred around for a while. When I came back after going around the median strip, they had stopped. Down the other end, there were 2 Aboriginals asleep on the median strip. I put it to you people straight from the shoulder, racism or not, this is not good for the Northern Territory. I put it to you that this is disgraceful. I put it to you that, if these people were white, they would be locked up - that is racism.

What is happening on all the Aboriginal communities around Katherine, apart from Bamyili and Beswick, is that they have declared their areas dry. All these people are confirmed drinkers. They come to Katherine and Mataranka and that is where they have their binge. That is quite sensible I suppose. But I believe that the towns belong to the people who live in them just as I believe that, if I go to Roper River or Hooker Creek - if I get a permit - I must behave as they want me to behave. I can't make my own rules there and I don't see why I should. That is their place. What are we on about? Are we just proceeding blindly along? Are we just 2 political parties, one with a policy as divisive as the illustration on the cover of the report of the Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs splitting Australians into 6 when we should be combined? We should be united; it should be Australia Fair first. It should be Australia first because we are Australians. Instead of that, we have land rights splitting this country straight up the middle. I think it is very bad indeed.

The impact of royalties on Aboriginals will show you that, in the year 2000, Aboriginals will be getting the equivalent of the 1974 figure of \$900m per annum. This is what land rights is doing. The jealousy created by this is apparent. White people say: 'Why, what's so special about them that our government is giving them this land over us? If you work hard, you are taxed. If you work harder, you are taxed more. But if you don't work at all, you get money for nothing. They give you money. What a crazy system'. I have suggested time and time again that we take a good close look at where we are going because a quarter of our population is going nowhere at all. And if that is racism, well I am racist.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon I would like to comment on something which I hope does not occur in the Northern Territory in the future. I have an interest in agricultural education as it applies to rural schools for post-primary school students. The minister has stated that there will be a rural school established at the Experimental Farm in Katherine. When I heard this, I was very pleased to know that something definite had been decided on. I hope there is a continuation of the good work done by the Katherine Rural Education College when it moves onto this land. What I hope does not occur is that this school, which I hope starts out as a post-primary school, goes on to try for better academic qualifications for the students who go there.

I would like to read from a Karmel Committee Report of 1978 in which comment was made about the educational disease of the 1970s, the academic creep. The Karmel Committee said: 'In recommending guidelines for tertiary education in the next triennium, attention must be drawn to trends seen during the 1970s resulting from the pressure on the educational system for higher qualifications. The response of the educational institutions has been to lengthen courses and lift the academic level of courses at the expense of adequate provision of opportunities for education at the lower end of the educational spectrum'.

As I see it, this rural school should cater for those students who do not wish to have higher tertiary academic qualifications. It should permanently cater for those students who wish to know something in the practical field about earning their living in the rural scene. I think that not enough attention is being paid to this in other places. In the Territory, we have seen the importance of agriculture and we are doing something about it.

However, there are 3 things that militate against agricultural education. The first one is the relatively high cost of agricultural education, especially in the practical field when we consider the land that must be used and worked to provide an education for these students. The second thing is that there are fewer agriculturally sympathetic ears in the legislature. I do not have exact figures but the figures for the members in the House of Representatives in 1974 as compared to members in the House of Representatives at present indicate that a greatly reduced number of those people are concerned with primary industry and in agriculture in Australia.

A third factor encouraging this academic creep in agricultural education is the continuing debate on academic or practical agriculture in the changing role of agricultural colleges because these colleges seek always to grant higher academic qualifications to the students because it enhances their status in the community. I have not heard it said so much lately but, in the past, it used to be said that, if a child could not work as a welder, as a builder or as a carpenter, then put him on the land. That is the only place he is good for. Put him among the horses, the cows and the pigs or have him growing a bit of wheat or something. Unfortunately, in the back of many people's minds, this very old-fashioned view still holds good and it is to be greatly deprecated.

The Organising Committee for the Conference on Agricultural Education in South Australia in 1979 found that there were 3 principal streams of use for agricultural education. One was farmers and farm managers, one was those employed in primary industry servicing these farmers and one was those involved in research and development associated with research. I will ignore the last one because that implies a tertiary qualification. It is most important that our rural education caters for farmers and for those people who will service the farmers. We must do this by sensible, down-to-earth rural education.

I think another factor also to be considered is that agricultural education must not only apply to those students engaged full time in it -

namely, the young people - but it must also take into account the training of current farmers and people currently in the service industries associated with agriculture. In instituting short courses for these people to keep them up to date, the current trends are towards practical agriculture.

Another point of interest is that large sums of money are being directed into projects associated with Aboriginal aid programs in Australia. But to my knowledge, not many of these, if any, are concerned with agricultural enterprises. I would like to see our rural education in the Northern Territory not aimed specifically at one section of the community. I would like to see full co-operation and help extended to Aboriginal people in the community, especially those people who come from outlying settlements. I can only speak for my electorate but there is a great deal of interest in agricultural projects on Bathurst and Melville Islands. If practical down-to-earth teaching is offered to the young people, they can go back to their communities - the same as other young people can go back to their farms - and put to good use what they have learned at these schools.

The second point on which I would like to touch this afternoon concerns a very young concerned mother who rang me last night. It has been mentioned in the Assembly that we have a problem of nits in people's hair in the Northern Territory. I would like to preface my remarks by saying that what hurt most of all was the fact that this child, who had the nits in his hair, is a fourth generation Northern Territorian. The child brought home a letter. He did not know what was in the letter. Obviously, he had been inspected by the sisters and he knew that he had nits. When the mother opened the letter, she found that it was in Portuguese and she took great umbrage at this because she said: 'Here am I trying to bring up my children, trying to teach them English. Here am I sending them to an English-speaking school. What do I do with this?' I said: 'How do you know it is Portuguese and how do you know it is about the nits?' She said: 'I put two and two together and assumed it was Portuguese because it looked as though it was Portuguese and it was about nits because the child said he had nits'.

That is the state of affairs. I may be commenting facetiously on it but I think it highlights what I hope does not occur in the future: division in the community. We are supposed to be one community and we speak English in this community.

Mr B. Collins: Not all of us Noel.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: We all live in Australia which is an English-speaking country. Some of us may not have it as our mother tongue but we come here to live and it is an English-speaking country.

The third subject on which I would like to comment is something in which I have had an interest for some time. It is the subject of titles. I am not referring to the titles that the Queen gives people, those grand titles which are probably alien to our way of life as some people would say, but titles that we all have in the community. Many years ago, these used to refer either to our position in the community or our occupation in the community. Some of these titles have become people's names. For example, the names Cooper, Smith or Farmer referred to occupations.

I come next to the titles of men and women. Men have the same title all their life and they are called 'Misters'. When a woman marries, it has been considered socially correct for her to change her title. I know this is not the case all the time and I heartily congratulate anyone who only answers to a

title which relates to her as an individual and not to the man with whom she lives. I do not think referring to a female person as 'Ms', which is the corruption of 'Mrs' or 'Miss', goes the whole distance. I would like to see people use the old English title. Perhaps those women in the community who would like to think they have reached a certain age or a certain standing in the community would like people to regard them in a certain way. I refer to the interesting old title of 'Mistress'. I think it is a shame that this has been corrupted over the years to the 2 titles that single women and married women use. Now all women use the title of 'Ms' if they consider themselves liberated. Personally, I answer to everything, depending on the company, but I think the old-fashioned title also has some interesting modern overtones to it.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, much as I would like to comment on some of the remarks from the honourable member for Elsey, I will restrain myself. However, I would like to make a very brief comment on this interesting little communist booklet which he has circulated and which I certainly will not read. I am fascinated by the signature on the top right hand corner. It is the signature of God's gift to the Aboriginal race, one Harold Christian Giese, and it is the kind of garbage that I would imagine Harry Giese would disseminate. I have worked for him for more years than I would like to remember.

On Wednesday of last week, in answer to a question from the honourable member for Tiwi concerning Bali cattle experiments, the Minister for Primary Production and Tourism replied: 'The program will be terminated after some 17 years of research requiring considerable resources. The results achieved are inconclusive. A scientific opinion both inside and outside the department is quite diverse about the commercial use of this particular cross-bred animal. I am advised that, while the department was successful in breeding 2 fertile Brahman-Bali-cross bulls, at the most optimistic estimate, a further 10 or 15 years of breeding and selecting from a large population would be required to enable the department to assess their commercial value'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my information is that the answer supplied by the honourable minister is only partly correct. The honourable minister says that the experimentation has been going on for 17 years. I think if he checks he will find that the cattle were mustered 17 years ago and, in fact, the formal experimentation resulting in cross-breeding did not actually commence until 1968 and then by accident. It was not experimental controlled breeding. It was a sort of accidental breeding and a Brahman-Bali-cross calf was produced in 1968. In fact, the experiment has only been going on for 12 years. Any expert on cattle breeding would know and admit that it is not possible to evolve a new breed of cattle inside 20 years. There has been a problem of first and second cross male infertility but the project has just reached a stage where it has been successful in producing proven fertile cross-bred bulls which is undoubtedly a major breakthrough.

It is also true to say that the Bali cattle project has been slowed down and plagued by things like poor nutrition due to various management factors. This is partly due to pressures on the Department of Primary Production due to a high rate of staff turnover, to lack of resident technical staff and to lack of money available for the Coastal Plains Research Station. These factors have been recognised and it is my information that they have been overcome. The Bali cattle project is probably one of the most crucial projects of all to the well-being of cattle production in north Australia and associated areas of South-east Asia and elsewhere because it aims to improve the major deficiency which is low fertility in cattle. Bali cows have achieved close to 100% conception. To translate that to the number of calves weaned is largely a matter of management expertise. Cross-breeds could be expected to have both improved conception

ability and an improved weaning rate over other cattle. The cost-benefit analysis of this research work is potentially the most favourable of any project because genetic improvement is permanent and has no maintenance costs. The project is now at the stage where great benefits may be expected to flow, given good management by the department in conjunction with selected interested producers.

These cattle have other exceptional abilities, not the least of which is an ability to maintain body weight on low-quality pastures which have little nutritional value. Since a group of cross-bred cows was transferred to Tortilla Flats earlier this year, they have made remarkable progress and have impressed many informed observers.

The Bali cattle project is a Territory project and it should stay in the Territory. The minister says scientific opinion both inside and outside his department is quite diverse with regard to the commercial value of these animals. I have had no feedback from expert opinions without the department but I have sought expert opinion from within his department. The people to whom I have spoken have been most favourably disposed towards continuing the project. Some practical farmers with whom I have spoken believe that to abandon the project at this stage when it is beginning to come to fruition is nothing short of an act of lunacy. The cattle will probably be handed over to James Cook University or somewhere to let them reap the benefits of all the hard work and spade work done by the Territory Department of Primary Production. Is it any wonder, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the minister's department is seething with discontent and frustration and is having such a heavy turnover in staff?

It is a tragedy if all the efforts of dedicated officers of the Department of Primary Production have been in vain. This new breed of animal shows such great potential considering our harsh climatic conditions and the low nutritional value of the natural feed available on which this beast can still maintain its body weight whilst other breeds are unable to do so. It would be a tragedy if they were lost to the Territory. I would ask the minister to seriously consider rescinding his decision to abandon this project which I and many other people feel would be of inestimable value to the Territory.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been mentioned many times before in this Assembly that we have a remarkably cosmopolitan population in the Northern Territory. I remember from past debates that the number of nationalities represented in Darwin alone is in excess of 40. That is quite remarkable. There has been a great deal of comment made in previous debates in commending the efforts of organisations such as the Electoral Office to communicate with people in their own tongue so that they can understand what people are trying to tell them. That is a proposition that received support generally from both sides of the Assembly.

I was unaware that the Department of Education had taken on the job of communicating to the parents of the pupils in Northern Territory schools advice about the serious problem of head lice - and the Chief Minister, amongst others, has taken a close personal interest in this - in languages they can understand so that they can do something about the problem. I know full well that the honourable member for Tiwi would be well aware that 100% of the letters that were sent out were not written in Portuguese. Obviously, an administrative error has been made in one particular case and I am sure that the honourable member is simply nit-picking. I would like to commend the Department of Education for undertaking the not inconsiderable effort of attempting to overcome this problem by communicating with people in a language they can understand. I know that there have been auspicious people in the Northern Territory in the past who have made errors of this kind, including the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I remember that,

on one occasion, he was the subject of a letter to the editor. I cannot let that remark go past without commending the Education Department for the effort it is obviously putting into this campaign.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this afternoon to say vale to Dhupuma College. The reason I am prompted to do this is that I heard a news item on the ABC just the other day that the Lions Club at Nhulunbuy will assist the government by selling up the movable items at Dhupuma. Since the final moves are being made in that direction, it is appropriate to have a look at what has happened to the pupils who attended Dhupuma College. The honourable Minister for Education said today that, when ministers make statements in the Assembly, they tend to be definitive. Unfortunately, that could not be applied to the minister's statement on Dhupuma College.

Many funny things have happened about the closure of Dhupuma College which showed the degree of non-planning that went into it. I refer to silly, expensive and annoying little things such as teaching staff being sent out to the college on transfer with all their goods and chattels one week before the college closed. A 30-KVA generator was purchased and then shipped at not inconsiderable expense to Nhulunbuy to be used at Dhupuma College just a few months before it was closed. It was then shipped back to Darwin again. We heard today from the Minister for Transport and Works about the costs of transporting demountables. We had a demountable classroom moved from Yirrkala to Dhupuma then back again to Yirrkala 5 months afterwards because of the closure. It was fairly obvious to everybody that a great deal of planning had gone into the closure.

More importantly, it would be of some interest at this time for members to have a look at what has happened to the kids. There were 9 pupils at Dhupuma from Lake Evella. Parents in the community felt so strongly about sending their children to Kormilda that they did not allow any of them to attend. The honourable minister will recall that it was this kind of attitude by Aboriginal parents that caused Dhupuma College to be built in the first place: dissatisfaction with sending their children to Darwin. Thus, 9 children were lost immediately. There were 8 children from Umbakumba and, because Kormilda would not accept a house-parent from Umbakumba, no students attended. There were 15 kids from Elcho Island. They originally refused to allow their children to attend Kormilda but, after visits from the Department of Education and the Principal of Kormilda College, they sent their children to Kormilda. As a result, an undertaking has been made by the department to have an Elcho Island house-parent at Kormilda College. This was not done in the case of the other communities. Eleven of those children are currently attending. Maningrida originally refused to allow the children to attend Kormilda. There is now a house-parent and 2 children have dropped out. Milingimbi had 10 children at Dhupuma College and they all started at Kormilda College despite the fact that the community was demonstrably very unhappy about it.

One year, 10 students from Nhulunbuy were placed in year 11 at Kormilda. There were 28 children from Roper River. After an initial inspection of Kormilda by community members and an assurance given that the girls' dormitories would be made more secure within 2 weeks after the children commenced at the college, all the students were allowed to attend Kormilda. It is very interesting that, despite those assurances, the girls' dormitory has still not been completed. Rumangining had 6 children at Dhupuma College, all of whom attended Kormilda believing that they would be allowed to have a house-parent from their community at Kormilda. This did not eventuate. The Numbulwar community did not and still will not allow any of its children to attend Kormilda.

To sum up, out of the 106 students who were attending Dhupuma on its final day in what everybody acknowledged was the very best year it had ever had, 58 have now dropped out of secondary education. Of the Dhupuma students who were attending Nhulunbuy High School, none now attends the high school. I believe that it is probably appropriate at this time to record that information in Hansard.

I would like to turn to an answer which I received from the Minister for Health this morning. I asked if he was aware that large numbers of people are travelling considerable distances to Casuarina Hospital only to find, when they get there, that they cannot receive medical attention. I asked if it was true that medical practitioners were not available to outpatients until 1 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The answer was that he did not know but he would find out.

Ministers have a lot of work to do, and certainly a great deal passes across their desks. If this question had never been asked before, we could possibly excuse the Minister for Health for being out of touch with the Casuarina Hospital. As we all know, that question and that problem has been raised incessantly in this Assembly by a number of honourable members. The last time it was raised was by the honourable member for Sanderson when she asked the minister on Wednesday 20 August 1980: 'Is it the policy of the Department of Health to discourage attendance by the public at Casuarina Hospital's Casualty clinic and, if not, upon whose authority are physicians who attend at that clinic informing patients that they should not attend that clinic, but seek the services of a private practitioner instead?' The honourable minister replied: 'I have absolutely no knowledge of any practice by the department...'. That is the same answer that I received and the same answer the honourable member for Fannie Bay has received on previous occasions.

The facts are that the honourable minister knows full well what is happening at Casuarina Hospital but he just will not come clean. The people for whom he will not come clean are members of the public who are being inconvenienced by this particular situation and hospital staff who are becoming a little bit sick of the friction that it causes them. A few days ago, I had a gentleman in my office complaining bitterly of the treatment that he had received at Casuarina Hospital. He had been injured at work - he works for NTEC - and he had been sent to Casuarina Hospital to have his injury attended to. He was treated and then told by the doctor concerned that, if his injury had not improved, he should come back to the hospital and have it examined again on the following Monday. Because his injury was not any better, he went back to Casuarina Hospital. When he arrived at the hospital, he was told that he would not be treated because he was a non-emergency patient and there would not be a doctor available to treat him unless he wanted to wait - and this was early in the morning - until 1 o'clock in the afternoon because there were no doctors available for outpatient care until 1 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The gentleman concerned was a bit agitated about this because he had been told the previous week by the doctor who treated him to come back at that particular time. After a fair amount of agitation, he was seen by a doctor. In fact, I understand a rather senior doctor treated him. I have no bones at all with the hospital for acting in that matter. The gentleman concerned protested vehemently at the time to the hospital staff present and said: 'Why don't you tell us that these situations are in force? Why don't you put some public notices in the papers where we can see them? Let us know that we were travelling all this distance for nothing!' The reply that he received was very interesting. He was told that people at the hospital had been instructed that they were not to make such public comment - very interesting indeed - and I

understand from talking to some hospital staff that they are not very happy about it. In fact, at one stage, the dreadful word 'politics' was used.

In view of the fact that we have been receiving no answers to this relatively simple question for a long time now, I ask the minister, for the benefit of the public and the hospital staff who are sick and tired of justifiably angry people, would he please spend a little bit of the government's money that we have been hearing about today and cause some prominent notices to be placed in the media advising people in Darwin of the services available and not available to them at Casuarina Hospital and other health facilities around Darwin. We need a comprehensive statement that people can pin up on their walls. That is what they want, and I understand that is what many of the medical staff at the hospital would like also. It may also be of some interest, in relation to the question asked by the honourable member for Sanderson as to whether people are actively being discouraged from getting care at the hospital, that the people who attend at the hospital for outpatient care are actually being given a duplicated set of the names and addresses of private practitioners in Darwin. It is being handed out at the Casuarina Hospital. I have a copy of this assistance you get from the hospital. I know perfectly well that the minister is either totally out of touch with his department or he is simply not wanting to come clean on it. It has to be one or the other. When people go for outpatient care at the Casuarina Hospital, not only are they told that they cannot get it but they are given a duplicated list of private practitioners with names and addresses and told: 'We are not allowed to recommend any one of these people but this is a list of all of them. You take your pick and get your own medical care'.

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

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Arnhem has pinched my speech but I am still going to put on record how deeply I feel about this question of the evasion by the Minister for Health, which we see day by day in this Assembly, of the honourable member for Fannie Bay in particular who has been asking questions for some time about the treatment of outpatients at Casuarina Hospital. The questions go back months. As the honourable member for Arnhem stated, on Wednesday 20 August the honourable member for Sanderson asked a particular question of the Minister for Health and his reply was that he did not know but he would find out. Now he has had some months to find out and yet this morning, when the honourable member for Arnhem asked a question that I think a few of us were going to ask about the apparent lack of staff to service the clinic at Casuarina Hospital, the minister said he had no knowledge of what was going on but he would find out.

We have had some debates this sittings about the value of question time. Of course, members of the opposition, whether they be in the ALP or without a party, and government backbenchers are well aware of the fact that question time is the one time members of parliament can expose to the public scrutiny the actions of executive government. In fact, the Minister for Education has stated that he supports the supremacy of the parliament over the executive. But the one government minister who consistently fails to reply to simple, straightforward and reasonable questions at question time - not curly ones, not ones needing a great deal of detail - is the Minister for Health and for Mines and Energy. I call upon him to resign that health portfolio.

On 21 August 1980, the member for Fannie Bay was similarly waxy on this. The honourable member for Fannie Bay, in castigating the minister for the lack of information he provides, stated: 'I am sick and tired of this Assembly

seeing me and other members address questions to the Minister for Health and he not answering them. I hope the next time we assemble, or even before, he has the courage to say what his policies are'.

That was also on the provision of facilities at Casuarina Hospital. In the intervening months, the minister has not bothered to inquire what is the practice at the hospital or he does not have a policy or, if he does have a policy, he is hoping to God that no one will question it and ask him what it is. Mr Deputy Speaker, the interesting thing is that members of the public attend a very expensive hospital and they naturally attend in the expectation that they will receive a service. We must remember too that the Sanderson Community Health Clinic is not on the capital works program for this year and people who would be wanting to attend that clinic in its rebuilt form are attending Casuarina Hospital with its larger facilities. When they get there, they are being told there is no doctor on duty until a certain hour: 'If you want to wait, you can. That is your prerogative. But if you do not want to wait, I suggest you see a private practitioner'.

That sounds all very glib but let us look at the practicalities. The people who have come to me distressed at the sequence of events have been, by and large, parents with young children needing attention. Particularly in a tropical area, young children continually present a variety of symptoms in the wet season which, if diagnosed and treated early, cause no great problem but, if left unattended, cause horrendous problems in the future, particularly middle ear infections and tropical ear. If one has, say, 3 young children and does not live in an air-conditioned environment with controlled humidity, and allows the children to swim to keep cool in the backyard pools or elsewhere, one certainly finds the necessity to visit for primary health attention a facility which one would expect to find at the Casuarina Hospital. I am aware that some people in the northern suburbs have found it more convenient to travel to Casuarina Hospital but there are large numbers of people living in Parap and Darwin City proper who take the trouble to go out to Casuarina and then find that it was all for naught. They say that, if the policy - and they do not like it - is not to have the facilities available, why does someone not say so?

It is not up to the staff to be put in this invidious position of trying to apologise for a non-policy of the non-minister. However, that is what they are expected to do. They are being put in a dreadful position. Members of the public are aware of what is going on and are quietly furious. The Minister for Health seems to be the one person in the Territory who does not know. He has not known for months. He still does not know - has not taken the trouble to find out - and I suggest that his portfolio could well be reallocated to one of the other government ministers whose portfolios do not appear to be extremely onerous. There are 2 there. One is the Minister for Transport and Works - a civil works program runs itself - and the other is the minister for cows and tourists. Mr Deputy Speaker, tourism needs some government incentive but, by and large, it is private enterprise that is the backbone of the tourist industry so that is not a particularly onerous part - in fact, I am sure it is quite pleasurable - of the honourable minister's duties. I believe he is going overseas to further his knowledge of tourism. As for his other portfolio, the interesting part of fisheries has been snaffled by the Chief Minister. All we have left of fisheries is the bones of the fisheries department.

The reason I mention these 2 gentlemen being able to take on the portfolio is that at least they do try to answer questions. In fact, they have been most forthcoming and have anticipated questions which are likely to be asked from honourable members on this side of the Assembly. They have done their best to

provide the answers, if not immediately, at least within the sitting time of the Assembly - a policy which is not followed by the Minister for Health and for Mines and Energy. The Chief Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Education and for Lands and Housing certainly have enough to do at present. Some might be so unwise as to suggest that the Chief Minister has almost too much. But there are 2 government ministers who could take on a portfolio which is of great importance to the people of the Territory - health care. It ranks with education as being basic. I will repeat that the honourable minister presently holding the portfolio should relinquish it. His is the poorest performance of any government minister in this Assembly and in the preceding Assembly. As it is the same government, I make no apology for alluding to the affairs of the previous Assembly.

In conclusion, may I say there is only one other comment I want to make and that was also covered by the member for Arnhem. It is delightful to learn that the Departments of Health and Education are taking the time and the trouble to approach in their own language people who have recently come to live in Darwin to appraise them of problems which arise. Federal government agencies have been doing this for some considerable time. The use of a variety of languages is actively encouraged by the present federal government and it is distasteful to hear that a member of this government finds that it is wrong in some ways for these people to be addressed in their first tongue. Prior to my entering into politics, I worked for a group of doctors as their receptionist. I am aware of the distress of people approaching doctors when they cannot really understand the reply the doctor has given.

The Department of Health in the Northern Territory years ago produced a range of multi-lingual booklets for the use of mothers who were about to give birth. The support it gave those people to have someone on hand to ask them questions in their own language and to understand their replies was delightful and a credit to the people sponsoring the programs. I condemn the member for Tiwi for her remarks which called into question the wisdom of conducting such a program. The more the program is developed, the better it will be. Of course, as people develop fluency in English such programs may not be needed but, until that fluency is reached, the programs must not only continue but be encouraged and expanded.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, there are 2 points I briefly want to raise tonight. The first one concerns a headline in the Northern Territory News of 22 November. It is headlined 'Pastoralist accused'. The newspaper article relates to comments made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who indicated that he in fact had sent telegrams to 2 pastoral properties in Central Australia, one in the Stuart electorate and one in the Barkly electorate. The one in the Stuart electorate is the one I want to comment on. He indicated that the owners of the property refused to accept a telegram that he sent to that property. I spoke to them during the weekend and I would like to present their story on their behalf.

There are a large number of Aboriginal people living at Napperby Station and, over many years, the pastoralists who own that property have developed a close personal and working relationship with those people and, over a period of time, have accepted radio-telephone calls and telegrams for them. The telegrams are from various government departments and sometimes from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. These extend to sometimes in excess of 200 words per telegram. It is my belief that telegrams are used only in emergency situations and, because of the cost, you keep them short.

Mrs Chisholm, the wife of the owner of Napperby Station, said that she did refuse to accept the telegram verbatim. She took the general gist of it and,

because she was ill and there was no one else at the property that day, she asked for it to be put in the mailbag and sent out. She then relayed the basic text of that telegram to the intended recipient. By way of explanation, telegrams there do not go out by radio but by radio-telephone. On many occasions, the radio-telephone service in Central Australia is limited by the operators and the bad reception. She did what I believe any other person would have done under the circumstances.

I would also point out that the entire costs of the rental and the repair costs of that telephone are borne by the property owners. They don't question that; they never have in the past and I don't think they will in the future. For pastoralists in Central Australia or anywhere else in the Northern Territory to pick up newspapers and find themselves accused and unjustifiably attacked by fellows like Neville Perkins is unfair. They are remote from anywhere else and unable to reply to unfair attacks such as this. I would suggest that the honourable member for MacDonnell owes a public apology at least to Napperby Station.

I would like to explain the activities and organisation of a Central Australian society of which I am chairman. I refer to the Ghan Preservation Society which was formed late in 1979. With the formation of a steering committee, we applied to the Northern Territory government for a grant to employ the services of an engineer to prepare for us a feasibility study into the reconstruction of certain sections of the line and the economics of running it as a tourist attraction and as a tribute to our pioneers. I refer to that section of line from the MacDonnell siding south of Alice Springs to a point 68 kilometres south of MacDonnell siding at Deep Well. We obtained from the Northern Territory government a cheque for \$3,000 and we employed the services of an engineer who is based in Adelaide. We are still waiting on that report and, hopefully, within a few weeks we will have it in our hands.

In the meantime, the steering committee has applied to the federal government for a peppercorn rental over the line, rolling stock and certain equipment from the MacDonnell siding to Deep Well 68 kilometres south of Alice Springs. We are not optimistic of getting that line, so we may be queuing up to ask the Chief Minister to help us. If he can get lines built, maybe his power of persuasion can encourage the federal government to give the Ghan Preservation Committee a peppercorn rental over that line. If we obtain that, we propose to launch a national appeal for the restoration funds and call a general public meeting in Central Australia to form a Ghan Preservation Society similar to the societies that operate in other parts of Australia.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, recently, along with the honourable member for Tiwi, I had the privilege of going to Queensland to see a couple of agricultural colleges that they have at Burdekin and Emerald. These are 2 of 4 colleges that have been set up under Queensland act number 45 of 1965. These colleges are extremely successful and I would like to see something along similar lines considered for the Territory.

To give you a very brief rundown on how these are organised, the Minister for Education appoints the board to a particular college and this board is made up of successful farmers, graziers and agricultural people. The principal of the college is a member of that board and is employed by the board. The staff for the college is appointed by the board. They are chosen on their particular skills which are essential for the program taught in the college. It is interesting to note that very few of the staff are actually trained teachers. They rely upon teaching skills which these people will learn as they teach the children. They improve upon the teaching side of their skills and upon the way of getting the message across.

The conditions of employment are extremely interesting. Not everybody may agree. They are on a salary for a start. In a farming community, with harvests and sowing and so forth, they may have to work very long hours just like they would have to do if they were farming for a living and aiming to do the best by it. Also the people who are employed are on 3-weeks notice. If things do not work out, they can be given notice. One might think this would be an unhappy situation but I have found that the staff were obviously very content in their work. For many people without teaching qualifications, the salaries offered are extremely good. They appreciate that. Free housing is thrown in and, all in all, staff turnover is extremely low. The way the houses are looked after by the people on these particular colleges is a credit to the people and indicates again their contentment.

The courses which are offered are of 2 years' duration and concern 3 parts. The first part involves the teaching of skills such as welding, carpentry, lathe work, bricklaying, concreting, farm construction and mechanics. At the Burdekin College in particular, many of the outbuildings were actually constructed by the students under the supervision of the teachers there. They had one particular thing on the mechanics side which impressed me very much. They had 10 old Holden motors. They have frames for these motors to sit in and each student had to completely strip a motor and then put the motor back together again and make it work. There is a real emphasis then on the skills which can be useful side-lines to farming.

Then, of course, there is the practical farming side. That is emphasised to a high degree. I need not go into all the bits and pieces but they are well covered. The third section is the farm theory. It deals with bookkeeping, the keeping of taxation records and cash flow methods so that the farmer at any stage knows exactly how much money he has on hand and what his bills are and so forth.

The aim of these colleges is to provide the basis for scholars to go on and become farm managers. In other words, there are some real incentives. The colleges are funded initially by a debenture scheme which I am not particularly keen on and neither are some of the principals of the colleges. Each student pays fees of about \$600 a term which is about \$3,600 for 2 years. Then there is the sale of products. The thing that really impressed me in particular about Burdekin was that the sale of products, along with the fees, were just about enabling these colleges to pay their own way. They have a contract for supplying a certain amount of rice and sugar. Last year, they raised about \$0.5m in fees and raised about \$0.25m from sales. If it had not been for the interest payments on the debentures, they would have just about been self-sufficient.

How successful are the colleges? We have been assured that no student has any trouble whatsoever in finding good employment. There is a long waiting list of people trying to get into the colleges. If the honourable members are interested, I have a pictorial record which I would be prepared to show them at my office in the Nelson Building. I believe that a college along these lines should be considered for the Territory. I believe that agriculture would be greatly helped by such a college.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

TABLED PAPERS

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, on 29 October 1980, I approved, in accordance with powers provided to me under section 13 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, transfers of funds between subdivisions within the provisions of the Supply Act 1980-81. In accordance with the requirements of section 13(2) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, I table the order made by me on 29 October 1980.

I table a further paper. On 14 November 1980, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia acting with the advice of the Executive Council approved, in accordance with powers provided to him under section 13 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the transfer of funds between subdivisions within the provisions of the Supply Act 1980-81. In accordance with the requirements of section 13(2) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, I table the order made by me on 14 November 1980.

VALUER-GENERAL, NORTHERN TERRITORY OFFICE - ANNUAL REPORT 1979-80

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): Mr Speaker, I table the Valuer-General's Report for 1979-80. This is merely for the information of honourable members.

COMMISSIONER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS - ANNUAL REPORT 1979-80

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I table the report of the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs for the year ended 30 June 1980. I move that this Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act 1977, authorises the publication of the report of the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs for the year ended 30 June 1980 and that the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): 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.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr ROBERTSON (Lands and Housing) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to correct my answer to a question this morning. With all of the talk about the Thorak Reserve area, I was becoming confused between cemeteries and rubbish dumps.

It is a cemetery we have been talking about, not a rubbish dump. The answer to the question is that agreement has been reached with the city council for the use of the eastern part of section 110 of the cemetery site. The question about the location of a large animal pound will have to be taken on notice. Indeed, it is debatable whether or not it is desirable to have such an animal pound in that area at all.

REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL BILL (Serial 39)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is to establish a Northern Territory tribunal to inquire into, report on and determine the remuneration, allowances and entitlements payable to members of this Assembly and to such persons or classes of persons as may from time to time be referred to it. The bill proposes to repeal the Legislative Assembly (Remuneration, Allowances and Entitlements) Act under which members' salaries and allowances are presently determined. The present act provides that the Administrator may request the Remuneration Tribunal, established under the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal Act, to inquire into and determine members' salaries. This is in fact what has occurred until the present time.

Mr Speaker, it is the government's policy, and I believe it is one that would be supported by the majority of honourable members, that the Territory should, wherever possible, accept state-type responsibilities. In introducing this bill, the government proposes to create a Territory tribunal to inquire into, report on and determine remuneration, allowances and other entitlements to be paid to members of the Assembly. It is also proposed that the tribunal will inquire into salaries and so on to be paid to persons holding various offices within the Territory. For instance, one can imagine that, if and when the Territory has to appoint judges to the Supreme Court, this tribunal would be the appropriate tribunal to determine their salaries and allowances.

Mr Speaker, this bill accords with the government's stated policy and will result in the Territory taking another step towards independence in respect of its own affairs. I am sure honourable members will agree that, having regard to our rather unique situation here as against the rest of Australia, it is preferable that a Territory tribunal determine conditions for people living and working here.

Turning to the bill, honourable members will see that the functions of the tribunal are twofold. The tribunal is to be empowered to inquire into and report on or determine the remuneration payable to members of the Assembly and, by clause 10, to inquire into and report on remuneration payable to other persons as directed. In relation to its powers contained in clause 10, the tribunal has no power to make a determination. The reason for this is a legal one as a result of constraints presently existing in the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act. While the power is expressly given for this Assembly to legislate in respect of a tribunal to determine remuneration and such like for members of the Assembly, there is no power for the Assembly to legislate in regard to a tribunal to determine the conditions of employment generally. For this reason, the bill has been drafted in its present form. Just to clear up the remark I made earlier in relation to this tribunal determining judges' salaries in the future, it would be the policy of this government that, in view of the fact that the existing judges are federal judges, the determinations of the federal Remuneration Tribunal in respect of federal judges should apply to them whilst they continue in their office unless they approach the government to request it to do otherwise.

In relation to its powers under clause 10, the tribunal will be able to perform a very important function. While the present practice of the Executive Council determining remuneration of specific office holders and departmental heads will have to continue, at least the Executive Council will have the benefit of the recommendations of an independent tribunal. While I agree that it would be preferable to empower the tribunal to make determinations in its own right, as I have said, we are constrained by the limitations contained in the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act.

I think very little more needs to be said about the particular clauses of the bill. They are fairly standard provisions creating boards and such like. Honourable members will note that the board is to consist of not more than 3 members. However, provision is also included for the constitution of the tribunal

by 1 member only. This is designed to give a degree of flexibility and to ensure that only appropriately qualified persons are appointed. There is also provision for the minister to make an interim order where no particular determination is in existence. This provision presently exists in the Legislative Assembly (Remuneration, Allowances and Entitlements) Act and its inclusion in the bill is considered worth while having regard to its usefulness in the present act.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES BILL (Serial 47)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill provides for the control of private hospitals and nursing homes. Honourable members will be aware that there are at present no private hospitals in the Territory and that all hospital services are provided by the government. Over the years there have been proposals to establish private hospitals and, at present, tenders are being invited for the use of the former Darwin Hospital for this purpose. It is important that the government ensure that any such hospitals meet proper standards and that the well-being of patients and the general public is protected.

This bill requires private hospitals to be licensed and any such licence is to be issued by the Chief Medical Officer when he is satisfied that the proposed institutions meet proper and adequate standards. The bill empowers the Chief Medical Officer to inspect private hospitals and nursing homes and, in fact, at least one inspection is required each year. The bill provides that the Chief Medical Officer may require repairs, alterations, additions or improvements to premises or to equipment within times specified. Failure to comply could lead to the cancellation of an institution's licence.

The Chief Medical Officer, under the act, will have power in an emergency to close an institution and arrange the transfer of patients to a government hospital. The cost of such transfer will be a charge against the licensee concerned. Provision is made for appeals to a magistrate against any decision of the Chief Medical Officer. Care has been taken to define the duties and responsibilities of both the licensee and the manager of a private hospital or nursing home and to ensure that adequate standards will be maintained.

This bill provides protection for Northern Territorians who may choose to avail themselves of facilities established by private institutions. It will ensure that high standards are maintained and that the welfare and well-being of such Territorians will be protected. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

STOCK DISEASES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 54)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr ROBERTSON (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

While some may accuse me of straying into the round paddock in dealing with the Stock Diseases Act, this amendment is in fact consequential upon the Crown Lands Amendment Bill presently before the Assembly. The power under the Stock Diseases Act to impose controls on various movements of diseased stock identifies the stock and the owners by reference to the holding on which they are held. As the word 'holding' is presently defined, it is limited to land held under leasehold. The proposed freeholding legislation will mean a significant expansion of freehold land into rural areas where disease control and eradication programs are required. Because of the ever-present threat of the outbreak of exotic diseases, it is essential that the government have full authority to carry out the necessary control measures on all land, both leasehold and freehold. The purpose of this amendment, therefore, is to broaden the definition of the word 'holding' for the purposes of the Stock Diseases Act to cover land held under any form of tenure.

Mr Speaker, while a body of advice given to me indicates this legislation should pass through all stages at this sittings, consistent with my new found attitude, I am most reluctant to do so. It seems to me that freehold land on rural holdings, which will become freehold subject to the passage of the legislation before us, is most unlikely to be registered as freehold land in respect of those properties prior to our next sittings. For that reason, I believe the legislation can be properly stood over.

Debate adjourned.

COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE AGENTS LICENSING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 50)

Bill presented and read a first time.

MR EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill makes 2 changes to the scope and operation of the Commercial and Private Agents Licensing Act. It also amends that act to improve its administration and to improve the drafting. Two important changes are to section 4 and section 8.

Section 4 is to be amended to exclude insurance loss adjusters from the operation of the act. They are excluded from the equivalent New South Wales and Victorian acts. It is considered that an act designed mainly to regulate debt collection and service of court process is not the appropriate place to regulate what is essentially insurance work. Section 4 is also amended to allow classes of activity to be exempted by regulation.

Section 8 is to be amended to delete the requirement that officers of a company must be resident in the Territory for the company to obtain a licence. This requirement does not exist in equivalent state acts and no real purpose is served by it. Officers will still have to be fit and proper persons before their company is granted a licence and to retain the requirement will force a number of reputable firms to cease operation or to set up dummy companies.

The other amendments are designed to clarify some problems in the operation of the act that have arisen in the 2 months that it has been in operation. The most important is clause 11 which proposes to insert a new section 18 which will make it clear that an agent must maintain a fund in force. The new subsections to section 33, inserted by clause 13, make it clear how a private bailiff executing a warrant will be reimbursed if he is employed directly by the plaintiff. He will be reimbursed by the plaintiff. If he is employed by the clerk, the payment will

be through the clerk.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

FISH AND FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 51)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr STEELE (Primary Production and Tourism): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will provide legislation for the Northern Territory which complements the Commonwealth Fisheries Amendment Act 1980 and honours the Chief Minister's undertaking in the Assembly on 16 May 1979 and on 1 May 1980.

Under the Commonwealth Fisheries Amendment Act 1980, a reference to 'state' or 'states' is defined to include the Territory as if it were a state. The Commonwealth act gives effect to the fisheries part of the offshore constitutional settlement reached with the states and the Northern Territory at the Premiers Conference in November 1979. The act creates a legal and administrative structure, the objective of which is to rationalise the roles of the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory and the states in managing Australia's fisheries. The act has the potential to eliminate many of the artificial lines on the sea that fishermen have been required to observe hitherto. It offers also the prospect of liberating fishermen from the need to hold a multiplicity of licences in order to comply with Commonwealth and Territory fishing laws.

The Commonwealth act provides initially for the establishment of 4 joint authorities each comprising the appropriate federal minister and the corresponding minister or ministers of the state or states concerned. Additional joint authorities may be established by Commonwealth-state agreement.

I must stress, however, that neither under the amendment bill before this Assembly today nor the Commonwealth Fisheries Amendment Act 1980 is the establishment of joint authority arrangements obligatory. Rather, the legislation simply provides the consultative mechanism for the management of a particular fishery. Consultation agreement would determine which fishery would be involved, what law will apply and over what area. The provisions of the Commonwealth Act giving effect to the new jurisdictional structure will come into operation on a date fixed by proclamation.

Mr Speaker, I will now give a brief summary of the events leading up to the presentation of this legislation. Before 1973, the states assumed that state boundaries extended seawards for 3 miles. In 1973, the Seas and Submerged Lands Act was passed by the federal parliament vesting the sovereignty of territorial seas in the Commonwealth. This act was challenged in 1976 by New South Wales in the High Court. The High Court, by a majority decision, declared that the act was valid. Apart from other aspects, this limited state powers in respect of the control of fisheries.

The Premiers Conference in June 1978 and November 1979 agreed that the Commonwealth, states and Territory would pass complementary fisheries legislation as part of an offshore constitutional settlement package. By agreement, the New South Wales Crown Solicitor prepared a draft model of complementary legislation for adoption by the states. This draft model has been used in the preparation of the bill under discussion. It has been modified, of course, where the particular needs of the Territory dictate.

Briefly, the basic amendments contained in the bill designed to complement Commonwealth legislation in relation to the jurisdiction over the 200-mile Australian fishing zone are: (a) to provide for the establishment by arrangement between the Commonwealth and the territory and or a state or states of joint authorities each consisting of the Commonwealth minister administering fisheries and the corresponding minister in the participating territory, state or states; (b) to vest the management of a particular fishery either by species of fish or geographical areas or both in a joint authority; (c) to provide that the law to be applied by a joint authority would be Commonwealth law where more than one state or territory is a member of the joint authority or, where only the territory or one state is the member of the joint authority, either Commonwealth or state or territory law, the choice being made by arrangement between the Commonwealth and the state or the territory concerned; (d) to provide for an arrangement between the Commonwealth and the state or territory for the management of a particular fishery in accordance with either the law of that state, territory or the Commonwealth without the intervention of a joint authority; and (e) to provide that, in cases where there is no arrangement for a fishery to be managed by a joint authority or as referred to above, the law of the state or territory is to apply to the fishery within 3 nautical miles on the seaward side of the baselines and to the extent to which the state/territory has powers to legislate extraterritorially with respect to fisheries.

Recognising the importance the government places on the need for consultations with industry, especially given industry input through the advisory mechanism already developing and to be further developed, the bill, under proposed section 72E (1), takes full account of the provisions of the Commonwealth act as it relates to the establishment of the advisory committee.

Those are the main provisions of this bill. I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES BILL (Serial 56)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill consolidates Northern Territory legislation relating to infectious diseases. The present acts covering the field are the Tuberculosis Act, the Venereal Diseases Act, the Leprosy Act and the Endemic Diseases Act. Regulations made under the Public Health Act also deal with the subject.

The diseases referred to in this legislation are of major concern to public health authorities because of their infectiousness and the danger they represent to the well-being and happiness of the community. The various acts which deal with the matter have many common features and one common aim: the control and elimination, as far as is possible, of these threats to community welfare. By consolidating the acts, the need to refer to separate legislation, which is time consuming and inefficient, is avoided. The diseases for which notification is required are set out in the schedules to the bill. The list has been prepared on the basis of advice from the National Health and Medical Research Council. The council recommends that compulsory notification should be required so that immediate remedial action can be taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

Special measures are required for venereal diseases and these diseases are listed in schedule 4. Clause 15 of the bill provides that the results of any pathological investigation indicating the existence of an infection must be given to the Chief Medical Officer. This is a continuation of an existing requirement and is considered essential if the battle against venereal diseases is to have any chance of success.

Information gained as a result of compulsory notification of diseases is extremely valuable in the struggle to safeguard the community by preventing the spread of the disease. The information received also enables the compilation of statistical data which is of great assistance in compiling the community health programs. The powers given to the Chief Medical Officer in this bill are a continuation of those in the existing legislation. The powers relate to the detention of persons in hospital, the closing of premises for disinfection, the destruction of bedding and clothing and other articles exposed to infection and the decontamination of water supplies for human consumption.

A provision is also included in the bill for the Administrator or the minister to isolate an area for short periods of time. The movement of persons or goods in isolation areas would be controlled by the Chief Medical Officer. Medical officers of course will also be empowered to question persons in such areas. It is not likely that the provisions relating to isolation areas would need to be used very often. If an outbreak of cholera or some of the listed diseases were to occur, we would want immediate action to be taken to isolate the infection and to eliminate it. The powers in this section will enable such action.

Mr Speaker, this bill consolidates and updates all Territory legislation on notifiable diseases and I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

FOREIGN JUDGMENTS (RECIPROCAL ENFORCEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 53)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to permit the enforcement of income tax judgments of the Papua New Guinea superior courts in the Territory Supreme Court. Honourable members may be aware that the existing Foreign Judgments (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act provides for the enforcement of certain judgments of overseas superior courts in the Territory Supreme Court. Recognition of overseas countries for this purpose is based on an assessment of the likelihood of an overseas country affording substantial reciprocity of treatment with respect to the enforcement within that country of judgments given in our Supreme Court. Countries recognised under the act are specified by notice in the Government Gazette.

The current legislation only encompasses judgments for the payment of money in respect of compensation or damages to an injured party. It does not extend to the enforcement of income tax or revenue judgments. All states in the Commonwealth have similar legislation including the principle that one country does not enforce revenue laws or judgments of another. At the request of Papua New Guinea, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General considered the question of extending the existing arrangements for reciprocal enforcement of judgments to include revenue judgments. The problem from Papua New Guinea's point of view is that expatriates, often Australian, who work in that country avoid paying income tax by delay and other means then return to their own country. The loss

of revenue to Papua New Guinea is understood to run into millions of dollars.

The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General has approved draft model provisions, with which the present bill is in accord, to provide for the enforcement of income tax judgments of Papua New Guinea. Similar action is being undertaken in that country to provide for the enforcement of Australian revenue judgments for any expatriates who go from Australia to Papua New Guinea to avoid paying income tax.

The bill will only be brought into operation if all states in the Commonwealth proceed with similar legislative action. Western Australia has already introduced its bill. Passage of the bill would represent a departure from the usual principle that one country does not enforce the revenue judgments of another. However, I believe that the special relationship which exists between Australia and Papua New Guinea justifies the departure from the principle. Moreover, the Papua New Guinea legislation will ensure that Australian revenue judgments are afforded similar treatment in that country.

Clause 4 of the bill provides for a definition of 'recoverable tax' to be inserted into the act. This definition effectively limits the enforcement of Papua New Guinea's revenue judgments to those in respect of income tax. The bill does not provide for the enforcement of judgments with respect to additional or other tax by way of penalty. Provision is also made to declare that a particular tax is not a recoverable tax for the purposes of the act. This provision is proposed to overcome any differences in approach between Australian and Papua New Guinea tax laws.

Clause 5 of the bill provides for the enforcement of judgments given in respect of recoverable tax. Clause 6 makes it clear that it is only that part of the judgment with respect to recoverable tax that may be enforced and not that part of any judgment which includes a sum of money by way of penalty tax.

The opportunity is taken in clause 7 of the bill to remove the reference to the earlier repealed Supreme Court Ordinance. Amendments are proposed to remove any doubt as to the powers of the Judges of the Supreme Court to make rules of court for the purposes of the act.

Finally, a number of minor and formal amendments are proposed to update the act in line with the current legislative style of the Territory and to include transitional provisions. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 21)

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the Crown Lands Amendment Bill has 4 philosophical underpinnings to it. The first is that freehold title to many categories of leasehold land in the Territory will confer more security of tenure upon landholders in the Territory. Secondly, that automatic freeholdings, which the bill will achieve, will involve more streamlined and sophisticated bureaucratic procedures for those who have dealings with the Department of Lands. Thirdly, freehold title will encourage economic progress, development and stability of population. As enthusiastically vaunted by the former Minister for Lands and Housing, the bill represents 'the greatest step forward in the history of the Northern Territory, aside from self-government'. The fourth philosophical underpinning as per the second-reading speeches is that the amendment represents an attempt to update the Territory's land tenure laws which have been formed and

consolidated by a process of accretion.

Mr Speaker, the bill will bring about the automatic conversion of leasehold lands in the Territory which fall within the following categories: leased land within a town area; leases within the Darwin town area; church land leases; and pastoral, agricultural and miscellaneous leases of less than 150 square kilometres. Leasehold land will automatically be converted whether or not the lessee has complied with the covenants attached to the leaseholding of that land. The bill will provide the government with an option on the sale of land - that is, the sale of leases - rather than the sale of certificates of title of land. The leases are to be subject to any reservations, covenants, conditions and provisions considered necessary by the minister.

The minister may grant estates in fee simple of not more than 150 square kilometres of land on which reservations and restrictive covenants may apply. Land so granted may be subject to whatever development or improvement conditions the minister seeks to impose. The minister may grant a licence to develop that land and grant the estate in fee simple upon completion of those development conditions initially agreed upon. Leasehold land in the above-mentioned categories will become freehold subject to usual water and mineral rights. The government retains the power to secure an easement or seek to resume or compulsorily acquire all or part of the land.

We believe there are a number of unsound principles embodied in this act. The first relates to our view that unconditional freehold ownership will act as an incentive to speculation. The bill will encourage speculation by allowing people to take up freehold ownership of land while not forcing them to also undertake obligations which pertain to the holding of land which currently exists. The bill will not impose usage obligations on the development of land, which has been freeholded, upon the owner or the lessee turned owner. Neither will it set down conditions in regard to the passing on of usage obligations to freehold land upon its purchase or change of ownership. In other words, the bill will give legal sanction to the practice of sitting on land and selling it whenever the market indicates a profitable return. We believe that automatic freehold ownership will act as an incentive to speculation.

We also believe that the freeholding of land with no obligation to use or to develop the land has unsound consequences in terms of urban and regional planning. Land which has been freeholded and which falls within the area over which a town plan is in force is, it is conceded, subject to planning controls under the Northern Territory's Planning Act. However, the planning guidelines set out under the operations of the bill are simply restrictive guidelines. They assist in co-ordinating an urban development strategy by instructing the holders of both leasehold and freehold land on types of permitted use; that is, they enforce restraints to land use. The intention and powers of the Planning Act do not guide or obligate landholders to actually develop or use their land in any given way.

We believe there are sounder tenure proposals which should have been considered so far as leasehold ownership is concerned. With regard to planning control, the value of the enforcement of covenants as an effective planning control mechanism is of course widely acknowledged. Covenants on leasehold land do work to ensure development within a given time and to control permitted use. There is also an obligation to develop. Leasehold covenants, by their very nature, provide for the positive use of land for a purpose deemed judicious and beneficial by a government's land control authority. Ideally, a land tenure system should embody the principles of both the freehold and leasehold systems to take advantage of the positive aspects of both systems. The obligations to land should not be divorced from the right to land. We therefore advocate the

disposal of land by freehold subject, however, to improvement conditions and the reservation of development rights.

I move to the matter of improvement conditions and obligations to land. The Crown Lands Act acknowledges the principle of improvement conditions. The Territory's current Crown Lands Act acknowledges obligations to land as a condition of its disposal - as indeed do the states of Western Australia and Queensland and also New Zealand - that is, in the Territory, leasehold land which is subject to covenants cannot be freeholded until all obligations to land as specified in the covenants have been discharged by the lessee. Of course, once a covenant has been complied with, a lessee can convert, upon the payment of a fee, to freehold. In these cases, a lessee may then apply for a transfer or conversion of his title from leasehold to freehold. The lessee has exploited the potential of the land as specified by the intention of its covenant and, in our view, he earned the right to the land as freehold. Under this system, therefore, usage obligations are discharged - and this is one of the major advantages and positive aspects of the leasehold system - after which people may obtain security of tenure, which is one of the major philosophical and practical justifications of the freehold tenure system.

In Western Australia, the system operates in a much more streamlined way. Lessees are automatically given the land in freehold title upon fulfilling the covenant obligation. The opposition sees no reason why the government has not chosen to adopt this refinement to its land disposal system in principle instead of simultaneously offering thousands of lessees freehold title to land upon which they have not necessarily discharged the usage obligations.

We are all aware of alternative land tenure proposals. The Commission of Inquiry into Land Tenure, whose report to the government may well be interesting but will be discarded if it has not been already, made its recommendations based on its concern for land use control under either the freehold or leasehold system. The commission stressed that the orderly and planned use of land meant considerable benefits in matters of environmental protection, social equity, economic efficiency and maintenance of aesthetic values. The commission categorically recommended the imposition of obligations in relation to the development and use of residential land grants. It was felt necessary to pay particular attention to the question of freehold land development since a regulatory mechanism already exists to control the use of leasehold land, covenants or lease conditions.

Mr Speaker, let me quote from the commission's specific recommendations:

We specify the need for an improvement condition to be enforced prior to the issue of freehold title on residential land. The imposition of an obligation to develop to a specified minimum cost and within a specified period is not new in Australia. Such a condition has frequently been imposed on Crown grants dating back to the earliest settlements. Under the Crown lands legislation of most, if not all, the states, such a condition may be and, we understand, frequently is imposed. The Territory's practice has been to impose such an obligation by means of lease conditions.

Concomitant with the enforcement of improvement conditions on freehold land is the commission's recommendation to issue development leases on certain categories of urban land. In relation to the development of industrial land, failure to satisfy lease obligations could result in the forfeiture of the lease, a stopgap which is obviously unavailable to public authorities when freehold tenure is involved. This stopgap has particular application to the control of activities in industrial land which may be seen to be creating environmental problems; for example, pollution. The threat of lease forfeiture is a consider-

able incentive for proper land use and management,

We believe that there is an alternative procedure to the one presented by the government. We cannot understand the reason for the government's refusal to admit the principle of conditional freehold to its glamorous and persuasive argument. The sensible alternative is simply this: to grant freehold title automatically to leasehold land after the lessee has complied with all covenants and development conditions as occurs in Western Australia.

Philosophically, the argument for conditional freehold has already been explored on the basis of proper and controlled land use, and the discouragement of speculation. Practically, the progressive and gradual conversion of Territory leaseholdings makes sense in terms of the sheer grind of administrative effort, enterprise and co-ordination. The philosophy and the practicality could easily come together if the government would legislate to convert automatically specified categories of leasehold land to freehold after the lessees have complied with any covenants. In our view this would appear to be the easiest and the most sensible approach in terms of actual implementation considering the existing situation.

In conclusion, may I quote from the Commission of Inquiry into Land Tenure. This time the quotation is the expression of a philosophy which also reflects the Labor Party's position on national policy: 'Development must be viewed not as an end itself but as a means to achieving more fundamental goals in society, including improvements in the quality of urban living and in social relationships. Land development use and redevelopment must therefore be controlled in the public interest'. Decisions on land tenure and use must therefore be made with full regard to their social consequences. An efficient and equitable land use policy must be designed to allow for the controlled development of land and its supply and allocation in accordance with relative needs at prices which reflect both the needs of users and their capacities to pay. Such sound land use procedures should also help to protect the environment and to prevent wasteful and uneconomic forms of land use. Concurrently, the socially undesirable activities of land speculation must be eliminated. Urban land policy must therefore be formulated with the aim of making land available to those people who are prepared to carry out their responsibilities to it.

We believe that the amendment under consideration will provide legal justification for speculation in land dealings whilst failing to acknowledge that concurrent with the right to hold land is the obligation to use it. We have gone so far as to suggest to the government a simple way of avoiding this trap. We agree with the Minister for Lands and Housing that the measures contained in the bill are momentous. We can only hope that the consequences in terms of unfettered development and a speculation boom are not equally as momentous.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this bill. I also agree with the previous Minister for Lands and Housing and the Leader of the Opposition that this move will have a major impact on Territory development and economic progress. The history of land tenure in the Northern Territory is an interesting one and one could say that the Northern Territory has played a major part in the development of other parts of Australia. Many years ago, large tracts of land in the Territory were offered as incentives to have people settle in South Australia. From that time until today, our land tenure system has been given a great deal of attention for a variety of reasons.

Back in 1937, a report of the Board of Inquiry into Land and Land Industries in the Northern Territory of Australia pointed out that governments at that time were beginning to realise that business terms must be granted if reasonable

development was to be obtained. Of course, the report was referring to the need for longer term leases or a more permanent and secure land tenure system which would attract investment. I believe this bill does just that, Mr Speaker. Freehold title will give people confidence in spending money in the Northern Territory and this change to our land tenure system will bring us into line with systems used in other parts of Australia. Many people who arrive in the Territory are somewhat shocked to find that the majority of land in the Northern Territory is leasehold land and not freehold land. Our methods of ownership in most cases are different to those found in other parts of Australia.

The only real concern that I had in the past was similar to that put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. I always felt that, unless there was some building covenant or requirement placed on particular blocks, we would be left with vacant land all over the city area. The whole philosophy behind leasehold was based on similar thoughts. The lease system was a method whereby governments could force owners to develop their land. However, I believe that we have outgrown the leasehold system. We can have controls through taxing and rating systems whereby it would become uneconomical for someone to have a block of land sitting there undeveloped. Because of this, we will not have a great deal of speculation, even with the leasehold system. The supply and demand situation will inevitably force owners of properties to do something with those properties.

Another concern that I have always had in the past relates to overgrown blocks. With the freeholding of title, we will still be able to control this for health reasons and also to avoid the risk of fire. The latter is a very serious problem which occurs throughout Darwin on a regular basis. We must ensure that we are able to have people keep their blocks clear of long grass.

After the cyclone many people over-capitalised on their properties, particularly in light industry. Because of the lease requirements, they were forced to build whether they were ready to or not and whether they could really afford to or not. These people had to start the building in order to retain their leases. So we had a situation where people were stampeded in a number of cases into developing their blocks at a higher cost than they otherwise would have. If we had had a freehold system, I believe that we would not have had such over-capitalisation at that particular time. I also believe that the prices would have been contained to some extent and more land would be available in the established areas of Darwin today.

A big plus in the move to freehold title will be the tremendous savings in the existing paperwork. At the present, before anything can happen to Darwin town area leases, such as a transfer or a mortgage registration, the minister's consent is required. Everything that happens to the Darwin town area leases must go to the minister for approval. There are a couple of branches in the department which do nothing else but handle paperwork that is generated from the transfer and registration of mortgages. It is cumbersome and time consuming. With a freehold system, an enormous amount of time will be saved.

This bill was circulated throughout Australia to interested groups and I understand that comment is still coming back. All of the people whom I contacted have been in favour of the move to freehold title. In fact, most of those people commented that the freeholding of titles should have happened a long time ago.

Our progression to this stage started when the Darwin town area leases were converted to leases in perpetuity. To my mind, it was only a matter of time before we moved from leases in perpetuity to freehold title. I am very pleased to see that this progression will now take place. I support the bill.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, my comments will, of necessity, be brief. I rise to indicate my concurrence with the Leader of the Opposition's constructive comments on this bill.

I hold a lease in perpetuity and I in no way feel disadvantaged because I did not bother to convert it to freehold when I had the opportunity. I have had no difficulty in securing finance to rebuild on such a lease. I think there is a lot of mystique about freehold title which should not necessarily apply. My reservations are the same as those expressed by the Leader of the Opposition: it will allow land speculation. Not only is that a bad thing in itself but it disadvantages other members of the community by its very definition. People hold the land until they can obtain the greatest personal profit. That profit is obtained by withholding land from the land-hungry market. If freehold could only be granted after the conditions of a lease had been met, it would seem to be an ideal situation. That situation existed before with the exception that there was a fee attached to the conversions.

The honourable member for Port Darwin spoke of the problems which occurred with rebuilding following Cyclone Tracy because people had leasehold land in the main and had to rebuild almost immediately. What the honourable member for Port Darwin forgot to mention was the problem which arose of those people who had converted to freehold and who sat on their blocks refusing to rebuild and saying to their neighbours: 'You can do what you like. I am freehold. They cannot touch me'. That was to the detriment of their neighbours and their neighbours' property values. I see no restrictions in this bill which would not allow that to happen again if all the blocks are automatically converted to freehold.

I have little else to say. I would imagine a lot will be said in committee. But I put the proposition to the sponsor of the bill that freehold should only be permitted in urban areas following compliance with all lease conditions.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): The bill says in a practical fashion what our government is all about, that is, giving the people what they want in respect of land. There has been a great demand for this type of legislation from people who want freehold title to their land. Land ownership is basic and it goes back hundreds of years when land was actually necessary to life in a more primitive way than it is now. Nomadic society existed then and vast tracts of land were needed to support human life. With closer settlement and crop and animal husbandry coming to the fore, the amount of land needed to support human life was less and less because the same land was used again and again.

Not every person wants to own his block of land whether it is the farmer, the pastoralist or the person on his quarter-acre block in town. He wants to own his blocks of land in freehold title. I will agree with the previous speaker who said that there was not much difference between a long-term lease and freehold. Perhaps there is not in actuality. But there is an intangible factor added to the ownership of freehold land which cannot be explained. I think that offering to many people the ability to convert to freehold does not necessarily grant an advantage to anyone because, if everybody has freehold, the advantage is taken away.

Another point that has been drawn to my attention is that pastoral leases which are larger than 150 square kilometres may be subdivided into smaller pastoral leases so that they can be freeholded. Some people may say it has its disadvantages. I think it has advantages in that, before subdivisional plans are allowed, account will be taken of the viability of the new areas of land subdivided from the larger area.

Doubts have been expressed to me that this legislation will not work. I hope they prove to be incorrect because this is major legislation. For the benefit and development of the Territory, I would like to see it work in a facile way.

I will only comment on the clauses of the bill which caught my interest. The first one was clause 9 relating to freehold subject to existing interests. I understand that this clause relates to the reservation of all easements on a property. It says: 'A reservation to the Crown of all minerals, mineral substances ... together with the right to authorise any person to enter upon the land to explore for, mine or otherwise recover and remove ...'. I would like to see regulations giving some rights to the property owners - perhaps their comments could be sought.

On first reading, clause 10 seemed to be rather confusing. I could not quite equate conditions of leases still carrying on when the land was freehold but I understand it refers to the rights of party walls. This would be in city areas.

Clause 11 relates to existing roads. I understand an amendment may be introduced to this clause. On first reading, it seemed that, where an agricultural miscellaneous lease were to be converted to freehold, the existing roads would be excluded from the lease and they would be acquired by the Northern Territory government. I feel that, if this went ahead as written, it would necessitate government expenditure in that it would be necessary to fence the roads that went through the property. These are not necessarily fenced now. If the roads were not included in the freeholding of these titles, would the owner still be able to use them for stock grazing purposes or the like? I understand that this is under consideration. I do not know whether it is active consideration. We all know there are public roads in pastoral leases now and I understand that, subject to certain surveying requirements, these public roads could be excluded from the subsequent ownership.

I would like to comment on the section in part III which deals with methods of disposal of Crown lands. All the methods of disposal are written out but apparently no account is taken of existing leases. It says that the land is to be offered for sale in the first instance by auction, tender or ballot whether freehold or leasehold. I would like an assurance that, if it is an existing lease that is being offered for sale, consideration will be given to the existing lessee on that land. It assumes that recommendations will come from the land board about the future of the leases. I am uncertain of the terms of reference of the land board. I would like to be reassured that existing lessees' rights are protected in the future.

Proposed new section 20A deals with water rights. It says that it does not confer upon the owner any property in, or right to the use or flow or to the control of, the water at any time in any lake, spring, watercourse, well or bore. I am particularly concerned about the well or bore. As this legislation is written, it seems that, in converting from leasehold to freehold, the owner would have no control over wells or bores that he put down on the property.

The next part that interested me is the maximum size of freehold grant: 150 square kilometres. I understand this was mentioned as the largest pastoral lease that could be converted to freehold to tie in with the size of some miscellaneous leases of about that size. It would include the mini-pastoral leases which are about that size and it would also streamline the consideration of the 2 sorts of leases together.

Proposed new section 23A deals with general conditions of leases. Paragraph (g) states, 'a provision that the lease shall be liable to forfeiture if

the rent is unpaid for 6 months or more', and (b) states, 'a provision that the lease shall, subject to this act, be liable to forfeiture for non-compliance on the part of the lessee with any covenant or condition of the lease'. I would like to see 'shall' changed to 'may'. Some years ago the very low price for cattle meant that many pastoralists had difficulty in fulfilling their covenants and in paying their rent. I would like it made clear that the minister would definitely have discretion should bad times besiege the pastoral industry again. I would like to see 'shall' changed to 'may'. I understand that this is the wording in the old act but that does not necessarily mean it is the right wording.

I would also like to comment on proposed new section 63 which relates to lessees' rights in improvements. I am concerned about agricultural, miscellaneous and pastoral lease improvements. I understand this is intended to refer to special purposes leases. As the special purposes leases legislation stands now, at the expiry of these leases, the government must buy the improvements. Under this change, the minister will have the power to negotiate with the lessee on the future of the improvements on the particular lease.

I would like to comment on what a couple of speakers have said. My initial remark was that land is basic to human living. However, I do not think it is necessary to exclude all speculation on land. We speculate on many things. Speculation is admired if one pulls off a good deal. If one makes a bad deal, one receives the condolences of one's peers. If I speculate by having a bet on the races and I win, everybody says, 'Good on you, mate'. If I am astute enough and I have the money to speculate on first editions or on precious stones or metals and I put them away for the future, nobody thinks any the worse of me. I cannot see why land speculation, in certain situations, has to be regarded as such a bad thing. If somebody bought land at a certain time and did not fulfil certain conditions or did not pay rates and or taxes, he would stand to lose his land under most legislation in Australia. If he fulfilled all the conditions, I cannot see why speculation would be such a bad thing.

I would also like to comment on something that the Leader of the Opposition said. He said that there should be an obligation to develop freehold land and there should be certain covenants on freehold land. I would like to make the point that no options were offered to people in the acquisition area in 1973. I will declare an interest here by saying that I live in the acquisition area. No choice was offered to the people in the acquisition area to develop their land in a certain way nor were covenants put on the freehold land.

In conclusion, this legislation is in keeping with the future of the Territory and will encourage development in the way this government wishes.

Mr TUXWORTH (Mines and Energy): I rise to support the bill this afternoon. I would just like to say that this legislation to freehold land in the Northern Territory will be one of the most significant things to happen this decade. I believe that it is the concept of freehold land possession that will give confidence and encouragement to buyers and to investors. Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that, if the Territory is to develop, there must be land available for the people who want to be a part of that development. Whatever our philosophy about the need for land, the reality is that people who are coming here to purchase and invest are familiar with the freehold system and they expect it to be similar here to other places in Australia.

The Leader of the Opposition touched on a couple of points that I think are worthy of comment. The first one is covenants. He said that they do work. I raise the question of how much they work. I have owned blocks and it is my experience that, where the covenant was set at a minimum to try and encourage people, it was regarded by the purchaser as the maximum that he had to perform.

I think that that in itself has been an inhibiting factor to our development.

The other thing about covenants that I find is not terribly progressive is that, in the course of time, a covenant becomes obsolete. In Tennant Creek, there are prime pieces of real estate - in the main street, for example - some of which are owned by leading citizens. The buildings on those blocks would not get recognition by a building authority in any form at all. They are decrepit. The owner of such a block is quite rightfully able to say: 'Well, I conformed with the covenant when I bought the block which cost \$3,000. The building sitting on the block is worth \$6,000. What is the hang up?' The fact that the properties on either side of him have values of \$100,000 or \$200,000 has no meaning at all. I feel that is one of the disadvantages of the covenant system.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Western Australian system is more streamlined and that perhaps we should adopt it here. Well, I went to Western Australia a couple of years ago and I rather took a fancy to some land in Broome. I thought that it was not a bad spot and that it would not be a bad idea to build there. I had a look at the process of buying land in Broome. Mr Speaker, our land system here was like a flea market compared to how you buy land in Broome. Not only was the land the most expensive I had ever come across but the system of getting it away from the state government was worse than anything we have ever experienced here. While there may be systems in Western Australia that are worthy of implementing here, there are some that I think we should be wary of; for example, the one in Broome.

I think it is important too that the Northern Territory regard land development in the same vein as would people down south. There is no doubt in my mind that there are investors down south who look at the Northern Territory and say: 'Well, we cannot go up there because the land is leasehold and it is different to what we have experienced here in New South Wales and we cannot be involved in that'. As a matter of policy, some people refuse to invest or purchase up here. Most people in the Northern Territory come from other states and the majority of the finance comes from other states. Therefore, I think it is reasonable that we implement a land system here that is consistent with the system in the other states.

It was said that the way to control speculation was to have covenants on land which had to be complied with before the land was freeholded. Covenants on land have very little to do with speculation. What creates speculation is the shortage or the surplus of land. I have owned blocks up here and my decisions to buy or sell were always influenced by the availability of land and not freehold title. Whether I made money out of it or not was not related to whether it was freehold or leasehold but the fact that there was a shortage or a surplus. In that sense, I do not think that I am any different to the average person in the community.

Finally, I would put it to the Assembly that speculation in the Northern Territory is not rampant. I do not think it is a factor that should influence our particular system of land tenure because, if you look at the investment in property and land as a whole, I believe that investors, as distinct from developers, do not really invest in vacant blocks of land. Occasionally they might do so for a very good reason but, for the main part, investors are looking for bricks and mortar for their prime capital realisation in the years to come. While some people may speculate to a degree - not that I approve - it is not so rampant that we should let it determine the sort of land system we have in the Northern Territory.

I would like to commend the 2 ministers who have been involved in setting up this legislation because it will be the launching pad from which the Territory

will develop during the 1980s. I commend the bill.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak in this debate because the bill has been of great interest to my constituents. As the Minister for Lands and Housing acknowledged yesterday, many of my constituents are recognised as people who have a great interest in and awareness of land law and related issues. Consequently, they are not so easily swayed as others might be by the mystique of freehold which the member for Nightcliff alluded to earlier in the debate. Many of them realise that the private rights and obligations of owners must be balanced against those of neighbours and against those of the community generally.

The implementation of the new system will create many more problems for older areas such as my electorate and the member for Port Darwin's electorate than it will for new developments. I am not opposed to the principle of freeholding residential land in certain areas, particularly where new developments are concerned. However, there will be problems in imposing this system on the older areas, particularly old Darwin, where the land systems have been so confused over a period of time and where one system has followed another and the rights of owners and their obligations towards their neighbours and the community have not always been met.

Mr Speaker, it is easy to talk about the mystique of freehold and to say that people find it desirable but, in reality, it has been available in Darwin since 1962 to those who have complied with their covenants. The fact is that not a very large number of lessees have taken this opportunity to freehold their land. There have been good citizens who have complied with their covenants and who are more than happy to continue with the leasehold system even though it has changed from time to time. Some have freeholded their land but many have not. Let us not be confused into thinking that it has not been available to them because it has.

The effect of this bill will not be to the benefit of those responsible citizens who have complied with their legal obligations but, in fact, it will benefit those citizens who have evaded the law and have not complied with their covenants. In the past, they have not been able to have their land freeholded because they had not complied with the covenants but now they will be able to. In the process, the people who will be disadvantaged are the people who have fulfilled their covenants. If they have neighbours who have not complied with the covenants, the value of their own investment may be decreased.

This is not idle speculation. This bill is of great interest to my constituents and some of them are very happy about it, particularly those who are in the process of purchasing land in the area or who anticipate purchasing land. Other citizens who have held land for some time and have known that their neighbours have an obligation to comply with the covenants will now lose their right to expect this. Many residents have come to me with specific examples in mind. They have asked what the effect of the legislation will be and they fear it will disadvantage them. As an example, I will cite a case about which I have had some correspondence with the Minister for Lands and Housing. This particular block of land, although it is a Darwin town area lease allotment, has not had its covenant complied with. Other people adjacent to it have been pressured by the Department of Lands and Housing, as is proper, to comply with their covenants and they have done so. Sometimes this has caused hardship. After the cyclone, it was not always easy to comply with the new building requirements and it was quite expensive. Nevertheless, these people have done what they were required to do under the law yet they find a block of land next to them where the covenants have not been complied with.

This sort of thing happens not just in the Northern Territory but everywhere. There are always those people who will use their influence or clever lawyers or delaying tactics in order to avoid their obligations. The member for Stuart Park grins. He has an inner-city electorate and he knows that these problems exist. It is happening. When this bill becomes law, those people who have evaded their responsibility to comply with any covenants will be rewarded by having the land freeholded. The other people who have done the right thing will then find that their investment will be downgraded because they will have a block of land next to them which has not been properly developed. These are the problems that will arise if we impose the new system onto the old without taking into account the obligations of people to comply with the law.

There is a further problem in the particular example that I cited. Through my correspondence with the minister, I was informed that the building on that particular allotment is an illegal building. The minister told me that it was constructed illegally during the term of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the government cannot do anything about it. That is absolutely incredible. If the minister is correct and the government can do nothing under the Darwin Town Area Leases Act or the Building Act to ensure that buildings were legally constructed during the term of the DRC or comply with the building regulations, I think it ought to do something about it urgently.

Even if the government does do something about those buildings and passes a law this month that states that those buildings must be bulldozed, the neighbours will be left with a piece of vacant undeveloped land once again. They will still be disadvantaged compared with the lessees next door who have not developed their block. I believe that that is most unfortunate. It is deplorable, in fact, that this bill is different from the one that was originally introduced and which ensured that freehold title could not be issued until covenants were complied with.

There are other examples in my electorate that I could mention. One was raised with me only a couple of days ago in my electorate office. It relates to a block of land which is leased by a club under a Darwin town area lease. It is not under a special purposes lease as most clubs are. These things happen for historical reasons. This club burnt down over 12 months ago and nothing seems to be happening there. When this act comes into force that land will be freeholded. The residents are concerned that they will be looking at a burnt out wreck of a club for another 2 years or 3 years because, once the land is freeholded, no one can force what is left of that club to do something about the state of the building. Once again, this will disadvantage people in the area whose land values might well be affected. I do not think we can underestimate too much the importance to the average citizen of the major investment in his life: his house and his block of land. We certainly should think very carefully before we commend bills which might be detrimental to that.

There is yet another example of how people who evade the law can be rewarded by it in the end. This example does not come from my electorate but from one very near by. Persons who had a Darwin town area lease, now a non-conforming business use, were given freehold even though they were not complying with the conditions of the business use. One of the methods which was available to the Lands Department to ensure the compliance of those owners was relinquished by the freeholding of that allotment under the old system. I would urge honourable members to think very carefully about this problem of the existing rights of citizens who have done the right thing with regard to their covenants as opposed to the benefit that people who have done the wrong thing will gain by the passage of this bill as it is drafted.

In closing, I would like to say a few words about land speculation which some honourable members seem to consider as a desirable thing. I have to disagree

with them because land is a scarce and vital resource for the whole community and land policy must reflect this. It must ensure that land is used effectively and not held idly for purposes of speculative gain. We must insist that land is used as a productive asset and not as a store of value. Buying and selling of land for purely speculative reasons does not serve any useful social purpose and it is not even advantageous to good productive enterprise. It achieves nothing for society and it should not be encouraged.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, in listening to the points made by the opposition in this debate, the phrase 'the lowest common denominator' comes to mind. A fair bit of the argument seems to centre about the fact that some people have gone to some trouble, and no doubt they have, to comply with the requirements of the leasehold system whilst others have not. The argument is that, therefore, we should bludgeon all the people into conforming irrespective of the rights or wrongs or justification of a system that we inherited from the Commonwealth and have administered to date. Fortunately, we have proposals before us to change that system and that is probably overdue.

The Leader of the Opposition rightly said that covenants are useful to ensure development within particular time constraints. Even under the legislation before us, in some circumstances that system will prevail. However, he felt that the system used in Western Australia whereby land automatically converts to freehold after the compliance of covenants is really the sensible system and we should follow it. That really flies in the face of a couple of the points raised by members of the opposition. It was pointed out that, once covenants are complied with and the land converts to freehold, a disaster cyclone could result in a situation whereby the owners could not be compelled to rebuild. The system that they have been proposing would fly in the face of any solution to a situation where disaster strikes or a house burns down.

The Minister for Health mentioned that one of the problems of the leasehold system is that covenants are established at the time of land release. Years later the covenants which were quite reasonable at the time may have become quite unrealistic. We have situations in all our Territory towns, particularly Darwin and Alice Springs, where covenants in the central business districts are very old and quite out of date. The covenants are for residential purposes yet the land is completely unsuitable for residential purposes because it is set among office blocks. The covenant may also have required only £2,000 of improvements. Unless there is a system - and this had not been proposed - where the covenants are regularly updated and almost indexed, the situation becomes completely unrealistic.

In the past, there has been enormous criticism of covenants that have been established by the administration in the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, you would be very familiar with the covenants placed on many pastoral leases which have never been complied with and today are regarded as being completely unrealistic covenants which cannot be met; such as, fencing and bore improvement covenants. If a person did go to the enormous expense of complying with these, he would send himself straight into the bankruptcy court. However, as long as he does not comply with those covenants - and a number of those blocks of course were released to individuals - he faces possible forfeiture at any time. What a situation in which to hold an individual!

Another example of the lousy system under which we have been operating relates to the Winnellie area which is in my electorate. We have a large number of large, brand new warehouse buildings. These have sat there for several years without a tenant, without a single dollar being returned to the owners of that land. The owners bought land at a time when the place was booming and a great deal of land was released in the Winnellie area. It was taken up and built upon.

As a result of government action in releasing too much land with strict conditions, we have buildings which are still vacant to this day. Some blocks have \$150,000 buildings on them yet not a single dollar has been returned. That is the sort of thing that covenants can bring.

As far as speculation is concerned, I do not support persons who directly speculate in land. As a general principle, it is a bad thing for the community but one can go overboard in trying to prevent it at every conceivable cost. There are ways of getting around the covenant system anyway. A speculator who is looking at recouping large sums of money through capital gain simply has to buy one of the blocks I mentioned earlier with a vastly outdated covenant of a few thousand pounds on it. Most of these blocks are in the older areas of our town. You can buy one of those as a leasehold block and sit on it virtually forever. You can speculate because it has an old government house or an old private house on it and it is in the middle of a business district. Let us not consider that freehold will abolish a system which can operate quite happily and legally under the leasehold system as we know it today. By and large, covenants have not worked as they were intended.

It was very well known throughout Darwin, particularly in regard to residential buildings, that it was easy to obtain extensions of time to comply with covenants. A letter to the Department of the Northern Territory or, of late, to a minister of the government, pleading that some setback in life had placed one in a position of being unable to meet a covenant in the time required, would lead to an extension of time because no government wants deliberately to drag ordinary people before the courts to forfeit land just on the basis that, if they were not going to build on it in the next 6 months, it wanted someone who would. Therefore, I would suggest there has been a fair degree of abuse of the covenant system. It is a good example of government not being prepared - and I do not believe that an ALP government would be any more prepared than this government - to take the very tough line that every person who failed to comply with his covenant in the slightest degree had the land immediately forfeited. It is simply not on; it is not the way governments act.

There are other examples from the past which indicate the unrealistic nature of covenants. For example, a gentleman bought 2 blocks alongside each other in the northern suburbs. He had his house on one and wanted to put a tennis court on the one next door. Whilst that may have been a reasonable pursuit - he was doing it at his own expense and perhaps a gap in a row of houses with a tennis court can be an improvement to a street rather than a detriment - he was not allowed to do it. 'That is an outrage', said the system. The covenant required a house to be built on the block, not a tennis court. So the system thwarted that type of initiative and, I think, very wrongly so.

Covenants seek the ideal without regard to other factors. It is fine if a person has lots of money and his plans are clearly developed. He can go along to an auction or a government sale, buy land and immediately put all the necessary capital into it to build the enterprise to its maximum potential development. However, what about the individual who might wish to start off in a smaller way. There have been considerable complaints in the past. Consider the case of a small businessman who only required small premises and who had a great deal of difficulty raising the capital to buy land. He may have had to meet an extensive covenant of \$100,000 or more. All he wanted was a block of land with a small shed on it perhaps to operate an upholstering business or something similar. In time, the business might have developed, he might have taken in other tenants or his business might have grown to a size that would warrant a shed of \$100,000. But that was not the case. The system required that the instant he bought that land, or within a 12-month or 2-year period, he was to build a complete development down to roses planted in the front so that everything was nice and sweet. The fact is that it simply did not happen. It stopped anybody from

buying land and then considering proposals to use it. One had to have it all worked out before one even started. It was not a very good system for helping the smaller businessmen. I thought the ALP would have been looking towards helping the small man rather than the big man. It seems not.

The member for Fannie Bay spoke of the mystique of freehold. To a degree, there is a mystique about freehold in that perpetual leasehold - dismissing the matter of covenants for a moment - may be almost as secure. I say 'almost' because the land is still owned by the Crown whereas in freehold it is not. But even the mystique question should be settled. We should get in on it, as it were. Why should the Northern Territory be different from other areas where freehold is a very common and quite clearly understood land tenure system? I think the question of mystique should be addressed and not just dismissed by saying that people do not understand that there is really no difference. Surely we are here to provide a system of government that people can understand and relate to other areas.

Regarding financiers, certainly money is lent on land in leasehold systems. That has been the case for a long time. I still contend though that there is a reservation, even though it may be small, in dealing with leasehold systems as compared to freehold systems. It is understandable that a lender would be a little bit more reserved when looking at a leasehold proposition. Despite the fact that the potential borrower may indeed put substantial improvements on the block and be running a very viable business, he still faces possible forfeiture if at any time he breaches lease conditions. The business may be running just fine but the fact that the fence has not been completed or trees have not been planted - and I have seen lease conditions that have been frightful as far as the details are concerned - means that the owner faces the potential forfeiture of the entire land, lock, stock and barrel to the Crown because he has not complied. It is no wonder financiers generally prefer a freehold proposition as compared to a leasehold proposition. Why should we even consider perpetuating this system?

The member for Fannie Bay stated that people in her electorate who live alongside a block which is vacant because someone has blatantly disregarded lease conditions are disadvantaged because the vacant block downgrades the value of their land. I could think of many examples, particularly with R2 blocks, where a vacant block next door could enhance the value of the land on each side. The potential for land amalgamation is quite attractive to a developer. I do not think that her argument suits all situations. I do not think that a suburb is necessarily a lesser place to live because there is the occasional vacant block. We can take development covenants to an absurd level by saying that every suburb should have every block built on and have the same common denominator standard laid down by lease conditions.

She said we should do something about demolishing illegal structures. There were quite a few illegal structures built after the cyclone. This was of concern to me in my former role as Minister for Lands and Housing. Imagine who would be the loudest screamers if the government sent in bulldozers to push over accommodation in Darwin, irrespective of the state of that accommodation, because the people did not obtain approval when the structures were built. I imagine the member for Fannie Bay would be screaming loudly that the government should leave these poor people alone.

It was stated also that we should not allow blocks of land in developed areas to remain idle because the owner may be earning a dollar. In all the

cities I have visited, including Sydney and Melbourne, right in the heart of the cities there appears to be vacant land held by private people. Obviously, the land is extremely valuable and perhaps the owners are just sitting on it to obtain a capital gain. It seems to me that land itself is part of the economy of the city. The land is often used for temporary car parking. Vacant land in the middle of a city is quite valuable in that regard and provides some relief to workers and others. The land may be used for temporary stalls or a market of some description right in the heart of a city. The possibility of using some land for less than the extremely high rents of surrounding areas is part of a temporary measure in a city's economy. I do not see that it is necessarily something which is simply an outrage.

I do not have very much more to say than that. The opposition seems to be trying to perpetuate a system which is absolutely full of holes. The provisions in the bill will allow, in certain circumstances, the minister to set covenants on land release which will automatically convert to freehold upon compliance with covenants. That will be principally where land is sold to a developer on a direct grant system. Where a person puts forward a particular proposal which is attractive to government, he will be allowed to buy land at market value without competing for it. In those circumstances, it is fair that covenants are set to comply with the development which he proposes and, after he has completed them, the land should convert to freehold. This bill before us provides for exactly that situation. A schedule also provides for the preservation of certain lands from conversion to freehold on similar grounds. I completely support the bill. It is one of the best measures that this government has introduced into this Assembly.

Mr VALE (Stuart): I also would like to speak in support of this bill. I think it is a tremendous step forward in terms of land development across the whole of the Northern Territory. I would like to speak briefly on a number of points that have already been raised by various speakers today.

Any legislation which does away with the red tape and the bureaucracy surrounding the access to and the development of land is, in my opinion, well worth having. Security of tenure is also a desirable aspect of land and the doing away with some of those troublesome covenants is to be highly commended. For many years, I worked for a company in Central Australia that struggled to obtain land without covenants. They had thousands of tons of oil field casing which they needed to store on land with high security fencing but without sheds. The covenants provided for industrial land required thousands of dollars worth of expenditure to put sheds on those blocks of land - expenditure that was just not necessary.

Further, the Treasurer briefly mentioned covenants which were drafted, no doubt with good intentions, by town planners where specifics such as trees were required. This happened last year in Central Australia with a large private development of a diorama and museum. The covenant required that person to name the types of trees and exactly where they were to be planted down to the last pinpoint on the block of land. There were literally hundreds of trees. That type of requirement is frustrating and tends to make people go out of their way to abuse the system.

The most disappointing fact of Territory life is the high number of untidy industrial sites. It has been a fact of life under the present leasehold system and it will possibly continue under the freehold system. Nonetheless, it is one thing that I would like to see cleaned up over the next few years. Large numbers of industrial sites from one end of the Northern Territory to the other could be cleaned up and not be an eyesore to everyone.

For some reason, the Leader of the Opposition opposes this freehold system and one would wonder why. I suppose the opposition remembers a remark made by a former federal Labor minister many years ago that anyone who attempted to own his own home or his own land would become a little capitalist.

I support his legislation and I think that its passage through this Assembly is long overdue.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.1.

As the committee will note, there are subsequent amendments further on in the bill to clause 7(2) that render reference in clause 5 to subclause (4) of clause 7 inoperable.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.2.

There are amendments to clause 7 and this is a cross-reference to those. There are necessary drafting changes in style required.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

New clause 6A:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.3.

This inserts a new clause 6A. This definition is required for the convenience of drafting so that the meaning of 'certificate of title' is beyond doubt.

New clause 6A agreed to.

Clause 7:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.4.

The purpose of this amendment is obvious. It is simply designed to improve the expression.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, this particular amendment is quite significant. I ask the minister to have a look at its significance in terms of the provisions of the Control of Roads Act. Whilst it appears that we are simply amending the word 'all' to 'and', in fact, in the Control of Roads Act, there is a provision that, even though a road might not be a gazetted road or road shown as a road on

a plan lodged at the Registrar-General's office, if that road is used by the public, it is in fact a road. This is a fairly important amendment because clause 7 attempts to exclude from freehold title lands which are used by the public even though they may not be roads. It is not so simple an amendment. Perhaps the minister might like to recommit it.

Mr ROBERTSON: No, I do not propose to recommit it. As the bill presently stands, it is arguable that roads used against the will of landholders - for example, by trespassers - may be excluded from the grant. The amendment is to ensure that both qualities obtain before the roads are automatically excluded. The word 'or' makes both apply.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.5.

This is the amendment referred to previously as being significant in its effect on other clauses. The most important addition is paragraph (c). This is the only real addition. This clause will set up a scheme for obtaining titles to subdivide blocks through the action of the Registrar-General. However, all such subdivisions now are excluded from the automatic process.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.6.

This is the power to give direct grants of land excluded from the automatic conversion. That is subclause (3). Subclause (2) is self-evident. There cannot be 2 titles which is the purpose of subclause (4). The purpose of subclause (5) is exactly the same as subclause (4).

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, in view of the fact that these amendments were given to us only yesterday, I do think that the honourable minister should give us a somewhat better explanation than he has. In fact, what has happened with clause 7 is that it has been rewritten and although, as the minister says, some of the changes are merely to tighten up what the intention of the original clause is, in fact, subclauses (3) to (8) have been completely rewritten and 3 subclauses do not appear at all. They have not just been reconstituted; their intent has been changed.

There are a couple of matters that I would like to raise with the minister. Firstly, there is the question which has already arisen by this bill granting in fee simple. Now, perhaps the minister would think about the question of whether or not a grant in terms of this bill has the same status as a grant in the terms of the Real Property Act. I am sure the minister would know that a grant under the Real Property Act is a grant by vice-regal decree. This has raised constitutional questions before in the law of land. I see that there is an element of doubt in the wording of this particular subclause (3).

The next question I raise is in relation to new subclause (4). It states: 'Where an estate in fee simple is granted by or under this section, the lease of the land, the subject of the grant, is surrendered and ceases to have effect'. Now, I appreciate that what is intended by this is that it would be replaced by a certificate of title in fee simple. However, if the head lease ceases to exist, then what becomes of registered interests such as subleases? What is the position of a person who has lodged a caveat? It seems to me that all of these registered instruments will be thrown out by proposed subsection (4).

Next we come to the question in the original bill which is covered in sub-clauses (3), (6) and (7) and these relate to plans of subdivision. We find that, in the new subclauses (3) to (8), all reference to plans of subdivision have been deleted. I wonder if the minister can tell us why that is so because there would be people who have approvals to subdivide, as we have just acknowledged in the section that we have just passed.

The next question that I raise relates to the matter of exclusion of roads open to and used by the public. On the one hand, in new subclause (1) that we have passed, we say that the minister may grant an estate in fee simple excluding parts of the land which are open to and used by the public as public roads. In new subclause (6), we say that we require notification of the existence of part of a road across or on the land and, if the land is so notified on the title, it is deemed to be excluded from the title. Paragraph (b) of that same subclause says that, if it is not included in the grant because it formed part of a road open to and used by the public and it is not notified on the title, then, despite subclause (1) which we have already passed, it is deemed always to have been part of the land in respect of which the estate in fee simple is granted. I know this all sounds very complicated but the minister should not have put it all in the one amendment. It does appear to me that, having said in subclause (1) that land shall be deemed always to have been an estate in fee simple net of roads open and used, then paragraph (b) of subclause (6) is clearly inconsistent because now we deem that, if they are not notified on the title, they are not part of the estate.

Mr ROBERTSON: I think there was a reference earlier to the effect on sub-clauses (1) and (2). There is no change because they would stand. The effect on subclause (3) is that the wording now provides for a positive action required by the minister. The redrafting now ensures consistency with the Real Property Act which is a point the member very validly made. It seeks to ensure consistency with that act. I am afraid in these highly complex matters that one relies on one's legal advice rather solidly. Of course, you try as hard as you can to understand it which is quite clearly what the honourable member is doing. The effect on subclause (4) is that it is necessary that the old lease title cease to exist when freehold is granted. This subclause ensures this action. The former title will be handed to the Registrar-General so that it may be destroyed and it would follow of course that any caveats or mortgages which are held on the original lease document would be transferred to the title in fee simple. Indeed, that is the benefit of having these returned to the Registrar-General although the conversion would be automatic. The only way you can find out what is on the title, and I understand your point - it is a matter of administration rather than law - is for the Registrar-General to get hold of the title to know what the caveats and mortgage instruments or endorsements are on that title. The old title will cease to exist.

The honourable member does raise a very good point. In subclause (5), while it says it is self-explanatory, I agree with the honourable member that it is not. It stands to reason that the certificates of title may not actually be handed to the occupier of the land; it may be given to those who hold a mortgage. The right of a certificate of title is established at the commencement of the act. In other words, it is to make provision for the handing of a certificate of title to a person other than the person who is the holder of the title in fee simple. The explanation given for subclause (6) is that the Registrar-General will issue a certificate of title for those areas described either on the lease or on a later plan of survey. That makes sense. If a road is shown on these documents, the area of the road will be excluded from the certificate of title. I think that would be quite clear to the committee. If a road is not shown on these documents, a certificate of title will be granted over all of the area of the lease and any new roads will be taken care of under the provisions of the Lands Acquisition Act. That also makes sense.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, just by way of explanation, clause 9, which we are yet to come to, deals with the subject of freeholding subject to existing interests in the title. Clause 9(2) appears to me to be a clause whereby mortgage interests in a lease can transfer to a freehold title.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 8.

Clause 8 negatived.

New clause 8:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.7.

This redrafting of the clause is purely of a technical nature. The clause gives the basis for the Registrar-General's power in the status of the land. It makes the fee simple title subject to the Real Property Act.

New clause 8 agreed to.

Clause 9:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.8.

This is a necessary amendment caused by change in the drafting style of clause 7.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.9.

The purpose of this is to make sure that the Commonwealth easements are not excluded. We must look after our friends in Canberra.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.10.

The first part is to again make sure that it is consistent with the new drafting style of clause 7.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 11.

Sufficient power to cater for unserviced roads will be created for the Lands Acquisition Act. These will be very few in number, This is also allowed for in the new amendment to clause 7(6).

Clause 11 negatived.

Clause 12:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 12.

The provisions previously contained in clause 12 are not provided for in new clause 7(2)(b).

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, I did not quite get that 'in new clause 7(2)(b)'. At the moment we have the ability to sell land by instalment particularly where, at auction, the bid is less than the reserve price. This particular clause 12 related to what the person who has the right to the lease, which will eventually be converted, has to do in respect of the balance of the purchase price. If we take this clause out, where does that leave the purchaser who has not paid out the full purchase price?

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, the point here is that too many problems exist with trying to convert the contract debts in respect of the balance of purchase money into mortgages. For example, what are the terms of the mortgage? Land upon which money is owing is now included in the schedule. When the money is paid or the agreement for a mortgage back is arranged, a deed of grant will then issue.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Do I take the minister to mean that all those lots that are given in the schedule without any explanation are lots on which there is a balance outstanding? If that is the case, then that satisfies my inquiry.

Mr ROBERTSON: I am not in a position to say that all of them are but that is what a substantial number of them are about.

Clause 12 negatived.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clause 14:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 14.

These provisions are now catered for in amended clause 7(2)(c),

Clause 14 negatived.

Clause 15 agreed to.

Clause 16:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14, 11.

It is simply a more precise definition.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17 agreed to.

Clause 18:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.12.

The purpose of the amendment is to ensure uniformity with deeds issued. It would be obvious that it is required that they be by instrument in a prescribed form in order to ensure uniformity. The amendment will make it clear that the Territory can freehold without the interest merging. I think the Treasurer said that a person cannot own leasehold but he can own freehold.

Progress reported.

INDUSTRIAL SAFETY BILLS

Continued from 18 November 1980.

In committee:

EXPLOSIVES AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 7)

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 7.1.

The reason for the amendment is that there has been recent judicial comment that would suggest that our power to bind the Crown is wider than originally thought. It is not, at this stage, as wide as the clause suggests. The original clause proposed to bind the Crown and we do not believe that we have that power.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 8)

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 8.1.

It is reducing the amount of liability that we believe we can put on the Crown.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 11 agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 8.2.

This corrects errors in the schedule. The words had inadvertently been omitted from 2 items and an amendment was scheduled to a section that has since been repealed. This corrects that anomaly.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 10)

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr TUXWORTH: I invite defeat of clause 3.

There is already in the principal act a section providing that the Crown is bound by the act. That section will remain with the defeat of the clause.

Clause 3 negatived.

Clauses 4 to 7 agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr TUXWORTH: I move amendment 6.1.

This is a formal amendment. Several words were left out from one item in the schedule.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bills passed remaining stages without debate.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): As the Leader of the Opposition explained last night, the member for MacDonnell is attending a funeral in Sydney in place of the Leader of the Opposition. I move that leave of absence for today and tomorrow be granted to the member for MacDonnell. I might add that the honourable member will attempt to come back before the close of business tomorrow but we cannot guarantee that.

Motion agreed to.

UNIVERSITY (INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS) BILL
(Serial 13)

Continued from 18 November 1980.

In committee:

Clause 5:

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I would seek your advice. If we proceed from clause 5, by the time we come to clause 9 the amendments I propose making will not make any sense without going back to clause 2. I seek your guidance on how the committee can get back to clause 2.

Mrs LAWRIE: It was as a result of my query that the committee reported progress. I have no difficulty in understanding the amendment. Perhaps you might allow the member, in speaking to the proposals in clause 5, to allude to proposals to amend clause 2. From the schedule as circulated, it is clear why clause 5 should proceed. The other clauses can be recommitted later.

Mr CHAIRMAN: We will continue from clause 5 and then we will have to recommit at a later stage to deal with the clauses 2, 3 and 4.

Mrs LAWRIE: It now seems that, under clause 5, the Interim Senate shall consider and advise the minister and the authority. That was always clearly understood. It is as the bill is printed. My original query was that it seems incongruous that the authority is the Planning Vice-Chancellor. I believe the minister could foreshadow an amendment to a previous clause by which the Interim Chancellor may be appointed under a new clause 2A. This will have some substance if clause 5 is passed as printed. The original point was that the Chairman of the Senate would be reporting to himself. The advice given to the minister at that time did not seem to cover the point raised.

Mr ROBERTSON: The honourable member is perfectly correct. The newly circulated schedule will establish a position of Chancellor and both the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor will be ex officio members of the Senate. There is a very specific advisory relationship between the Senate and the Vice-Chancellor with the exception of those matters involving the academic functions of the planning committee in the Interim Senate. That should overcome the problems that the member raised.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 8 agreed to.

Clause 9:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 12.9.

This substitutes 'Minister' with 'Administrator'. It is believed by the government that it is quite proper for the Administrator to appoint persons as important as the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor. We are talking about an organisation which we want to have the maximum possible status, particularly in the early days.

Amendment agreed to.

Mrs LAWRIE: I have one other query on clause 9. I want to be assured that this will be taken care of elsewhere in the bill. Subject to subclause (3), the Planning Vice-Chancellor will hold office on such terms and conditions and shall be paid such remuneration and expenses and allowances as the Administrator determines. Does this mean that each time there is to be an adjustment in remuneration, expenses or allowances, the Administrator has to determine it and notify it in the Gazette or is this covered in the clause which mentions that public service procedures apply?

Mr ROBERTSON: It would be similar to what now applies to the Darwin Community College where variations are required to go to Executive Council. Administratively, there may be some problems with that arrangement in respect of the Darwin Community College but it is not envisaged that there will be any difficulty under this short-term arrangement. It is unlikely that there will be work value cases conducted in respect of the officers of the University Planning Authority.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 and 11 agreed to.

Clause 12:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 12.10.

As I indicated the other day, I decided not to proceed with the earlier proposal to delete this clause and substitute another clause making the planning authority a prescribed authority under the Public Service Act. It is better that the authority be set up outside the public service as the authority is the forerunner of the permanent institution and it is probable that most of the staff of the authority will become part of the staff of the university. I do not envisage that the university will be staffed from within the public service. The slight amendment now proposed to the clause is to make it clear that, in so far as the planning authority does employ public servants by arrangements with the Public Service Commissioner, those persons so employed continue to be public servants and have their rights safeguarded.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clause 14:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 14.

The defeat of this clause is invited following discussions with the Department of the Treasury. The main difficulty envisaged with the clause is that prescribed statutory corporations under the Financial Administration and Audit Act must keep their accounts in accordance with commercial practices and are not obliged to follow standard Treasury Accounting directions. This is not considered appropriate for an interim planning authority, the planning authority can have the necessary degree of financial flexibility by appointing the Planning Vice-Chancellor as the accountable officer under the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Mrs LAWRIE: I ask the minister to indicate whether this means that it is outside the scrutiny of the auditor.

Mr ROBERTSON: No. By appointing the Vice-Chancellor as the accountable officer under the Financial Administration and Audit Act, he then has the same function as a departmental head and is therefore subject to normal audit and scrutiny.

Clause 14 negatived.

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

In Assembly:

Bill reported; report adopted.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be recommitted to the committee of the whole for further consideration of clauses 2,3 and 4,

Motion agreed to.

In committee:

On recommitment:

Clause 2:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 12.1,

The government proposes to create the statutory position of Interim Chancellor and hence a new definition is required in this clause,

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

New clause 2A.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 12.2.

This new clause proposes that there is to be an Interim Chancellor appointed by the Administrator.

New clause 2A agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 12.3.

This clause enables the appointment of an Interim Senate of 6 or more persons appointed by the Administrator. Under the amendment, both the Interim Chancellor and the Planning Vice-Chancellor will be ex officio members of the Interim Senate. It is considered preferable not to specify the other categories of membership so as not to pre-empt decisions on the membership of the university's permanent building body.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr ROBERTSON. I move amendments 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, and 12.7.

This clause specifies the procedures of the Interim Senate. Because of the creation of the new position of Interim Chancellor, the amendment of this clause is designed to make him Chairman of the Interim Senate and to give him power to call meetings. As a result, subclause (2) is no longer necessary and can be deleted and the amendments to subclauses (3), (4) and (7) are consequential. The new subclause (8A) is designed to place an obligation on the Planning Vice-Chancellor to keep the Interim Senate informed at all of its meetings and the past

activities or the proposed activities of the University Planning Authority. The government does not see the need to go any further at this stage in relation to respective roles of the Interim Senate and the University Planning Authority. Members will have noted that the Interim Senate already has considerable power in that it has absolute right of veto in respect of academic matters. It also has a right of direct access to the minister. I have no doubt that the Interim Senate and the University Planning Authority will work closely together with the former body concerning itself mainly with academic standards, broad university policy and development plans, and the latter body attending to the research and detailed planning and its practical implementation.

Mrs LAWRIE: At the risk of incurring the wrath of one of my constituents, might I say that this is a fairly tortuous way of stating that the Interim Chancellor is to be Chairman of the Senate. Had that just been stated, a lot of unnecessary concern by members of this committee would not have been evident. The amendments proposed by the minister certainly make the whole bill more logical. But I think it needs to be said that what is now happening is that the Interim Chancellor is Chairman of the Senate.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, if it makes the member for Nightcliff happier, let her say that her constituent is responsible for the good words and that I am responsible for the bad.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 12.8.

This is simply to outline the Planning Vice-Chancellor's responsibility to the Interim Senate. I have already explained the matter.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, it has to be said that the Planning Vice-Chancellor, under the bill, is the authority. It now makes sense where the authority and the Planning Vice-Chancellor, being the same person, are reporting to the Senate which is chaired by the Interim Chancellor as to the doings of the authority. Before, he was reporting to himself. We now have the reports to the Senate chaired by the Interim Chancellor.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

In Assembly:

Bill reported; report adopted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I rise to speak to the third reading. I wish to make an announcement which the Minister for Education has permitted me to make in view of the fact that the arrangements were made between the gentleman concerned and myself. I am sure that all members will wish to see that the character and standing of the Interim Chancellor of this university will be of the highest order so that the university may aspire, not only nationally but internationally, to those standards of excellence that we all desire for it.

Honourable members are aware that the bill now before the Assembly provides for the constitution of an Interim Senate and it is the intention of the government to proceed to establish the university as speedily as the planning stages can be accomplished. The success or failure of the university is dependent very much upon the quality of the men and women entrusted with its foundation and early years. The government has made it clear from the beginning that the

University of the Northern Territory will aspire to the highest standards of excellence serving the people of the Northern Territory in their exciting years of social and economic change and growth.

Work is well under way in planning the style and operation of the university and the time has now come for its future supreme governing body to be constituted after the assent has been granted to this bill. To this end, the choice of an Interim Chancellor and, subsequently, a Chancellor is crucial and I am pleased to be able to inform the Assembly - and I have informed His Honour the Administrator at an earlier time - that I have approached a distinguished Australian, Mr Rupert Murdoch, and he has agreed to accept the government's invitation to serve in the capacity of Interim Chancellor.

Mr Murdoch, a man with considerable interests in the Territory, is eminently suited to the task. His wide experience coupled with his vision for the future of the Northern Territory and, for that matter, Australia and the world, will ensure that the Senate and the university community in the Northern Territory are stimulated to seek high standards of performance whilst maintaining a close relationship with the needs and realities of the Territory. This juxtaposition of academia and the business world will, I believe, work to the advantage of all of us.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, given the current political climate of the Territory, that appointment would hardly surprise anyone although it leaves me somewhat speechless.

I want to make some comment on the third reading. I would like to refer the Chief Minister to some of the comments he made in his second-reading speech when he talked about people sending their children out of the Territory to get secondary education as being a matter of choice. I would imagine - as the Chief Minister went on to tell us - that his own preference was to send his children outside the Territory. That may well be the case with him but I would like to assure the Chief Minister that there are people in my electorate who send their children out of the Northern Territory for secondary education not out of choice but out of absolute need.

The opposition said during the second reading that it supports the concept of the Darwin Community College. No one will question that the progress that that college has made since its opening in 1974 has been nothing short of remarkable. We believe that, by improving and adding to the concept of the Darwin Community College, the academic needs of the Territory would be served in a much better way and at certainly much less cost.

I would also like to draw members' attention to the financial difficulties that universities are in all around Australia. The minister would be aware that there was an ABC news report today that emanated from ANU which has a research unit in the Northern Territory saying that, if it did not receive urgent financial assistance, it would have to curtail or even remove some faculties from the university. It will be interesting to see what kind of reaction the TEC has to the proposal to fund a Northern Territory university in the face of the severe financial difficulties being faced around Australia by universities such as ANU, Flinders, Wollongong and many others.

I would also like to say that I was intrigued by the proposition that the university should be based on an Alaskan model. Of course, the opposition has not seen the Walker Report and neither has anyone else except the select few in the executive. That is totally in line with the sentiments of the Treasurer because, unless you get into government, you are entitled to nothing as far as he is concerned. Parliament counts for nothing and the executive is everything. That was the basis for my motion that this parliament supervise the construction of the

university rather than the way it is being done at the moment.

I would suggest - this is the result of my own research and, as members have mentioned, I have little to do with academics - that one of the universities that could be looked at is the University of New England. This seems to me to be a very appropriate model for a Northern Territory university. It is based on a small town serving a large rural population and it has extensive and highly recognised courses in rural science and a very active and highly recognised external studies department. Perhaps the Minister for Education could bring his attention to bear there.

I would like to refer to a rather prominent article that appeared in the NT News headlined 'Academics Worried About the Planning'. They are not the only ones who are worried about the planning. Dr Eedle is reported as having said at a DCC meeting: 'The Alaskan model gives me the creeps'. The report goes on: 'Although the Walker Report has been seen by the Chief Minister, Mr Everingham, Education Minister, Mr Robertson ... nobody else has seen it. The minister, Mr Robertson, seems confident about the future for the Territory university although the size of the university file on his desk indicates his own involvement has not been that great so far'.

I would urge the Minister for Education to make the Walker Report available and to table at the earliest possible opportunity in this parliament the report from the Planning Vice-Chancellor of the university that will be given to the minister next month. I will be very interested to see what public comment there is on the Chief Minister's announcement of the university's latest appointment today.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): I wish to speak to the third reading because the debate was stifled somewhat, although unintentionally. I would like to go on record as saying that I support wholeheartedly the government's intention to establish a university. I believe that it is of vital importance to the people of the Northern Territory. The matter I wanted to canvass in the second reading was my fear that we would end up with a second-rate university. Some years ago, I was involved in discussions aimed at combining a number of courses whereby units obtained through the Darwin Community College and units obtained at the Queensland University would be pooled together to gain the necessary number of units required to receive a BA. The problem was accreditation and I did not want any part of setting a standard where we would be enabling people to obtain a second-rate degree, and one that was not accepted in Australia. It is very difficult in Australia to gain approval for something that is different or that breaks with tradition. In the long term, I can see a real danger if the proposed university and the Darwin Community College are linked other than for the initial development period.

I would like to go on record as saying that I agree with the member for Arnhem that the work of the college over the years has been really magnificent and is something of which we should be proud. It should continue in operation. I can imagine people saying that, if the university and the college stayed together it would not be a real university but just another arm of the college. I would hate this to happen. We must be careful to ensure that our university will be a first-rate institution.

The bill sets up the machinery to look at the establishment of the university and I wholeheartedly support that move. I am also pleased to note the Chief Minister's comments. I will write to the minister responsible giving details of all the concerns that I have in regard to the university interim arrangements.

Bill read a third time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 55)

Continued from 25 November 1980.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am satisfied that the delay of one month provided by Standing Order 153 could result in hardship being caused. Therefore, on application of the Chief Minister, I declare the bill to be an urgent bill.

Mr ISAACS: Mr Speaker, in view of what you have just said, I move that all words after 'that' be omitted and the following words inserted: 'consideration of item 4, Orders of the Day, Government Business be deferred until the next sittings of the Legislative Assembly'.

I move this motion because of my general attitude to the question of seeking urgency and also the manner in which it has been done on this particular occasion. The bill relates to the Local Government Act which, in terms of its accretions, would have to be the worst piece of legislation in the Northern Territory. The government has promised consolidations and reviews since the very first days of the Second Legislative Assembly. We received a second-reading speech from the Treasurer yesterday, and we are asked to debate it today. You, Sir, have granted it urgency on the grounds provided by Standing Order 153 that hardship will be caused.

Hardship to whom? Certainly there was nothing in the Treasurer's speech to indicate any hardship whatever. Nobody has argued that hardship will occur. If one reads the second-reading speech, one can imagine that it alleviates certain problems for the private subdividers but there does not seem to be any hardship accruing to any members of the community. Certainly, I do not believe that any hardship will be accruing to the developers either.

The simple fact is that the government allowed certain areas of Darwin to be developed by private companies, as is its right. Those companies set about their developments given certain, to use the words of the government, 'strict requirements'. We find now that those strict requirements are being diluted. According to the Treasurer in his speech yesterday: 'The necessity for private subdividers to be able to arrange sales of land as early as possible should be apparent to members of the Assembly. Public demand for residential allotments is high. This demand for land is really a demand for housing. The amendments proposed here seek to allow this demand to be satisfied in the shortest possible time'. Now, that is according to the Treasurer.

Mr Speaker, I must say you caught us somewhat by surprise because normally you have allowed debate to take place and then, just prior to the putting of the motion, you have announced that urgency will be granted. However, you did not say, and you have never said, where the hardship occurs. You did not tell this Assembly the grounds given by the Chief Minister. What grounds were given to show hardship? Sir, I ask that, in future, you explain to the Assembly where you believe the hardship will occur.

The private developers are turning off the land in the northern suburbs of Darwin. They say that they want to be able to pre-contract the sale of the allotments prior to the necessary services being provided. The Treasurer says that, if they are allowed to sell the land before the services are required, this will somehow speed up the turn off of land. He winks. I do not know that I take that too kindly. I would think the greatest accelerator of the turn off of land would be to say to the subdividers, 'You will not get a penny until the land is properly serviced'. If that is said to them - as indeed it was prior to this piece of legislation being introduced - the land would have been turned off quickly.

What does the bill do? It enables the developers to get some extra cash at an earlier stage. I do not know whether the minister is saying that the private developers are short of cash. The 2 companies that we are talking about, Hooker and Kerns, do not strike me as being small companies or short of cash. From the last statements I saw about them, both seemed to be doing reasonably well. We ask these companies to develop the land, which is fine, but the amazing thing is that we say to them: 'Well, we are going to look after your cash-flow problem',

The point is clear. The government says that, unless we do this, land will be held up. Nobody doubts this for a second. Nobody argues for a second with the proposition that we must get the land into the hands of consumers as quickly as possible. Nobody questions or argues with that proposition for one second. What we say is that the best way to achieve that is to ensure that the developers have an incentive to turn the land off quickly, not to hang onto it. If they sell it prior to the completion of the servicing, if they can pre-contract the sale, then clearly they have no incentive to complete the servicing. It seems to me to be a very dangerous precedent to say that we are going to stick by this very strong principle which the Treasurer reiterated in the opening parts of his speech. The government thinks it is wrong to offer for sale or lease subdivided land within the municipality before it is serviced. The Treasurer said: 'It is wrong, you should not do it'. There are very strong penalties. But this bill will allow the minister to talk with the private subdivider and say: 'Well look, we will let you do it so long as you comply with certain strict requirements'. I believe that is a very dangerous precedent to set indeed.

I think the policies outlined by the Treasurer in his opening remarks are correct. They are enshrined in the Local Government Act. The developers, when they took on the task of subdividing the land out in the northern suburbs, knew that that was the requirement. They knew it and they were happy to go ahead accordingly. I believe that the greatest pressure that could be brought on them to produce the land as quickly as possible, which is what we all want, is to retain that provision so that they know that they get no cash until they have properly serviced that land.

We object to the manner in which this particular piece of legislation is being brought in: introduced yesterday, debated today, and you, Sir, have declared that hardship will be caused, although you do not tell us where or to whom, and you therefore consider it an urgent bill. We heard pious nonsense from the Minister for Education: 'I do not like to ramrod legislation through the Assembly'. He does not say that just for one bill; he is happy to say it for quite a number. Pressure is applied from the city council and the minister rightly says: 'We are not going to be railroaded in this; we will take our time thank you very much. We have the Standing Orders there for very good reason'. Yet here we have a situation where legislation with very wide-ranging ramifications was introduced yesterday, debated today and will soon be passed.

The Treasurer said: 'What we want is a quick turn-off of land'. Nobody will argue against that. Do not let it be said from the other side, although I am sure they will in their normal glib way: 'You see that the opposition is against the rapid turn off of land'. We believe that the best way to get a rapid turn off of land is to do what the Treasurer said ought to be done; that is, land within a municipality ought not to be for sale prior to the necessary servicing works being done.

I cannot stress strongly enough how we believe this is a shabby way of dealing with this particular piece of legislation. We believe that you, Sir, should give the grounds where the hardship has occurred as sought by the Chief Minister in his letter to you so that this parliament can scrutinise that decision and see whether or not hardship is being caused. I believe it has not been. It

will not be. I believe we need not be debating it now. We ought to have it deferred until the next sittings of the parliament.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I think the best I can do is simply to refer again to the second-reading speech to answer the diatribe the Leader of the Opposition has just delivered himself of. As I read the second-reading speech, there is no intention on the part of the government to relieve subdividers of the obligations imposed on them by section 323 of the Local Government Act which prohibits the selling, offering for sale or leasing of subdivided land etc except in certain circumstances where, if safeguards have been approved by the minister, he may allow the offering for sale and pre-contracting.

We have heard the opposition go on and on during this session as to the shortage of accommodation in this town and throughout the Territory. Here is a possible way of cutting down the time whereby people may get on with the business of getting themselves accommodation but the opposition has not really got anything substantial to say. For that reason, I suppose we must expect them to rattle like empty drums on the other side of the Assembly. I will read into the Hansard the letter that I wrote to you:

Dear Mr Speaker,

Pursuant to Standing Order No 153, I apply for your declaration that the Local Government Bill (No 6) (Serial 55) is an urgent bill. Failure to effect the amendment as a matter of urgency will cause hardship to:

- 1. Darwin and Alice Springs people who are anxious to own their own houses as the current legislation causes a delay of the order of 3 months in these residents realising their aim. Projected turn off of land for sale to the private sector in Darwin during 1981 would allow 175 private dwellings to be completed in a 3-month period. Thus it can be demonstrated that this number of prospective house owners and families would be either unhoused or unsatisfactorily housed unnecessarily at any time whilst the current shortage exists. This situation would be overcome by the legal sanctioning of forward contracting as it would give property buyers a legal document on which to negotiate loan funds. Both the Northern Territory Housing Commission and private lending sources will process applications to approval stage based on a contract of sale and, secondly, give speculative builders the confidence to commence building prior to the issue of leases. The simultaneous erection of houses and completion of subdivision works will allow the earliest possible release of house and land packages which is the preference of most purchasers and help contain housing costs by reducing the holding time of land and houses in various stages of completion.*
- 2. Private developers who are engaged in subdivisions as the current legislation precludes forward contracting. This curtails their ability to use work already completed as collateral to raise further funds to continue their work. This may impede the rate of development which further aggravates the Territory's land shortage situation.*
- 3. The real estate industry in general which has been thrown into confusion as the result of conflicting legal opinions given to it on the correct interpretation of section 323.*

These problems have surfaced directly as a result of the first private development venture undertaken in Darwin and are part of the inevitable teething problems which have arisen. Speedy resolution of the problems

by treating the proposed amendments as urgent will relieve the present hardship and smooth the way for future private development undertakings in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Accordingly, Mr Speaker, I apply to you to declare, pursuant to Standing Order No 153, the Local Government Amendment Bill (No 6) (Serial 55) to be an urgent bill.

Mr Speaker, you ruled that hardship would be caused and that the bill should be treated as urgent. As far as I am aware, the Leader of the Opposition has moved no motion of dissent with your ruling. For that reason, I move that the question be now put.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 10

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Noes 7

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided (Mr Isaacs's amendment):

Ayes 7

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Noes 10

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Pairs

Mr Perkins

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Amendment negatived.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker ...

Ms D'ROZARIO: A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Speaker, I believe I was on my feet when you called the question and the honourable Treasurer, by getting the call, is in fact closing the debate. Is there to be no debate on this bill?

Mr SPEAKER: I did not see the honourable member, I must admit. The Treasurer has the call. The member may dissent from the ruling and give it to me in writing.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Speaker, I propose to do that.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, in my second-reading speech on this bill I made a very distinct point that the demand for land in the Northern Territory is really a demand for houses. This amendment speaks really more of houses than it does of land.

Mrs Lawrie: You are the only one who has been able to speak to it.

Mr PERRON: It seems I have heard a few words. Mr Speaker, the advantage of the legislation before us today and the reason that the government proposes that it be passed with urgency is the fact that it will indeed enable a considerable number of families in the Northern Territory to be housed in their own homes much sooner than they would be if this legislation was not passed.

The opposition has expressed some concern at the current accommodation situation in Darwin. Yet, a short while ago, we saw a move to defer this legislation and to have it considered at a later time which would, in fact, create considerable hardship to a lot of families.

The law as it stands at the present time makes it an offence for a person to offer for sale, sell or lease for residential or business purposes land in an area within a municipality which is being subdivided. That means that any advertisement by a developer for people to even come and look at land that he is subdividing is probably an offence. As well, probably every person who approaches a subdivider and proposes to sign up for a particular lot that may be on his plan of subdivision is offending. Surely, if we want houses built in the Northern Territory, the way to do it is to allow the houses to be constructed concurrently with the subdivisions. Of course, there must be protections for the local government which will eventually inherit the maintenance responsibilities of the subdivisions. This bill will do exactly that.

What we are trying to avoid is a situation whereby a subdivider first has to complete his entire subdivision. That could mean that land has been completed at one end for some time before the entire job would be completed. We are trying to achieve a situation where people can contract with a developer and with a house constructor. People could nominate a parcel of land and have a house built on it whilst the subdivision is proceeding. If members opposite cannot see this as a significant time saver in housing people, I am afraid there is no hope for them at all. When I say 'significant', I am not just talking about the 3 months that it takes to build a house. It is a matter of whether you wait till the subdivision is finished and then start building your houses or whether you plan before the subdivision is completed. This would give people a chance to choose their style of house or even design it themselves. As everyone knows, even arranging contracts and prices can take weeks. Then the builder must construct the house on the site.

Obviously, several months can be saved in housing each family. We are talking about turning off hundreds of blocks between now and early next year. If the opposition had its way, this bill would be deferred until then. We are talking about hundreds of families being housed and, obviously, those families will be vacating their present accommodation. I just cannot understand a group, which professes some concern for the accommodation situation, not taking every reasonable effort to support proposals which will house hundreds of people earlier than otherwise would be the case,

This system of pre-contracting exists elsewhere. The sanity of these moves has been seen by other governments. They have allowed pre-contracting so that people can select the land. They do not have to prepare for a big rush when a developer finishes his subdivision. 'I have 100 blocks for sale', he says, and 300 people try to get through the front door. Indeed, it could help to stabilise prices in that, once the contractor has pre-contracted to sell land, obviously the price cannot change. In a situation where he was forced to wait until the entire exercise was completed, the demand may push the prices up considerably.

I do not have much more to say on this bill. It is self-explanatory. It protects the local governments which support the bill in principle. They believe that the minister concerned should probably be the minister for local government rather than the Minister for Lands and Housing. The government does not accept that view. Subdivisional approvals are currently the responsibility of the Minister for Lands and Housing. We disagree with them in that regard but, generally, they support the bill because they are aware of the problems under existing legislation as far as accommodation is concerned.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent other members of the Assembly taking part in this debate.

The government clearly does not want to have any debate. The minister responsible for the piece of legislation could see that at least 2 other members on this side of the Assembly wished to speak on the matter. It clearly wants to stifle debate notwithstanding the pious statements of the Minister for Education. I would urge all members to support the suspension of Standing Orders to enable other members on both sides of the Assembly to speak to this very important bill. The Treasurer has not replied to my statements but has introduced a whole new range of issues into the debate. Other members ought to be allowed to debate this matter fully.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): In speaking to this motion of the Leader of the Opposition, I would indicate my strong support for it. I am anxious to speak on this bill. Twice the government has tried to deny me and other members on both sides of the Assembly that right by moving a gag motion in the first instance and now by the method of the minister speaking in reply before other members have a chance to speak. This is a most important bill. Members of the public have not had a chance to see it because it was only introduced yesterday and therefore it is all the more important that members of the Assembly have a chance to debate it and consider the topics which it raises. One only becomes very suspicious indeed of the intention of the bill if the minister does not want to debate it. If his arguments are so sound, why is he trying to stop us debating it?

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I wish to support the motion for the suspension of Standing Orders. The Minister for Education and the Treasurer have been very quick to say that we did not want to debate this bill. Until I heard your ruling this afternoon, I had no indication that this bill would receive urgency. I am appalled that the procedures of this Assembly can be so misused to allow members to remain in complete ignorance of the government's intention to proceed as a

matter of urgency on the grounds of hardship. There are other members who wish to put a point of view on the legislation which is of some importance to the people of the Territory. The procedures which have been used by the government have been such that no member other than the Leader of the Opposition is to be given any chance to put any point of view at all. I rather take it amiss that the Treasurer and the Minister for Education presume to know what is in one's mind on this matter.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. Clearly the Treasurer did not give any indication of his intention to seek urgency when he introduced this bill. As the member for Nightcliff has pointed out, she did not know of this particular intention of the Treasurer. We were given no indication of this in the Assembly. Members of the parliamentary wing of the ALP knew that the Treasurer was seeking urgency only because of a brief conversation that he had late yesterday with the Leader of the Opposition.

The content of the bill is so important that it does require some detailed comment and detailed examination by this Assembly. By leaping to his feet and closing the debate, the Treasurer has denied the elected representatives of those people who will be so momentarily affected by the provisions of this bill the right to debate this important matter. I ask members on the other side of the Assembly to support the motion.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I would also like to speak in support of this motion. It is normal practice in this Assembly that, when a bill is to be put through as an urgent bill - and reference to Hansard will clearly show this - the minister introducing the bill foreshadows as much in his second-reading speech. In fact, the expression that is used quite commonly is: 'I wish to advise the Assembly that I will be seeking urgency for this bill'. That appears again and again. The minister did not do that. He gave no notice whatever in his second-reading speech yesterday that this bill would receive urgency from you, Mr Speaker, yet that is the normal, courteous practice of ministers. It was not done in this case.

The first time that the opposition knew about it was as a result of a conversation that took place late last night between the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition. To make this even worse, the member for Nightcliff, the only independent member of this Assembly, was not advised at all. That honourable member found out about it today.

I believe that to flaunt the procedures of this Assembly for proper parliamentary scrutiny of legislation is disgraceful. There is another matter which has not been raised which I would like to touch on. If the Treasurer is so proud of the intent of this significant bill and if there is nothing suspicious about the intent of it, then it is quite extraordinary that he will not allow debate on it. If the virtues of this bill are so great, I would have thought that he would have welcomed debate and welcomed winning a division on the passage of this bill through this sittings so it became law. It is quite extraordinary that we have had the gag applied. First of all, we had no notice yesterday that it would be an urgent bill. The member for Nightcliff did not even receive the courtesy of being advised of it. So one member of this parliament was not even told. We then had the gag applied. We then had the minister getting to his feet and cutting off debate a second time.

Mr Speaker, if the government is being sincere in its desire to have this bill passed through this sittings, then why could not it have been introduced last week when at least the members of this parliament could have had some chance to have a closer look at it. If the minister has got his act together and if this matter is so vital and so desirable, then why could not notice have been given

of this bill last week in time for members to have had a good look at it instead of the matter being raised yesterday in this Assembly. As all members will recall, we had a very late sitting yesterday. We all left here fairly tired last night at about 8 o'clock. We had been in here all day. I do not think that anybody was interested or capable of properly scrutinising legislation after such a long sitting day.

I would just like to recap. One member of the Assembly was not even advised that it would be urgent. No notice of the urgency was given in the second-reading speech. The Leader of the House who is organising the government's strategy on this bill only half an hour ago said how much he abhorred the practice of bills being pushed through this Assembly. Now he is behind it and pushing as hard as he can. We have the gag applied to us on this commendable bill. The minister for some reason does not want it debated. He then cuts off debate himself shortly after that. I ask the minister, if this bill is so good, why he could not have introduced it into the Assembly last week and given us some small opportunity of having a better look at it?

Mr SPEAKER: The motion is not supported by an absolute majority of the Assembly and I therefore declare it lapsed.

The Assembly divided on the question that the bill be now read a second time:

Ayes 10

Noes 7

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mr. B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice relating to the third reading.

Leave denied.

In committee:

Clause 1:

The committee divided:

Ayes 9

Noes 7

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs

Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

The committee divided:

Ayes 9

Noes 7

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, I am glad that I made an impression this time. We have here what purports to be a transitional clause, the words of which are quite interesting. In view of what has been said in the second-reading debate by those of us who had an opportunity, I wonder what is the requirement to have this particular amendment applied to land which has been subdivided. If we look at the definition of 'subdivision', and I presume it means the same as it means in the Planning Act - all these subdivisions do have approval under the Planning Act - we find that 'subdivision' means an activity which involves the rendering of separate parcels of land available for separate occupation or use, or the consolidation of parcels of land into one or more allotments. Basically, we are interested in the rendering of separate parts of land available for separate occupation or use. If the land is subdivided - and it is only after the completion of that process that separate titles would issue - then I ask the honourable sponsor of the bill why land which has been subdivided is included in this particular provision. We can appreciate that the Treasurer wishes that land which is in the process of subdivision or land which has not yet gained an approval to be subdivided should be covered by this particular bill but I am at a loss to understand why land which has already been subdivided should also be provided for in the transitional clause. It does raise the question that this bill applies more widely than we have been led to believe by the Treasurer. As I say, if the land has been subdivided, there is no constraint upon the developer building the house and then selling it as a land and house package to a prospective purchaser. I do ask for that explanation.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, the operations of the amending provisions of this bill are proposed to have a retrospective as well as a prospective effect and will in effect apply to all land that has been subdivided to date provided the requirements of the next section of this bill are complied with; that is, to obtain the various approvals from the ministers.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, this is rather what I suspected. If the act is to have effect retrospectively, what the Treasurer is saying is that there are some people whose titles may be in doubt. As I mentioned, the only way you can get individual titles as a result of subdivision is if in fact you have completed the works which are defined; that is, forming and laying out roads and footpaths, constructing drains, kerbs, gutters and providing means of access for electricity supply, water supply and sewerage facilities. The question does arise here that we are talking about providing securities for the completion of this work and giving retrospective approvals to people who do not have the entitlement to have separate titles because they have not complied with the subdivision requirements.

Mr PERRON: I think that the member for Sanderson's points are really quite pedantic. It is like the opposition's whole attitude towards the processing of this bill to date - really quite childish from beginning to end. I cannot really understand whose titles are all of a sudden going to be in some kind of doubt. I think the member for Sanderson is simply playing on words.

Mrs O'NEIL: I have listened to the exchanges of the member for Sanderson and the Treasurer. This had not occurred to me before but, having listened to that argument, it seems to me that she has raised a point that he has not answered. We have been led to believe by the small amount of information that we have that the intention of this bill is to apply to the new subdivisions which are presently under construction. There is now a retrospective element suddenly added and I would ask the minister to explain to the committee just how much land and how many subdivisions are in fact covered by this. It could well be that it is a very broad-ranging bill indeed and does not just apply to those few subdivisions as we have been led to believe.

Mr PERRON: Unfortunately, the way this matter was dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition early in the piece did not allow the members the opportunity to look at the question seriously instead of simply trying to defer it. I do not have specific information as to the numbers of blocks selected which the member for Fannie Bay raised. She is obviously just trying to prolong the debate as the member for Sanderson has obviously lost out on her 2 turns to speak on this clause. She does not have a point to answer.

Mr B. COLLINS: I cannot let the last remark made by the Treasurer pass.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that the question be now put.

Mrs LAWRIE: A point of order! You did not have the call.

Mr ROBERTSON: I do not need it.

The committee divided:

Ayes 9

Noes 7

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Harris
Mr Everingham
Mr Perron

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie

Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Motion agreed to.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The question is that clause 3 stand as printed.

The committee divided:

Ayes 9

Noes 7

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, this is the key clause of the bill so I hope it will not be taken amiss if I make a few remarks about it and ask for a few explanations. The Treasurer seems to think we have no duty at all to examine legislation in detail.

Firstly, it is proposed by this bill that there will be occasions when subdividers will be exempt from the normal subdivision provisions and will have allotments ready for separate occupation before disposal by sale or by pre-contract. I wish to make it quite clear that I have no difficulty with extending this particular provision to pre-contract transactions: where a purchaser expresses interest in a particular block or a particular house and land package and, subject to the contract being complete, pays the deposit and, in due course, becomes the occupier of the land. However, I draw a distinction between that transaction and one of disposal by outright sale.

I point out to the Treasurer that we have had some experience in the Northern Territory with these sorts of transactions. I ask him to recall the reasons why in the Local Government Act we have these provisions which are designed basically to restrict the subdividers from selling by outright sale before the land is in a state for occupation. Clearly, the Legislative Council before us and the First Legislative Assembly took this duty very seriously indeed. It was a duty to protect the purchaser. We are talking here about people making the single largest investment in their lifetime. We are talking about people spending their life savings, in many instances, and putting themselves into hock to purchase this particular commodity. I have no difficulty in extending

these provisions to pre-contract transactions but I do object to their being extended to sale transactions.

As I mentioned, we have had some experience with this particular phenomenon and I have only to remind the Treasurer of an analogous situation which we had in respect of freehold land not so very long ago. I understand that the Treasurer himself was a member of that Assembly which appointed a commission of inquiry to examine how relief could be given to persons who had bought land and then found that they could not compel the subdivider to perform and therefore could not obtain title.

The Treasurer will say that he has provided adequate safeguards. Let us look at the safeguards. The safeguards are in subsection (6) of proposed section 323: the minister, when he gives his consent to this partial exemption, shall impose conditions. Of course, this is a compulsion on the minister to impose conditions. One condition will be that the subdivider will provide security. There is a further condition that his consent is personal to the applicant. Many local government authorities use the mechanism of upholding security but, if the subdividers were to pay securities sufficient to compel performance - that is to say, the amount lodged in security would in fact cover the cost of construction - then they would not overcome their cash-flow problems. They would be putting money into security whereas they could be complying with the subdivision requirement, selling the lots and maintaining a cash flow by that device.

The personal consent to the applicant becomes very difficult in cases where the subdivider may pull out of a particular development and sell the right to develop the lease to another party. That has happened before in Australia. It is not unknown for subsidiaries of these companies and finance corporations to take over and finally complete the subdivision. Giving a personal consent will mean that each time the new applicant will have to reapply to the minister.

The next question I wish to raise is contained in subsection (7) of the proposed section. It relates to a revocation of consent if the conditions are not complied with. We know from past experience - and again I refer to the fracas in the freehold subdivision - that revocation does nothing. All revocation does is relieve the subdivider of any further incentive to perform. Since he has had his consent revoked, there is nothing at all that compels performance to complete the subdivision.

I am sure the Treasurer will tell me that these matters are covered in proposed subsection (8) which says that, if the subdivider fails to complete the specified works, the consent which has been granted is deemed to have lapsed or to be no longer effective. The minister may call upon the security which was lodged or, if the security is insufficient, he may recover the deficiency from the subdivider. I have already referred to the question of security. If cash flow is to be maintained, then I ask the Treasurer what is the point of putting large sums in security.

The recovery of the deficiency can only be done in courts of competent jurisdiction. I am sure that the Treasurer and the relevant minister would have good grounds before going to any such court but I would remind the Treasurer that these sorts of proceedings are not costless to the community. Eventually, the taxpayer and the purchasers in this subdivision will foot these costs. It is all very well to say that there are safeguards but they are not costless safeguards: to the purchaser, to the general taxpayer nor to the subdivider for that matter.

I can see a situation arising whereby these blocks will be occupied with kerbs and guttering perhaps incomplete. We will have exactly the same situation that has arisen in the fringe suburbs of all the larger cities where, after occupying the land, the occupiers lobby for the upgrading of the services. The

government finds it too costly to compel performance by the subdividers and, in the end, the local government authority does the work which should have been done by the subdivider. I would remind the Treasurer that semi-government loans are taken by local authorities in many places to provide ordinary kerbing, guttering and drainage works which are the responsibility of the subdivider.

Mr PERRON: The member for Sanderson has just further demonstrated her lack of interest in having this bill processed today. The opposition will obviously go to any lengths to avoid that. Every point she raised is quite clearly self-explanatory in the bill or was explained in the second-reading speech. She even went so far as to say that she supported the clause which is rather amazing considering that she was involved in a series of divisions here this afternoon.

Quite clearly, the bill provides for pre-contracting. If she thinks about it carefully enough, that should answer the question about pre-contracting compared to pre-sale. She raises the question of guarantees that the minister can require. The requirement upon the minister is that he shall impose such other conditions as he thinks fit. Guarantees that work will be undertaken do not have to be in the form of cash. She should know that. As a matter of fact, these very provisions are also included in other legislation which provides for the very letting of subdivisional leases to which this legislation partly relates. The subdivisional leases in the northern suburbs have a whole raft of conditions upon the developers, including guarantees, that the government may call upon if it wishes to exercise its powers to complete a subdivision which has not been completed. What we are asking for here is a second bite at the cherry. My point is that the guarantees do not have to be in cash and the nonsense about whether or not this situation will improve the cash flow of subdividers is beside the point.

I have mentioned earlier that the principal reason for this bill and its urgency is to house people, a point conveniently forgotten by others. The member for Sanderson said that there was absolutely nothing which compelled the developer to perform. That is a load of nonsense. She went on to answer her own question by quoting proposed subsection (8). She said that, whatever conditions the minister imposed, the subdividers would default and the government would not back up its undertaking to local government which is laid down in this legislation. The local government would have to turn to the semi-government market to borrow and burden its ratepayers by raising the loan rate to complete these kerbs and gutters that have not been completed. Mr Chairman, what the honourable member raised was a load of nonsense and she knows it.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, it is hardly a load of nonsense given the report which was presented in the Legislative Council regarding the problems associated with a private subdivision in the Nightcliff area where some of the work had been carried out. People were unable to get title to their land. I do not see the security for those persons who, under this bill, buy their land or enter into an agreement but are then disadvantaged because of the failure of the applicant to satisfactorily complete the work. This will allow for people to be grossly out of pocket in the event of a defaulting principal contractor.

I note also that, whilst the relevant minister will not give his consent to an application unless he is satisfied the applicant is able to complete the specified works and until he has informed the municipal council within which the subdivision is situated that he has received the application and proposes to give consent thereto, there is no requirement upon him to receive the assent of the municipal council. Now, I realise that this Assembly is a superior body legislatively. Nevertheless, in an agreement of this kind, one would

have thought the drafting could have been a little more precise so that the minister would not proceed to grant the application if it was within a municipality if the municipality itself did not wish that application granted. I hope I have made my point clear to the minister because it is of some concern to me.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, the situation is quite unlike the earlier days in the Territory when there were a number of subdivisions. When I say 'earlier days', I am going back to before self-government when certain subdivisions were uncompleted and a number of people lost money. The situation now is that we have a government prepared to commit itself in legislation to assure prospective purchasers of land that the government will back the completion of any uncompleted subdivision. Now that has never been the case in the Territory before. A situation existed where some people in rural Darwin could subdivide land as of right and the government could not even stop it. We may recall legislation in this Assembly to stop things such as battleaxe blocks and the like. Prior to that, persons had a right to subdivide land without any government approval whatsoever. They also had a right in those days to pre-sell land. That is how people were taken for a ride.

We now have a situation where every subdivision requires the minister's approval and the developer will need to have that same minister's approval to pre-sell land. That minister is also responsible for the capital works projects sponsored through his department for subdivisional works. He will be watching fairly carefully that people put up funds commensurate with the risk. Some of the developers are quite substantial concerns. We can be reasonably assured that the possibility of their going bankrupt over a job in Darwin is fairly small. However, sufficient guarantees can be assured. Therefore, we have a government guaranteeing both the purchaser and local government that it will complete the works in event of default by a developer. I think that this bill is really quite secure from both those party's points of view.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, firstly I must take offence at the response of the minister to my earlier questions. It seems that the minister is quite unprepared to handle this particular bill. He claims that it refers only to pre-contracting. Further, he misrepresented a number of points I made because he obviously cannot even give me the courtesy of listening. He seems to deny that we have a right to scrutinise this legislation and, just because I have taken the trouble to make a distinction between pre-contract transactions and contracts for outright sales, the minister claims that somehow or other this is inconsistent with my approach. I know what I feel personally about this particular bill but that is not to say that my constituents do not expect me to raise these matters. Let us be clear on one thing. The bulk of the subdivisions in the Darwin area are in the electorate of Sanderson. I think that the Treasurer shows contempt for this Assembly and contempt for my constituents. With the exception of the question of security, he answered none of my queries.

Let us return to the question of the government being able to back the completion of the subdivision. In proposed subsection (8) we have a provision that, where the subdivider defaults, the minister may either call upon the security which has been lodged or recover the deficiency from the applicant. As I have said, to recover the deficiency entails instigating legal proceedings against the subdivider. As I mentioned earlier, those proceedings are not costless. I do not see why the government should take on the responsibility of incurring additional costs to ensure compliance when that is what the subdivider should be doing. The subdividers should be providing the services in accordance with the provisions of this bill in the first place. If it is not the intention to exempt them from this obligation, then what I ask is the

purpose of this particular bill? The purpose clearly is, in certain circumstances, to exempt them, partially or wholly, from compliance with these particular conditions.

The Treasurer said also that these conditions only apply to pre-contracts for sale. Of course, if one reads the second-reading speech, we find that that is not so. There are clearly 2 sets of transactions here, one offering for outright sale and one offering for pre-contract. If I can just read the relevant sentence of the Treasurer's second-reading speech from page 17 of yesterday's Hansard: 'The bill seeks to empower the Minister for Lands and Housing to give his consent to offering or pre-contracting for sale'. That is, offering for sale or pre-contracting for sale.

Mr Chairman, I think this matter is of some importance because, as I have mentioned, we are talking about large investments on the part of families and individuals. The dream of owning one's own home can fast become a nightmare when one is involved in all sorts of actions to get the subdivider to perform in terms of the original approval to subdivide. The Treasurer seems to regard all these things quite lightly. I do not deny for a moment that the intent of the bill is to provide more land and houses. As the Leader of the Opposition said, we do not reject that notion. What we are saying is that the quickest way to do it is to provide the incentive for the subdivider to comply with the provisions of the approval rather than to give him loopholes by which he can default and then wait for the government to get around to proceeding against him in order to compel compliance.

All of these things seem very minor to the Treasurer and this surprises me because I believe that he also has the responsibility for consumer affairs as I do on this side of the Assembly. I am looking at this not only from the point of view of large individual investments but also from the point of view of protecting the consumer. Mr Chairman, I repeat what I said before which the Treasurer disregarded: if we look at the history of why these restrictions have been included in legislation in this legislature and the one before it, we will see that it is all aimed at securing compliance on the part of the subdivider and thereby giving protection to the ultimate occupier of the land. If all the subdividers behaved correctly, we would never have this problem. But the fact of the matter is that most households make a large commitment to owning land and a house. It is necessary to protect them and the protection that this legislature has seen fit to give is restrictions and prescriptions on the behaviour of the subdividers.

It is essential that the minister look at this not solely from the point of view of helping these subdividers but also from the point of view of the ultimate consumer; that is, the house purchaser. He keeps saying that there are adequate protections for both buyer and seller. I put it to him that wherever there has been an inquiry as to why or how a party has been disadvantaged in the sale of a house, it has all had to do with the relative disadvantage to the purchaser. He has already said that all of this is nonsense but I remind him that I regard my duty to my constituents and to this Assembly very seriously indeed. No matter how hard he tries, I will not let him push this bill through without making these remarks which should be of concern to every member of this committee, half of whom I am certain have not even bothered to look at the bill.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, the style of the member for Sanderson has not changed a bit during the course of this debate. She is still being almost pedantic. She spoke about a hypothetical situation where a subdivider went broke and where the bonds required by the minister were insufficient to complete the subdivision. The government decided that it would take him

to court in order to squeeze the deficiency out of him. She rightly pointed out that court actions are not cheap. Thus, the whole bill should rise or fall because it is liable to cost the Crown some money in the courts. Obviously, if the Crown wins, it should recover costs from the developer anyway. The member for Sanderson clearly knows that. The very raising of this point has to be clutching at straws.

Her other point dealt with a matter in the second-reading speech. She referred to the bill itself: 'Offering for sale or contracting to sell'. There is an 'or' included there. We are trying to make it legal for somebody to hang a sign up saying: 'Land for sale'. We are also making it legal for a person to contract to sell. If the member cares to read proposed subsection (6), she will find that the minister may impose whatever conditions he thinks fit. The minister may well choose to impose a limitation on the deposit that the developer can require or any other conditions as he sees fit. Her points might be better directed in a letter to the minister suggesting guidelines that the minister could adopt in imposing conditions on developers.

Finally, she suggested that I look at this matter with an eye towards the consumer instead of the developer. These proposals to change the act have been solely in the interests of the provision of accommodation in the Northern Territory. We are talking about providing houses for hundreds of families months earlier than will be the case if this bill is not passed. I suggest that the member for Sanderson look at the consumers instead of just being pedantic.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, the minister did not reply to my earlier query on clause 4. My concern was that he could give consent to an applicant notwithstanding the opposition of the local municipality in which the subdivision is to take place.

Mr PERRON: I overlooked that particular question. We have considered this matter. Since the government is undertaking to exempt the corporation from financial responsibility in the event of default, it was felt that it should have extensive control over the subdivision process in the interests of the Territory generally. We probably will require an extensive control of this process for some time. Government advisers will monitor very closely subdivisional developments, particularly those in places like Darwin. It is felt that the government should retain the right to be fairly arbitrary in this matter in that it is prepared to take the financial risks of a possible failure to exonerate the city council from any charges in regard to this. Whilst we serve notice on the council that the minister proposes to exercise his power in this regard, we have not given it a right to veto that decision of the minister.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Chairman, the Treasurer has a tendency to completely fail to address himself to the questions raised in committee. Since the member for Sanderson has expended the time available to her, I will reiterate the point that she made in reference to paragraph (8)(b). It states: 'If the security provided by the applicant in accordance with subsection 6(a)(i) proves to be insufficient, recover any deficiency from the applicant'. This bill is all about exemption. We have the Local Government Act that provides a great deal of protection to the public. It has been said again and again that the single biggest investment that a normal person is ever likely to make is the purchase of a house. The provisions in the Local Government Act were put there for a very good purpose and this bill is all about exempting people from those provisions.

Mr Chairman, I would ask members to consider the points that the member for Sanderson raised about court action by the government against a subdivider to enforce the provisions of the Local Government Act in respect of the subdivision. I know that the government owns land which, at some time in the future, will be sold for people to build houses on it. There are many people interested in purchasing that land from the government. Although a number of services are provided to that land, some services are not. Some of the land in question has roads, telephones and electricity but does not have water. Those people have been told by the Lands Branch that the government will not consider selling that land because it has insisted on rigid conditions for the subdivision of land which it is now applying to private developers. It would be totally wrong of the government to put land on the market itself for sale whilst it is insisting that these stringent pre-sale conditions be met by private developers. It is of some interest that I had a person in my office only last week who had been told that by the people in the Palmerston Arcade that very day. Now we have this bill before us without any warning.

The member for Sanderson quite rightly pointed out that the majority of these subdivisions are within her electorate. She pointed out that she was simply trying to make the point that these conditions of which the minister was so proud when they were introduced into the Assembly are preventing the government from selling its own land because it does not want to sell that land when it is imposing stringent conditions on private developers. It would be much easier and much safer for the consumer if the subdivider simply proceeded to complete this work and to comply with the conditions of the Local Government Act in the first place.

Can you imagine the situation when a large number of not very wealthy people purchase their houses under this arrangement? That problem has obviously been foreseen by the government and provided for in this bill: the subdivider may default on the conditions laid down by the minister and the people will not obtain title to their land. The government will take the subdivider to court. What an horrendous court battle that would be.

The member for Sanderson made another point and I would like to make it again. The minister once again suggested to the member for Sanderson that she should raise these matters with him by letter. That takes your breath away. The whole purpose of parliament is to scrutinise legislation. That is why we are here. It is the specific purpose of the committee stage of a bill. The minister does not bother to listen to anything that the member says and finishes off by saying that parliament should not be bothered about the scrutiny of legislation and that the member should send a letter to the minister. Why don't we shut the Assembly down and run everything from the Chan building across the road? That is the attitude that has been demonstrated towards this Assembly by the gentleman concerned since my first day here. He shows complete contempt of this Assembly and one member in particular. We heard the extraordinary suggestion from the government whip that I, the opposition whip, should tell him how to do his job. That was terrific. It would take a better man than I to tell the gentleman how to do his job.

Mrs O'NEIL: I attempted to ask the Treasurer a question about clause 3 earlier on and he did not answer it. I asked it because I have a constituent who has been caught in the sort of problem that can arise. It relates to a freehold land subdivision but, nevertheless, the principle is the same. This lady is a pensioner, the sort of person who certainly cannot afford to lose money through the improper dealings of other people in land. Perhaps this bill might affect that dealing yet the minister declines to answer. I find his attitude totally improper. We are trying to find things out for the benefit

of our constituents and our community. For his information, I asked him a question about clause 3 because I have a constituent who might well be affected by it. It is a fact that many people in the Northern Territory have been affected by these sorts of dealings in the past. The member for Nightcliff referred to the Nimmo Inquiry which was initiated by the Assembly in the days when it was apparently slightly more responsible than the government members are now.

I have another question about the necessity for this bill at all. I am told that there is in fact eminent legal opinion which suggests that there is a loophole in section 323 of the Local Government Act as it stands which enables these sales or agreements for sales to take place and that perhaps this bill is not necessary at all. I would like to ask the minister whether he has any information to this effect and whether in fact the bill is an attempt to prevent subdividers from acting in that way without the approval of the government.

Mr ROBERTSON: It would not have come to the Treasurer's attention because this piece of legislation will be placed under the control of the Minister for Lands and Housing. The point raised by the member for Fannie Bay that there is a body of legal opinion which says that the existing provisions of section 323 may not be valid is certainly true. Indeed, that was the legal opinion obtained by one of the developers. On the other hand, there is an equally strong legal view to the contrary.

We have one of the most significant areas of the development of land in the Northern Territory totally tied up. We have a cloud of legal doubt surrounding the very meaning, intent and operation of section 323 of the Local Government Act. I think it would be rather irresponsible if a government did not take the quickest possible steps it could to overcome a position of grave legal doubt in a very important provision in a piece of legislation. It is one of those rare occasions when we take the matter to the Speaker and ask for a certificate of urgency. This is very rare because we know in government that Mr Speaker is particularly careful about these things and he will not grant one lightly. In fact, I think this Assembly operated under a rule set down when it was not a parliament and when it was merely a legislature. Mr Speaker Kilgariff defined the rules as to urgency. With respect, I know that Mr Speaker applies those rules to matters which are put before him.

What really is the intent of this clause? We not only have the absurd position where a person cannot go to a developer and say, 'Gee, that nice piece of land on the corner is the one I would like and I want you to contract to me to build that nice home in that nice block', but if the countervailing law is to apply that it is illegal to do that under section 323 of the Local Government Act, then the moment any citizen of the Northern Territory talks to a contractor who is doing the subdivisions or to the nominated real estate agent of that person about that block of land, the strong legal opinion is that he has automatically broken the law. What a preposterous situation the opposition is asking us to perpetuate for over another 3 months.

Let us ignore for a moment the question of hardship. What we are really saying is that these people who so piously announce that the interests of their constituents must be protected wish to expose those constituents to a criminal prosecution. In addition to that, we are told that the developers are supposed to know of the existence of section 323.

Mr Chairman, notwithstanding all the publicity after the Darwin episode, a real estate agent in Alice Springs, on the announcement of the Sadadeen subdivision, innocently took out a full page advertisement asking people to come

into his office and select a block. He was not aware that it would constitute in all probability an offence for him immediately the first person spoke to him about that subdivision because he would be held to be offering land in that subdivision for sale.

All this legislation seeks to do is to allow an offering for sale and a contract to be entered into. The normal procedure is 10% and, as minister, I would not allow more than 10% as a general rule. Who would be able to pay it in the normal course of events anyway? It is not, as the Leader of the Opposition suggested, a move by this government to put money early into the pocket of the developer. It is only 10% and he is hardly going to retire on that. He is probably borrowing at 18% to build his subdivision so it is nonsense to suggest that, because we are putting so much money into his pocket, he is going to bolt off into the bush. It is also nonsense to suggest that he is going to default to such an extent that the government will have to sue him for any significant amount of money. It would be a gross dereliction of ministerial duty to allow that to happen.

Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition told us earlier, we are not proposing to create a precedent; we are proposing the nub of what makes the system of private development work around this country. The Territory is the only odd man out in fact. It has been put to me by many developers that the archaic law contained in section 323 is an impediment to early home building. This sort of bonding arrangement goes on right around the country. Indeed, in the state of South Australia, total bonding was brought in and not just the provisions contained in the schedule to the amendments to the act. Under Don Dunstan, total bonding was introduced so that a developer had to take out an insurance policy to complete the whole package and could pre-sell and pre-contract immediately. The Territory is the odd man out. What we intend to do is to wait until the subdivision is 60% or 70% complete but still allow a person to talk about it beforehand. After it is 60% or 70% complete - those are the conditions that the government will impose - then we will allow pre-contracting and work can commence immediately on a home. Without this legislation, all of the land which is now being developed in subdivisions, and will be developed in future subdivisions, will not be able to be even discussed between agent and home builder until next March.

The committee divided:

Ayes 9

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Noes 7

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Clause 4 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

In Assembly:

Progress reported; report adopted.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I asked the sponsor of this bill to indicate in the third-reading debate why he did not give notice in his second-reading speech that he intended to seek the Chair's approval for this bill to pass all stages on the basis that hardship would be caused and to explain to me why at no stage was I notified of this impending procedure.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I can only apologise to the member for Nightcliff for an oversight on my behalf. I informed the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and indeed provided at his request a copy of the second-reading speech of the bill. I failed to inform the member for Nightcliff separately. I guess that I can do no more than that: regard it as an oversight on my behalf. I did not refer to the urgency in the second-reading speech which would have solved that problem. That was because I was reading a prepared speech at the time. The question of urgency was dealt with separately in a letter from the Chief Minister to the Speaker. It was unfortunate and I apologise to the member for Nightcliff for that oversight.

The Assembly divided on the question that the bill be now read a third time:

Ayes 10

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Dondas
Mr Everingham
Mr Harris
Mr MacFarlane
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Noes 7

Mr B. Collins
Mr Doolan
Ms D'Rozario
Mr Isaacs
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Leo
Mrs O'Neil

Pairs

Mrs Padgham-Purich

Mr Perkins

Bill read a third time.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 21)

Continued from page 402.

In committee:

Clause 18 (Mr Robertson's amendment):

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, there are 3 main parts to this amendment. The first one is obviously to ensure uniformity in the deeds issued. There is no difficulty there. The second part of the amendment is to make it clear that the Territory can grant to itself or hold freehold without the interest merging. It is questionable whether the Territory or any state, being representative of the Crown, can lease Crown land to itself. This will make that possible without merging the 2 interests: the interest that the Territory has as an agent of the Crown and the interest under the title. So it is simply to make it clear that the radical title does not merge with the other title.

Subsection (3) is to be omitted because it is quite clear that the minister can enter into contracts for sale without our having to state that in this particular section. It is simply superfluous.

Ms D'ROZARIO: I am in some difficulty with the proposed new subsection (1A). The words that cause some difficulty are: 'shall not merge with the radical title to the land'. As far as I am aware, there is no definition of 'radical title' in the Crown Lands Act and I have no recollection of such a term in the Real Property Act. These amendments were introduced so late that I did not really have time to check. I dare say that such a definition could be found in a legal dictionary. While the minister has told us that the problem is whether the Crown can grant itself title, I do feel that that particular expression does not really make much sense as far as what we are trying to achieve in this particular bill is concerned.

The second point to be raised is that, if the Crown in right of the Territory did not wish to hold the title, then I think there is some subsequent clause or subclause whereby it can be surrendered and the duplicate destroyed. While we all appreciate what this notice of 'merging' means in its commonplace sense, I fear that, in the legal sense, the intention of proposed new subsection (1A) is not all that apparent.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Chairman, I agree that I have never seen the word used in that context. It does not appear in Osborn either. It certainly appears in the Oxford and it means 'primary'. The purpose is simply to clear up the question as to whether or not it is arguable that the Territory can be a tenant unto itself. There are many legal forms of drafting that we do not understand. I do not think that that necessarily excuses it.

I think law ought to be for the people and the people ought to be able to understand it but I do not think it is worth holding up the passage of the amendment. I take the point of the honourable member that it is not a word commonly used in this context. We might have a look at it at a later time. It would be a very simple amendment to make.

Ms D'ROZARIO: It is certainly not my intention to hold up the passage of this amendment. The only difficulty that I see arising is when it comes to transferring the title. The minister says that there is some doubt as to whether the Territory can be a tenant unto itself and I do not dispute that view. There is a large area of doubt there. The problem arises when the Territory wishes to alienate that land from its own title to somebody else. According to this bill, there will be 2 ways: it can alienate its own tenancy or it can surrender its title, have the land declared by that process as unalienated Crown land and then pass on the tenancy to another party. That is a matter that I am not very sure about. Certainly that particular passage does not make sense to me. I hope that later on the minister can tell us what is its intention.

Mr ROBERTSON: I do not think there is any difficulty. I do not think there is any confusion as to what it means once we understand what the word 'radical' means.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.13.

The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the possibility of reverting a title over a piece of land back to no title at all. The Territory may not

wish a title to continue when it acquires land with a title. This new section will give the power to make land truly unalienated Crown land if it is desired to do so. A good example of where it will probably be used is the acquisitions necessary to construct the flyover at the intersection of Bagot Road and the Stuart Highway.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.14.

This amendment removes reference to over-the-counter sales where there is more than one tender. This is already contained in section 15(2). The other amendments are drafting measures to ensure that sections 15(2) and 15(4) can operate independently of each other. Paragraph (c) will make the time period more understandable to the public.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, I have no difficulty with paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of the proposed amendments. However, it appears to me that there is an inconsistency in paragraph (a). The intention of this particular section is to allow the minister, under some circumstances, to be exempt from complying with paragraph (1)(b) which prescribes the methods of disposal of Crown land. In fact, there are such provisions in the Crown Lands Act. Subsection (3) prescribes the constraints upon the minister if he chooses to dispose of land in some other way than those prescribed in paragraph (b) of subsection (1). We have removed the constraints which are provided by subsection (3) and which I think are quite important. Subsection (3) says that the minister can only dispose of land, other than by those methods prescribed in subsection (1), if it is upon the recommendation of the Land Board, in pursuance of a provision of a lease to which the land is subject or for the purpose only of exercising a power to add to an area of land that is the subject of an existing estate in fee simple. Those are the 3 conditions with which the minister must comply if he wishes to dispose of land other than by direct application, sale, auction, tender or ballot.

What we have done by removing that constraint in paragraph (a) is to give the minister unlimited reasons for disposing of land other than by those methods prescribed in paragraph (1)(b). So I think that it is more than a drafting amendment. It is in fact an amendment which changes the intent quite significantly by removing the prescription which is contained in subsection (3) of the present bill.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is fairly obvious that the normal activities of the Land Board are related to the pastoral leases and not to direct grants. This is what we are talking about here. Notwithstanding the provisions in subsection (3), direct grants can be made and that is precisely the position at the moment. I would see absolutely no reason to retreat to a position which is less favourable to applicants for land under the direct grants system than what we have at the moment.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.15.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.16.

It is considered that the existing provision in the bill is too restricted. It may well be necessary for the minister to set financial provisions in relation to these matters as well.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.17.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.18.

This is to allow further flexibility.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.19.

We have all been to auctions and we are all familiar with the normal rules. There is no reason why land auctions should vary from the normal practice.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.20.

This is a drafting amendment to accord more closely with and facilitate the operation of the Real Property Act. It is on the recommendation of the Registrar-General.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, this is quite an interesting proposal. By and large, we are talking about the extinguishing of easements. From that point of view, I can well understand why the Registrar-General would want to have this amendment included. There is another class of restriction which can be removed by the simple action of the minister lodging an instrument and that is reservations. Reservations cover a multitude of sins. We have reservations of land for all types of occupations; we have reservations of land for mining. I would have thought that the inclusion of reservations in a clause which basically deals with the extinguishing of restricted covenants and easements is going a little far. Perhaps the question of reservations requires a bit more thought in view of the large category of such reservations that exist.

Mr ROBERTSON: I would agree with that if it would affect the rights and easements in respect of private citizens' property but this is only in respect of property of which the Territory is a registered proprietor.

Ms D'ROZARIO: I must admit that I did not get that particular distinction on the ownership. The words are that the minister may declare: 'That their land...'. From the preceding clause, I cannot see how that relates exclusively to land held by the Territory. If that is the case, then I withdraw my previous remarks.

Mr ROBERTSON: 'At any time while the Territory is the registered proprietor of an estate in fee simple and land...'.
Amendment agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.21.

This is again a matter of grammar. It is only a drafting matter.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.22.

This is to take up the point quite validly raised this morning by the member for Tiwi that one's bores that one pays for and sinks in one's own property are one's own property. But we should not be transferring the ownership of rivers, springs, natural lakes etc.

Ms D'ROZARIO: Mr Chairman, there is a point to be raised here. What happens with underground water-tables in the normal course of events? We have said that giving an estate in fee simple by this bill does not of itself confer any extraordinary water rights. Presumably the water rights which would be available to owners would be those which are defined in the Control of Waters Act. The area that the member for Tiwi is interested in has large areas of underground water supplies. I do feel that those people who, in the course of time, will all become one as far as their land status is concerned - that is, all freehold land will now be thought of in the same way - may well feel that somehow they have to obtain further approvals to avail themselves of the underground water supply that is already within the boundaries of the present city of Darwin.

Mr ROBERTSON: This goes back to the Control of Waters Act. I am 99% certain that the Control of Waters Act does not prevent the use of underground water for the purposes of domestic consumption.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.23.

If we give the power in section 23B to the minister to determine that rent is not payable, there will be occasions when he will use it. Therefore, the covenant in a lease that the rent will be paid should be omitted. It is a complete contradiction in terms. This is then to reconcile the 2 provisions where it is envisaged that the minister would determine on some occasions and for some reasons that rent would not be payable. It is then silly to say that it shall be in another section.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.24.

It corrects an obvious error.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.25.

Existing provisions relating to the rights to a lease are to be removed. The normal common law is to apply and the change in terminology is to reflect this. It is fairly obvious that, if this is enshrined in law, it implies a right to a lease rather than an agreement entered into between the Crown and the prospective lessee.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.26.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 19 agreed to.

New clause 19A:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.27.

New clause 19A agreed to.

Clause 20 agreed to.

Clause 21:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.28.

This is for drafting purposes.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 22 and 23 agreed to.

Clause 24:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 24.

Clause 24 negatived.

New clause 24:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.29.

It is the same philosophy expressed in far more accurate legal terms.

New clause 24 agreed to.

Clause 25:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.30.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 32 agreed to.

Clause 33:

Mr ROBERTSON: I invite defeat of clause 33.

Clause 33 negatived.

New clause 33:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.31.

It is a syntax amendment.

New clause 33 agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 38 agreed to.

Clause 39:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.32.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 39, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 40 to 41 agreed to.

Clause 42:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.33.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 42, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 43 to 45 agreed to.

Schedule 1 agreed to.

Schedule 2:

Mr ROBERTSON: I move amendment 14.34.

This relates mainly to leases which have outstanding payments to be made on the purchase price.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule 2, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, earlier this year I was given the privilege of representing this Assembly at the CPA Conference in Zambia. I would like to advise the Assembly of my attendance at that conference. I would like to talk about the country. I will have to do this in 2 parts - today and tomorrow.

Zambia is a large country by any standards, being over 750,000 square kilometres in size. It has a population of 5½ million people, half a million of whom live in the capital of Lusaka. It was a country formerly known as Northern Rhodesia. It became independent on 24 November 1964. The head of state is known as the President, that person being Dr Kenneth David Kaunda.

The system of government used in Zambia is a republic which is described by the government as being a one-party participatory democracy. There are some similarities between the Zambian legislature and our own. They do have a parliament. The parliament consists of the President and the National Assembly which comprises 125 elected members and 10 members nominated by the President. The National Assembly now has power to initiate, modify or veto legislation. The government operates on a one-party system. It is a one-party state which was declared in December 1972 and the United National Independence Party is the sole legal party in Zambia. The most important policy-making body of government is the UNIP Central Committee.

Four main tribal languages are used in various parts of Zambia, being Bemba, Lozi, Nyanja and Tonga. The official language of Zambia is English. The major religions of Zambia are Christian, Moslem and traditional religions.

Zambia's main economic base is copper and the country has suffered seriously economically over the years because of fluctuations in the world price. Zambia has also paid an extremely high price for its opposition to white minority regimes in Southern Africa.

Attached to the Zambian parliament is a political museum which I will devote more time to later. I spent a great deal of my time in that museum. I will ask members to excuse me if I spend most of my time in this debate talking about the political rather than the physical aspects of Zambia.

The country has accepted refugees fleeing from neighbouring war zones. Over the years, it has permitted the use of its territories for liberation movements and has endured border attacks and incursions on the part of Portuguese, South African and Rhodesian regimes. Zambians have had to suffer many shortages and rationing resulting from sanctions imposed on Rhodesia which quite frequently affected Zambia more seriously than they did their target. Compliance with these sanctions meant that Zambia had to divert resources from development projects to the creation of alternative trade routes and energy sources.

Zambia enjoys what must be one of the world's finest climates. Most of Zambia lies on a plateau between 900 and 1,500 metres above sea level. It has wet and dry seasons at exactly the same time of the year as the Northern Territory, the difference being that, because of its high elevation, it enjoys an average humidity of about 5% and daytime temperatures vary between 10 degrees in the winter and 25 degrees in the summer. It is certainly a delightful climate. It also has a similar terrain to the Territory.

The country has a fascinating political history. It was originally controlled by the Cecil Rhodes British South Africa Company and became a British protectorate in 1924. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, now known as Malawi, came into being in 1953 against considerable opposition from most Africans. The key year in the struggle for African independence was 1958 when a group of radicals split from the Northern Rhodesian African National Conference to form the Zambia African National Congress - ZANC. In 1959, a state of emergency was declared. As a result, ZANC was disbanded and several of its leaders including Kaunda were gaoled. This repression only served to stiffen African resistance. A new party was then formed, the United National Independence Party. In June 1960, Kaunda was released from prison and was greeted as a popular hero and took over leadership of UNIP. This party under Kaunda soon organised a widespread campaign of civil disobedience. In the elections in 1962, UNIP and the old African National Congress won two-thirds of the total vote. With an African majority, Northern Rhodesia moved rapidly

towards independence, the final step being in January 1964. The election was an overwhelming victory for Kaunda and UNIP with the party winning 55 out of the 65 seats. Independence was granted on 24 October 1964.

Since independence, Zambia has suffered from many political problems and the formation of a one-party state in that country has to be seen in that context. The Rhodesian unilateral declaration of independence in 1965 and economic sanctions that resulted were extremely severe on Zambia. It caused the virtual collapse of its tourist industry, supply shortages, a rise in the cost of imports and extremely costly attempts to diversify the export of its copper away from Rhodesia. Zambians supported the sanctions against Rhodesia and this caused the country extreme economic hardship and the virtual curtailment of all its development programs.

Zambia's political history since independence has been very stable in comparison with many other African countries but it has not been without its political problems. After independence, the African National Congress gave strong opposition to the government, particularly in the 1968 elections. A further rift developed within UNIP with the resignation of Kaunda's closest collaborator, Simon Kapepwe, from the vice-presidency and his founding in 1971 of the United Progressive Party.

UNIP's leaders were overwhelmingly from one tribal area of Zambia. Kaunda had resisted pressure from within UNIP for 8 years to forming a one-party state. In 1971 this pressure became overwhelming. It was strengthened by the successful example of the operation of a one-party state over the border in Tanzania and by many fears within the government party that any internal political difficulties in Zambia would be exploited by the white minority regimes in the south of Zambia with which Zambia was in opposition. A one-party constitution was drawn up in 1972 and the only remaining opposition party to the government, the African National Congress, was amalgamated with UNIP. Elections under this new constitution were held in 1973.

The most central feature of Zambian political practice in the last decade has been the supremacy of this one party over all political activity in the country and the personal hold of Kaunda himself over the presidency. The UNIP Central Committee is the supreme policy-making body in the state and it has been publicly stated by Kaunda that parliament is merely one of its subcommittees with all members of parliament being vetted members of the party. Kaunda is widely venerated in Zambia and many see him as being Africa's Gandhi. His official philosophy of government is what is known as Zambian humanism and is identified by Kaunda himself as African democratic socialism. These theories are based on Kaunda's own Christian beliefs and ideals of mutual respect and cooperation.

Most political observers have pointed out that Zambia's national unity is held together not so much through ideology but through Kenneth Kaunda himself who alone amongst all Zambian politicians is a national figure, and that is certainly something which I observed while I was there. The only political figure who had any natural prominence apart from Kaunda was Simon Kapepwe who died earlier this year of natural causes and thereby removed the only pivot around which any opposition to Kaunda would have revolved.

As I said before, Zambia has paid heavily for its opposition to white rule in Rhodesia. In money terms, the latest annual estimate of this cost has been made by the co-ordinator of the United Nations assistance to Zambia. The direct financial cost to the country, including exceptional transport costs, is a

figure of \$1.25 billion dollars - a very high price in dollar terms by any estimate for the support of African independence.

At the time of independence in 1964, the Zambian economy was almost totally dependent on that of Southern Africa. 21% of its imports came from South Africa and 40% from Rhodesia. Most of the substantial local retail trade was controlled from the south and 70% of the expatriate staff in the mines, Zambia's largest industry, came from Rhodesia or South Africa. The majority of the 1,000 commercial farms were owned by expatriate farmers of South African or Rhodesian origin. Consequently, a great effort was made after independence to reduce Zambia's economic links with Rhodesia and to institute a process of Zambianisation of the civil service administration.

This process of disengagement from southern Africa has been successful. During the first 10 years of independence, and especially since 1966, trade with the south of Africa was reduced by two-thirds in money terms and almost 90% in relation to the Zambian total. The South African share of the Zambian market has continued to decline steadily and, by 1974, was only one-third of what it was 10 years earlier.

In 1968, the government began a process of state control of industry by assuming a 51% share in 26 companies, mainly in the transport and construction industries. The government currently has a 60% shareholding in the country's major enterprise - the copper mines which were formerly controlled by South African and American multi-nationals. In 1970 building societies were taken over by the state and a law was passed to ensure that only Zambian citizens could engage in retail trade. The government has also attempted to attract foreign capital to diversify an industrial base away from copper.

The control of the state over a very large sector is mainly through Zimco, the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation with net assets of over 1 billion kwacha. Zimco is the largest company in independent Africa. In explanation, the kwacha is the basis of the decimalised currency in Zambia and 1 kwacha is equivalent to 0.79 Australian dollars.

Metal mining is still Zambia's most important economic activity and the economy is almost totally dependent on the copper industry which accounts for about 40% of the gross domestic product, 15% of employment, 25% of the annual wages bill, between 49% and 70% of government revenue and about 93% of the country's exports. Another of the most dramatic improvements in this area has been the extent to which expatriate staff has been reduced to an absolute minimum and the vast majority of the employees - 10,000 of them in the industry - are Zambians.

I was very interested also to note that, despite the fact that industry has been largely nationalised, with the government having a controlling interest, the multi-nationals who previously owned the industry are still perfectly happy to remain working for the reduced percentage they are now receiving.

As I said earlier, Zambia has supported nationalist movements in other parts of Africa to the great economic detriment of the country. This problem of course has been accentuated by the fact that Zambia is an entirely landlocked country with no ports. Nationalist liberation movements such as the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, FRELIMO, and later the Zimbabwe African People's Union, ZAPU, and the Zimbabwe African National Union, ZANU, started and secretly operated from Zambian territory. The country has accepted refugees fleeing from neighbouring war zones. It has endured border attacks and incursions on the part of the Portuguese, South African and Rhodesian regimes.

The evidence of one such spectacular incursion which I was able to photograph while I was there was the gutted ruins of the state house where Nkomo had been living in Lusaka. The house was destroyed in an attempt to assassinate Nkomo by helicopter gunship raid in the early hours of the morning from Rhodesia straight into Lusaka. General Wall's Rhodesian army fortunately was not successful in assassinating Nkomo. They destroyed the house but he was out at the time.

Many of the sanctions imposed on Rhodesia by the international community have frequently had more serious effects on Zambia than they had on Rhodesia. It must be said that Zambia, despite all of this, has always favoured peaceful compromise solutions to the conflict in the region and has persistently appealed to western nations in promoting such negotiated settlements.

In the last 2 years, Zambia became very directly involved in the Zimbabwe conflict. From 1978, the Smith-Muzorewa government began a series of raids in an attempt to weaken ZAPU for whom Zambia remained the sole base. Rhodesia's ability to strike at Zambia was unhampered and this was well illustrated in 1979 by raids on camps in the north-western province and, as I have just mentioned, a helicopter raid on Nkomo's headquarters in the middle of Lusaka.

At the beginning of November last year, Rhodesian troops resumed the attacks upon ZAPU camps inside Zambia and, on 6 November, announced suspension of all maize shipments from Zambia through its territory. The Zambian response was to call for full mobilisation of Zambia's defence forces. All full-time military personnel were put on a war footing and all male reserves were called up. This followed a series of Rhodesian commando strikes against Zambia's rail and road bridges that virtually severed Lusaka from the rest of the country. The evidence of this war situation in Zambia is still very evident in Lusaka.

While Kaunda quite publicly preferred Nkomo to Mugabe, he welcomed Mugabe's victory in the Zimbabwe elections when he said, 'We have suffered for the independence of Angola, of Mozambique but not to the extent that we suffered for the independence of Zimbabwe. Now we can look forward to better things in terms of cooperation between our brothers in Zimbabwe and ourselves'. Zambia still remains committed to the independence of Namibia and provides assistance for the guerillas of the South West African People's Organisation, SWAPO, which operates from bases within Zambia.

The Zambian government also makes no secret of its aggressive support for liberation movements within South Africa. It is no doubt that all South Africa's moves to arm itself with a strategic nuclear artillery capacity is aimed at obliterating this kind of support in years to come. The continuing cost to Zambia of this liberation struggle in Africa and certainly the bigger one that is likely to come in South Africa itself is likely to continue to be high.

Zambia has played a very forceful role among the so-called front line states, the others in the commitment to the liberation of South Africa being Angola, Mozambique, Botswana and Tanzania. One of the reasons for the close relationship between Zambia and Tanzania is the common hostility to the existing systems of European rule in southern Africa and the physical possibilities for joint action against this rule.

As I stated earlier, Zambia has sought and negotiated settlements in southern Africa and has persistently appealed to the west to intervene for peaceful changes in the region. Australia has always enjoyed friendly

relations with Zambia although our aid to the country is very small. Africa generally does not have a very high priority on our list of foreign aid. The aid is very small. This year it has consisted of a total of \$300,000 which was expended on the construction of grain sheds. In 1978-79, we exported \$382,000 worth of wheat to Zambia and supplied \$84,000 worth of training aid. Currently, Qantas assists Zambia in a fairly small way in the training of pilots.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: Mr Speaker, this afternoon I would like to talk about a situation which was described to me by the Secretary of the Caravan Park Owners Association. I cannot speak for caravan park owners from down the track. It was put to me that many of these caravan park owners and operators will face ruin next season if they do not receive some help through legislation and regulations so that they can run their businesses properly for the betterment of the community and particularly the tourist industry. These people are not against free enterprise. They are not against other caravan parks setting up. What they are against is the fact that the legislation and regulations seem to be enforced on older caravan parks but not enforced on other caravan parks that have been set up and continue to run in the city and in the industrial area.

I am referring to caravan parks in the city and the industrial area which consist of 3 caravans or more. That is a caravan park; 2 caravans or less do not constitute a caravan park. The established caravan parks have to fulfil certain rigid standards and are subject to health and fire prevention inspections. There are other conditions relating to safety and the well-being of the people who come to stay in the caravan parks. It seems that the smaller caravan parks of 3 to 6 caravans do not have anywhere near the same standards imposed on them. Because of the existence of these caravan parks in the city and the industrial area, the older established caravan parks just outside of Darwin are in pretty dire straits.

I will give you some figures, Mr Speaker. I have been given permission by the owners of these caravan parks. The Shady Glen caravan park can take 20 to 30 caravans more, Overlander can take 6 more, Bloodwood can take 13 more, Coolalinga can take 50 more and Howard Springs caravan park, Darwin rural caravan park and the Nook are only 25% full. These caravan park owners want the zoning to continue because these small caravan parks in the city and in the industrial area are not in caravan park zones.

They also said that there is an anomaly in the way the Health Department enforces the regulations relating to caravan parks. It enforces the regulations relating to fire prevention and also seems to control the zoning of caravan parks. If somebody wants to set up a caravan park legitimately, he must maintain strict standards of health, of fire prevention and other standards for the well-being of the people. But the smaller caravan parks are not expected to comply with these standards.

Unless something is done to enforce the regulations and legislation, these people will go down the drain by the next dry season with the big influx of tourists to the Top End. They have been told by the tourist officials to upgrade their caravan parks so that they will attract automatically more tourist caravans. But they say to me that they are only making ends meet now; they do not have any spare cash to upgrade. They are in a vicious circle. If they do not upgrade, they will not attract more tourists. The tourist officials say to the caravan park owners: 'If the backyard caravans are forced to leave these backyard caravan parks, where will all the vans go?' The caravan park owners say that there is plenty of room in the caravan parks. If the caravans in the backyard caravan parks move to the legitimate caravan parks, where they should be, they will generate more income which the caravan park owners can use to

do the improvements to attract more tourists.

I will not bore members by going over the list of caravan parks but every one of those caravan parks has at its disposal extra land for more caravans either immediately adjacent to it or on the block that it is already using. Therefore, a situation of there being no place for tourists would not arise. If the legislation and regulations are not enforced on the backyard caravan parks, some of the legitimate caravan parks will have to close down by the next season. Then there will not be any room for tourists in caravans except in backyard caravan parks.

The second subject about which I would like to speak this afternoon is something about which I have spoken in the press before: the McMinn's bores. At the end of the dry season, several of my constituents drew to my attention the fact that the levels in their bores were falling. They felt that it was not only due to the end of the dry season and to the increase in the rural population but that it was also due in no small part to the activation of some of the government bores in the McMinn's recharge area.

There are 4 bores there and 2 of them have been used recently. Their output is about 30,000-odd gallons an hour. These are experimental bores to find the extent of the aquifer from which they draw. Also, they have been used to determine the quantity of water and the area of the aquifer. These bores were used during the change-over from the Manton Dam to the Darwin River Dam. This bore water has a very high pH value; that is, it is rather hard if used alone. Used with the Darwin River water, which has a low pH value, it supplies reasonable water to the people in Darwin.

Anyone who sinks a bore on his block does so at great expense. A certain amount of water is guaranteed to the owner of the bore so he can plan how to use it. It may be used to grow feed for stock or just for gardens around the house. These plans may be ruined because of the use of the government bores. People will not be able to draw water from their bores.

I was given a letter today containing a rate notice for water rates. On the front, it says: 'Water wasted is money down the drain'. It is obviously written on the notice to get people to restrict their use of water or at least to not waste water. This is not unusual. It is appealing to the hip pocket nerve of the people who are using the water in town. However, I would like to draw to your attention the disparity in treatment of the people in the town area and those in the rural area. It seems that the people in the rural area are being penalised by the use of these government bores at the McMinn's area for the greater benefit of the people in town. The people in the rural area are putting up with less water in their bores. The people in town do not have any restrictions placed on them. I have been told that the reason the bores are being used now is because the piping has not been completed from the Darwin River Dam into town. When that is completed, there will be plenty of water and it will be coming in at a rate great enough to satisfy the demand in Darwin. However, these bores in the McMinn's area may be used again in the change-over from the Darwin River Dam to the new dam planned on the Finnis River. Again, the people in the rural area will suffer.

In fairness, if people will be using water from the same area, they should be treated similarly. If the people in the rural area have these restrictions of less borehead and less water in their bores, then the people in town should have restrictions placed on them also.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, a recent fatality of a child cyclist in Tennant Creek prompts me to raise the matter of safety for cyclists again. Members will know that I have raised this matter on several occasions. I am pleased to see that, since the first occasion that I raised it, we are now in a better position at least in Darwin. Along with the construction of the Fannie Bay connector road in Darwin, a bicycle path was constructed. Since that road was opened to traffic, a firm commitment was made to provide a barrier between the vehicular traffic and cyclist traffic.

In other communities in the world, there are comprehensive approaches being taken to the question of safety for cyclists. In Northern Territory communities, children are the main users of bicycles but, in European communities which tend to be a lot more compact, we are finding that governments are encouraging the use of bicycles by adults as part of an overall energy conservation program.

The purpose of my speaking today about this matter is simply to inform the Minister for Transport and Works that there is an excellent device now available to American and European bicycle users which could well be used in the Northern Territory. The device is a very simple object. Like so many good ideas, its simplicity is probably the reason that it has taken so long to manufacture. It is a simple reflectorised bicycle pennant. Pennants are not all together unknown. Children love to put them on handlebars. This reflectorised bicycle pennant would be attached on the centre line of the bicycle on a horizontal plane. The purpose of it is to give motorists an idea of how close they pass by a bicycle.

If one analyses the accidents involving cyclists, one finds that a significant number are caused by vehicles overtaking. From that point of view, I think that this device could be very useful.

I came upon this wonderful invention in a small newsletter publication entitled 'Urban Transportation Abroad'. It is published by an organisation based in America called 'The Council for International Urban Liaison'. I extend to the minister an invitation to take up a subscription to this very excellent newsletter because it is full of good ideas for improving not only the general traffic management and planning but also such devices as I have mentioned.

In Europe, specifically Finland, Germany and France, this device is in very common use. There are apparently 2 million bicycles in Finland alone which have had these devices fitted. It is a very simple and cheap device. This device is not only sanctioned by the local government authorities but also by the respective road safety councils in these particular countries. Governments have seen the value of these devices and gone so far as to make regulations which prescribe the minimum length. It is a simple device which projects on a horizontal plane from the centre line of the saddle. It is attached to a swivel mount so that, if it is touched by a moving object, the impact will be minimised and the cyclist will not be thrown from his conveyance.

These devices are being offered at a very cheap rate. When you buy them singly, they cost \$US2.95 and there are large discounts available for bulk purchases. I can certainly put the minister in touch with the exporter. I suggest that he obtain a consignment of these excellent devices and distribute them to schoolchildren in Territory centres so that we can gauge the effectiveness of the device. The experience of communities which are already using them is that it is a very valuable device for motorists to gauge the safe passing distance from a cyclist.

Road safety is a matter which a number of members have expressed concern about in the past. To take a more comprehensive view of the whole subject is now becoming a necessity. In the last Assembly, the former Minister for Transport and Works, the member for Ludmilla, produced a statement on the proposals which may be implemented by his government after investigation. Members on both sides commended the initiatives that have been taken by the minister. Some of the initiatives related to regulating the carriage of passengers in cargo spaces of vehicles, the wearing of restraints if people were to be carried in such cargo spaces and also the general question of speed limits along rural highways.

I am disappointed that no further action has been forthcoming since the minister's statement. We were told that the minister was investigating all these issues with the objective of bringing in legislation to implement a comprehensive policy in respect of road safety. When ministerial statements are made, it is all too easy to forget those which are commendable. I am raising this matter again for the benefit of the present minister because I would like to see a comprehensive attitude towards road safety developed in the Northern Territory.

One of the reasons why I say this is that we have had some experience with random breath testing in the Territory and, despite the measures that have been taken in that respect, the fatality and casualty rates have increased in relation to what they were last year. I am coming to the view that implementing one measure in isolation is not the answer. Perhaps we have to come to some comprehensive approach and implement a number of policies which are all aimed at the one objective of reducing the road toll. I ask the present minister to resurrect this particular statement of the former minister and to report to the Assembly at a later date on the progress of these investigations and on his program for legislative change in that direction.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, in response to a question from the member for MacDonnell last week, the Minister for Community Development admitted that his view on the funding of NTCOSS was coloured by that organisation's activities in the past year. He accused NTCOSS of consistently opposing the activities of the government and taking a political stand indistinguishable from that of the opposition.

The minister said that his coloured view was not the sole reason why NTCOSS was not funded. He said that the question of the availability of funds was also relevant. What the minister did not say was that his own department recommended that NTCOSS should be funded. I think it can be safely assumed on the basis of this fact that the department's recommendation was rejected by the minister on the basis of his coloured view. The minister chose to reject the view of the experts within his department who presumably had assessed all the applications for grants-in-aid and made recommendations to the minister on those considered most worthy of funding. He made the decision in relation to funding for NTCOSS not on the basis of the application but on the basis of his own bias against that organisation.

I wonder if the minister realises the situation that he is now in. He obviously believes NTCOSS is an unsuitable organisation to receive government funding. His department not only disagrees with this assessment but remains an organisational member of NTCOSS. How does the minister feel about his department's membership of this supposedly radical organisation, this group of people who have the temerity to say critical things about government policy? Will he demand that his department now withdraw its membership and will he refuse to authorise payment of the department's membership fee?

Mrs Lawrie: He is thinking about it.

Mrs O'NEIL: Yes, he is and I want to know. The minister cannot accuse NTCOSS of political bias when he is so patently guilty of the same offence himself. What he has in fact done is to signal his government's intolerance of any views other than his own. He has put on notice every voluntary agency and every community group that, if it steps out of line, government funds will dry up. There is to be no diversity of ideas, no speaking out on issues of public concern and no airing of honest differences. Any independent gesture by an organisation in receipt of government funding will be construed as 'biting the hand that feeds you'.

The greatest sin committed by NTCOSS was undoubtedly its highlighting of the housing situation in the Territory. It did no more than that. It took up an issue already known to thousands of Territorians and instigated a seminar to discuss emergency housing problems. Its cardinal sin was to take this action close to an election. It wanted public debate on a real bread-and-butter issue at a time inconvenient to the government and, by airing such an issue at that time, it embarrassed the government. That is what offended the government and the minister: that it should be embarrassed close to an election. It did not matter that the Territory is in chronic difficulties over housing and that rents are astronomical and house prices rising. Ignore the fact that people are sleeping in tents, in parked cars and in other unsatisfactory places.

Perhaps because of his admitted bias, the minister may consider changing the grants-in-aid system to ensure that someone more objective than himself makes a decision on which organisations are to receive funding. I commend this suggestion to the minister. He may care to examine the South Australian model where such decisions are made by a community welfare grants committee. This committee, which is comprised of voluntary representatives and prominent people with proven knowledge of community needs, considers all applications for grants, judges them by a set of criteria approved by the government and makes recommendations to the minister on which organisations are to be funded. The committee is able to investigate each application thoroughly and measure each organisation's effectiveness in the community and ability to carry out the program it is proposing - a thoroughly commendable method, Mr Deputy Speaker. The important thing is that the minister is provided with an objective set of recommendations on how best to allocate the available funds and remove such decisions from the area of politics and coloured views. It leaves them in the hands of people who have no political axe to grind and who have the knowledge and professional expertise needed to make the necessary choices.

I have been informed that, under the South Australian system, it is very rare for the minister to veto any of the Grants Committee's recommendations and certainly not for political reasons. The system that I am proposing does not involve the government abdicating its responsibility on disbursement of public funds. The government retains the final say and is able to ensure that its priorities are addressed by setting guidelines for the Grants Committee each year. In this way, it can ensure that proper attention is given to particular community needs which emerge from time to time.

The Minister for Community Development and other government ministers should give serious consideration to changing the grants-in-aid system in the Northern Territory. Because of his political bias, the minister should distance himself from the process and set up a reasonably independent and competent body which will examine grant applications on their merits and make objective recommendations rather than political judgments.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, over the last couple of weeks there has been considerable backlash over my criticism of the proposed establishment of 45 rice farms on the upper Adelaide River at the end of stage 2 of the agricultural development program. On the ABC Country Hour program last Friday, a press release from the office of the Minister for Primary Production and Tourism said words to the effect that it was not strange that I had not mentioned the matter in the Legislative Assembly because I knew that, if I did, I would be shot down in flames. This, of course, leaves me no alternative but to raise the matter of rice cropping on the Adelaide River.

A press release in the NT News on Saturday 22 November said: 'The opposition spokesman on primary production appeared to have an obsession to destroy plans to develop agriculture in the Northern Territory'. That statement is completely false and the minister knows it. The minister went on to say that my continual attacks on the agricultural development projects centred solely on rice production while ignoring the complete range of plans. That statement, Mr Deputy Speaker, is partly true because I have made no attacks at all on the overall agricultural development project nor the complete range of plans.

Members will recall that, when the bill was introduced, I welcomed its introduction on behalf of the opposition. I believed then, as I believe now, that it is an excellent scheme which, if properly managed, can be of enormous value to the advance of agriculture in the Territory. It is even incorrect to say that I have attacked the rice production on the Adelaide River. In fact, what I have attacked is what the minister said in this Assembly when he announced on 20 February 1980: 'In the Adelaide River area, over a similar period' - 10 years - 'we would expect 45 farms to come into rice production'. Note that the minister said 'rice production' and made no mention at all of any other crop at that time. In the same paragraph in his second-reading speech, the minister said: 'By the end of stage 2, in the Douglas-Daly area we would expect to see development of 120 farms over a period of 10 years for grain, oil seeds and peanut production'. That statement to me makes good sense as he listed a variety of crops.

I have never at any time criticised this project. My information is that the soil in the Douglas-Daly area which is proposed to be farmed is suitable for the crops mentioned and that there is water in abundance. The minister went on to say: 'To give members an idea of the scope of the development, total direct costs over a period of 10 years are expected to be about \$62m made up of \$52.5m in the Douglas-Daly area and \$9.4m in the Adelaide River area'. In quoting the figures given in relation to the Adelaide River project, the minister has either been incorrectly advised by his department or else he has deliberately misled this Assembly because they are out by around \$20m if the project is to be proceeded with.

If a viable rice production enterprise is to be established, it is absolutely essential that 2 crops are produced each year and I challenge the minister to produce any evidence or any agricultural economist to dispute that statement. The Lapidge Report, on which the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority has relied to a great extent - indeed the report was commissioned in order to give a basis for the establishment of this authority - whilst agreeing that the upper Adelaide River is suitable for rice production, states: 'However, in the dry season, the Adelaide River dries up into a chain of waterholes'. Where then is the water going to come from for a second annual crop?

In my reply last Thursday to the minister's statement on government rural policy - which, incidentally, I again heartily endorsed because it seems to be a very good policy and the minister later noted that I had supported the policy but I again disputed that 45 rice farms will be established on the Adelaide River - someone interjected and said I had no vision. I think I would prefer to be a politician with no vision than a rice farmer with no water. Despite the fact that the Adelaide River dries up into a chain of waterholes in the dry season, it could still be possible to produce 2 crops of rice each year but only if a multi-million dollar dam is constructed on the Adelaide River as well as damming some of the tributaries which run into the Adelaide River.

The figures which I have been given and which I believe are fairly conservative are \$20m for the dam and from \$6m to \$8m for a diversion channel to divert the watercourse while the dam is constructed. This means an expenditure of a minimum of \$26m - I am taking the lowest figure - plus another \$4m to \$8m to establish 45 rice farms which are between 400 and 500 hectares in area. Where then does the minister get the figure of \$9.4m which he quoted? Perhaps he quoted the cost of establishing the farms and forgot the \$26m which would be required to construct the dam.

The minister has been snooping around the Adelaide River farms trying to get the Northern Farmers Association to issue a press release knocking me because I have been knocking rice cropping on the Adelaide River. I have not; I have knocked this concept of 45 farms. I would like to go on record in this Assembly as saying that I gave my wholehearted support to rice cropping on the Adelaide River. I believe that 4 or 5 farms could be established right now without a dam and produce biannual crops. Actually, they could not be established right now because it is too late in the season. Although the scheme was announced last February, nothing whatsoever has been done despite the fact that \$300,000 was available for the project and the Adelaide River farmers advised me that they cannot plant rice this year because it is too late in the season. This of course means that the first year of the 5-year development plan has gone by without a grain of rice to show for it. So now I presume that stage 1 will be a 4-year plan rather than a 5-year plan.

The Adelaide River farmers are not particularly happy about being prevented from planting this year's crop because of the dilatory attitude of the minister and I would suggest to him that, if he wishes to start his overseas junket on a happy note, he does not consult with those farmers until his return by which time they may have simmered down a little. In last night's NT News, there was a letter from Graham Melville, a long-established farmer and a good practical farmer on the Adelaide River. It is headed 'Steele Farms?':

Sir, the news item about Mr Roger Steele's great farm development program is some sort of a joke. Ever since his grand scheme was announced early in 1980, I have been trying to find out details with no success. Many farmers believe the whole thing is a fraud. I challenge Mr Steele to table documents proving the existence of any rice scheme prior to his March announcement. If there is anything now, the ink must still be wet.

Graham Melville,
Adelaide River.

Graham Melville is by no means the only dissatisfied farmer. The minister said that the established farms on the Adelaide River would be used as pilot farms for this project. Now these blokes have nothing. I do not think the minister is going to be successful in stirring up the northern farmers to issue a press

release about me because I can assure him that most of them are on my side.

To return to the manner in which 4 or 5 farms could be serviced with adequate water at minimal cost immediately, there is a 400 acre swamp close to the Adelaide River in the proposed rice farming area. If water was pumped from the river into this swamp to a depth of 10 feet, it would provide 4,000 acre feet of water which would be quite sufficient to establish 5 farms providing twice-yearly crops. It could have been done; it could have been in operation now but it is not a goer. Farmers are asking: 'Why not try this first as a pilot scheme? If it works, go ahead. If it is a failure, then forget it'. This seems to me a perfectly logical idea and it should have been started a month ago. If it had been, then we could have had 5 farms growing rice already this year.

Despite the fact that rice and rice only was in the Adelaide River cropping scheme - and I have quoted the minister's exact words from Hansard - he is now ducking for cover by saying that the intention is to grow other crops in the dry season. What crops? None has been named. The government has told us nothing at all and at no time has the minister given a satisfactory answer to my questions. All he has done is to try to introduce a succession of red herrings. When he originally introduced the bill, he said: 'We would expect 45 rice farms to come into production'. He said 'rice', full stop. There was no mention at all of any other crops. If other crops were grown, presumably after the rice crop was harvested, the alternative crop would also need water and lots of it, particularly if it was planted in the dry season. Where will that water come from if a dam is not built?

When I brought up the absolute necessity of a multi-million dollar dam requirement to grow rice twice yearly out into the open, the government came up with another whopper. Would you believe it: 'Surveyors from Water Resources surveyed a dam site on the Adelaide River years ago with a view to providing Darwin with an alternative source of water in the event of our requiring a supplementary supply in years to come'. Presumably, Mr Deputy Speaker, we are going to have a population the size of Tokyo. I suppose this is not inconceivable because the Treasurer is listening with interest and he is indeed a visionary. He can foresee the time when the Cox Peninsula will be a bustling metropolis.

Mr Perron: You have no vision; you are right, Jack.

Mr DOOLAN: I cannot see the Cox Peninsula becoming a bustling metropolis. The facts of the matter are that Darwin, with the Darwin River Dam, Manton Dam and the McMinn's bore is not short of water and, if our existing water supply is to be supplemented, the Finnis River Dam will be next on the program. It is relatively close to the Darwin River Dam and would feed into the existing dam.

In his speech introducing the Agricultural Development and Marketing Bill, the minister had this to say: 'We will therefore concentrate on areas which have the greatest chance of success. This does not mean, however, that other areas will be ignored'. I am pleased to see that other areas will not be ignored but I do fail to see how he can reconcile his statement that the areas with the greatest chance of success are being concentrated on. The Edith River farms and the farms on the Katherine would have a pretty good chance of success too if something in the order of \$30m was invested in them. Scott Creek on Willeroo Station can grow almost anything and has a readily accessible source of permanent water. Crops growing there when the Willeroo fiasco happened were showing amazing progress until they were allowed to wither and die for lack of attention when this government reneged on its promise and backed off from a deal that could have been of inestimable value to the Territory.

I have come in for strong criticism because I have suggested that, if the government is sincere and genuine in its intention to have a flourishing rice growing industry in the Northern Territory, then it should look to the Keep River plains. I am informed that the Adelaide River is the most suitable area for rice growing because of the existence of the Adelaide River Co-operative and because the Department of Primary Production extension service is readily available here. This seems to me to be a very lame excuse. Kununurra, which is not a great distance at all from the Keep River plains, has a bigger and better equipped co-operative than the Adelaide River Co-operative. The idea of developing farms around existing extension services is ludicrous. Any sensible person must realise that extension services should go out to farming areas rather than to try to develop farms in an area just because there are existing extension services available in that area. In any case, Kununurra would have probably better extension service facilities available than we have, even if they were only applied temporarily until the Northern Territory set-up was better organised.

Soil experts from both the Territory department and CSIRO have confirmed that there are around 15,000 hectares of excellent rice growing country in the Keep River area. The government has said that, to bring water to Keep River or Weeber plains would cost between \$4m and \$8m and that a similar amount would be required to set up the farms. That would call for an expenditure figure of, at the most, \$16m. To set up 45 rice farms on the Adelaide River, the government would have to expend \$20m on a dam, \$6m to \$8m for diversion of the water-course plus the cost of setting up the farms. The minister has said that setting up farms on the Keep River would cost between \$4m and \$8m. If we use the same figure to set up farms on the Adelaide River, we arrive at a minimum expenditure of \$30m or a maximum of \$36m yet the minister said: 'It is planned to spend \$9.4m on rice growing on the Adelaide'. That is obviously incorrect and, in fact, ridiculous. If we use the figures quoted in his own press releases on both the Keep River and the Adelaide River schemes, it is obvious that it will cost between \$14m and \$20m more to establish the farms on the Adelaide River than it would to establish them on the Keep River. One authoritative source believes that 120 rice farms could be set up on the Keep River for the cost of 40 on the Adelaide River.

The minister stated in this Assembly in February of this year that the government is not in the business of buying cattle stations. If not, where are they going to get the land, not only for the Adelaide River scheme but also for the Douglas-Daly scheme? I think that the minister should concede that, rather than to have made a grandstanding announcement prior to the election, it would have been better for the government to have purchased Douglas Station when it was on the market for a give-away price. I suggested in a press release at that time that the government purchase Douglas Station but my suggestion was ignored.

Willeroo Station could also have been purchased for an extremely low price but that is now history. The company, headed by Mr Luke Wise, which did buy the property has since sold off millions of dollars worth of cattle and now has Willeroo Station on the market for around 3 times what it cost it. Good luck to it. But the government could have bought it at a ridiculously low price at the time. It is a proven area for agricultural pursuits.

I would like also to mention what happened to 3 senior public servants who disagreed with much of what was contained in the Lapidge Report. From what I heard on very good authority, Mr Clyde Adams, the Chairman of the TDC, Mr David Reuben, the Director, Industries Assistance Division in the TDC, and Mr John Dillon, Deputy Secretary in the Department of Primary Production, were all highly critical of the Lapidge Report and of rice farming on the Adelaide

River. All 3 dissidents whose integrity and ability are unquestionable were removed from office and now languish in relative obscurity. I wonder why. Expert opinion of officers of the CSIRO, if it was ever sought, must have been disregarded because I have talked with its top expert on rice production in the Territory - he is probably Australia's top expert, Andy Chapman - and he, like myself, cannot understand why Adelaide River rather than the Keep River could possibly be chosen for such a large-scale rice growing scheme. 45 farms of from 400 to 500 hectares is large scale.

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

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am glad the Minister for Primary Production and Tourism is in the Assembly because what I will say has to do with his portfolio. On Thursday 21 August, the member for Tiwi asked the minister: 'What power does the Department of Primary Production have over noxious weeds on Commonwealth land used by the Navy at Humpty Doo?' He replied: 'Even though it is a defence reserve, the land in question is still subject to the provisions contained in the Noxious Weeds Act and the Plant Diseases Act'. A perfectly reasonable question and a perfectly honest answer.

On Thursday 20 November 1980, the member for Tiwi was talking about a variety of things in the adjournment debate and stated:

As I have said before, the Navy has the use of one square mile of this land. There is also another buffer zone of about another square mile outside that. I greatly deprecate the fact that the Navy does not seem to be doing much with this land. The land has been cleared in previous years. The sucker regrowth is the best I have seen. Last year it had one of the best crops of sida that I had seen in years. Every private primary producer is supposed to rid his property of noxious weeds but it seems that the defence property, which is a Commonwealth responsibility, is a sacred cow. It does not have to follow the rules like everyone else.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been waiting with bated breath for the minister to stand in this Assembly and put the record right for the member for Tiwi who was demonstrating her intense interest in this area. If the minister has not seen fit to inform her of what is going on, I shall inform both of them. I find it a little surprising that the minister is not aware of the close co-operation existing between his department and the Navy. In September 1980, one of his officers stated - and I quote from the letter which I am prepared to show him: 'As requested, I have surveyed the defence reserve area and it is my assessment that there is little in the way of noxious weed infestation of the area at present'. He mentioned the species present. He referred to hyptis and said: 'This is present even on virgin land throughout the Humpty Doo area and would not be a problem where there was slashing carried out'. He said that sida was present in some areas on the southern side, mainly in the Hoffman field area: 'It is not heavy in concentration and regular slashing of this plant, particularly before it seeds, would give effective control of further spread'.

He went on: 'Measures of vegetation control currently employed would appear to be adequate to control the spread of both the species which are now present. Both species could be further reduced by the use of 24D herbicide if desired'. He went on to talk about other herbicides for sucker control. Mr Deputy Speaker, isn't that pleasant? The Department of Primary Production and Her Majesty's Royal Australian Navy are cooperating closely on the control of noxious

weeds in the area referred to by the member for Tiwi. I have taken the trouble to raise this in the adjournment debate because, unfortunately, it seems that the minister was not intending to put the other side of the story: this co-operation exists and surveys have been done by his department which considers there is nothing to worry about at present and approves of the methods of control already being implemented. If he was not going to do it, I felt it was up to some member of this Assembly because the impression left by the member for Tiwi was that, as she said, the Navy was some kind of sacred cow that did not have to toe the line like everybody else. The letter written from the minister's own department shows that it is not some kind of sacred cow; it is a group of people adhering to Northern Territory laws on noxious weed control.

Mr PERRON (Stuart Park): Mr Deputy Speaker, with all this wonderful advice we receive in this Assembly, it is a wonder how this government goes wrong at all.

I rise to comment on suggestions made by the member for Fannie Bay that I was not doing my job because I had overruled the departmental recommendation and by the member for Victoria River that my colleague, the Minister for Primary Production and Tourism, is not doing his job because he is not overruling his department. You just cannot win. All I have to say is that I have overridden my department's recommendations from time to time as all ministers have. We will certainly continue to do so whenever we feel it is appropriate. There is nothing unusual about a minister overriding a recommendation put to him. I am sure that goes for any government in this country. The setting up of all the committees in the world to try to handle prickly problems through unbiased, non-political approaches simply does not make for better government. In any case, they do not remove the responsibility that rests with the minister. The minister makes the decision and the minister wears the result. That is the way it is and that is the way it will stay. I will still continue to overturn recommendations from my department if I see fit and the Minister for Primary Production and Tourism can make his own decisions as to whether he will accept the advice of his department.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, as a school student and then early in my teaching career, the most familiar thing on the first day of school was the school booklist. Once the student had chosen his subjects, he would then select the books which he had to buy. Generally, the school had a supply of new books which could be bought or students could buy and sell second-hand books from other students. This system is familiar to every member in this Assembly. The federal government contributed with a book allowance. It paid so much money towards each student's book costs depending on the year level. There was also a library fee, a sporting fee and, in some cases, a book hire fee. The latter would cover extra reading books for English. These books were circulated among the various classes on a regular basis. This was the old system.

In 1974, there was rather a lot of rain in Alice Springs. There were problems with getting books through. At the school where I was teaching, a supply of new books did not arrive. That presented problems and the new principal decided that we should have a renting system. Instead of buying books, a renting scheme was introduced and that is really what is involved in the school fees today. You pay a certain amount of money and books are given to you on the subjects which you are studying. These are handed back at the end of the year. The book allowance was paid to the schools and I believe it is still being paid to the schools. Parents do not see any sign of that. I would like to make a few observations on these 2 systems.

When a student owns his own property, I believe it teaches him real responsibility. There is a certain amount of pressure from parents for a student to look after books. Each year, the majority of the previous year's books could be sold again. The actual amount of money paid on the school booklist could be reduced. In fact, I can remember that some people who looked after their books - with the assistance of the federal government book allowance - did not actually pay anything at all. Most people paid a small amount. Those who did not look after their books had large booklist costs. Their parents often were not very happy about that and extra pressure was exerted to encourage students to look after their property. This is not an unimportant matter by any means.

The renting of books is common throughout the Territory now. However, the system has brought many problems with it. From my experience, the majority of students do not care for the property nearly as much as they did when they owned the books. The books are ill-treated, lost and sometimes stolen. If a book is lost, the theory is that you are supposed to report its loss. The teacher does what he can to try to locate the book. If it cannot be found, the student pays for the book and is issued with another one. That does not become the student's property. At the end of the year, he has to hand the book back. However, getting the money for the lost book is proving to be a very difficult job. There is resistance from both students and parents alike. Bills are sent out and the teacher keeps harping on the subject. Much of the teacher's time is lost and class time is lost in trying to chase up the book. In the main, teachers give up on the matter after a time and they sneak the student another copy. Members would understand the reasoning behind that. The teacher's job is to get on with teaching, not to be forever debating about a student's lost book.

As you might gather, Mr Deputy Speaker, I prefer the purchase system. I think it teaches our children about real responsibility. What I am trying to say is that the school fees - this subject has been bandied around this Assembly - arose out of the changeover from a purchase system to a rental system. In essence, if we accept the purchase of the books and the renting of the books, this money which is called school fees, and which is supposed to be illegal, can simply be called rent. The principle does not change very much. I much prefer the purchase system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe in a principle which I would call the pearl of great price. That is a biblical story which most members no doubt know about. The principle is that what costs is valued. I believe that the school fees are a very important part of the education system. If parents have to pay school fees, they are determined to see that their children will get value for money from their education. I believe that it is a very good thing indeed. Private schools levy very high fees and parental interest is real. Parents demand that their students obtain value for money. There is also pressure on the students because they know it costs a pretty penny to send them to private schools. I believe that the students benefit from this matter of paying fees.

In the public system - and there is no way that I would expect or want parents to pay the full cost of education - I believe that the figure in the Territory averages out at about \$2,000 a year per student. If you have 3 kids going to school, as I will have next year, a \$6,000 bill would be rather expensive. It would be just about the total of the taxation that I pay. A fee of \$50 per student is not a very large amount. In fact, that has been the figure for some time. With inflation, one might be so bold as to suggest that perhaps it ought to be raised rather than remain static. The \$50 is about 2.5% of what it costs the government for the education of a student. If that 2.5% contribution to a student's education makes the parents more determined

that the child will obtain value for money, then I am all for it.

One last point relates to the matter of books. Under the rental scheme, a department is given an amount of money to buy school books. Sometimes that amount may not be enough to buy a book for every student. A decision is taken to use the books in groups. A class uses the books for a lesson but they have to leave them behind for the use of the next class. Some arrangements have to be made so that the students will be able to take the books home on occasions to aid homework. Of course, some students forget to bring them back and classes are disadvantaged because there are fewer books. In the end, a rule is made that textbooks cannot be taken home for homework. I have seen it happen. I personally believe that homework is the most important area in the education system. The student is on his own. He has no mate to ask for the answers and he has no teacher.

Ms D'Rozario: He can ask dad.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Hopefully, dad will not know the answer. I think that is a great thing because it teaches the student to be independent. You have to struggle; you have to battle for the answer on your own. I have been telling that to parents for years. They say, 'Oh, I can't help my Johnny with his mathematics' or 'I do not understand the science'. I say, 'Make a room available for your child to do his homework. Give him good conditions in which to do his homework and don't be worried about the fact that you cannot help him'. It is vitally important that children learn to be independent. That is one of the key things that education should be teaching students. They must learn methods of study so that they can become independent of a teacher. Independence should be one of the key aims of education. If they have to battle over geometry theorems and riders, they will be provided with great training.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that a good textbook is the cheapest and most valuable education tool available. You just thumb through to get to the page that you want. There is so much to learn just by flipping through. It is a vitally important educational tool. I do not think that school fees should be reduced or done away with. I believe they are very important. The price that you pay is well worth it. I believe that, in essence, fees should be raised so that students get a decent set of textbooks for the benefit of their education. Above all, I would like to see the fees, as such, done away with and students going back to the stage where they actually bought their books.

Mr STEELE (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Nightcliff for her information about the cooperation between the Navy and the Department of Primary Production. Some time ago I received an advice from the department as to its cooperation with the Navy but I had not recalled it until she spoke tonight. I am pleased that cooperation exists between organisations like that because it would be so easy for a defence department to prevent access to land. It is the type of cooperation that we want.

The member for Victoria River raised last night the discussion on the Bali cattle experiment. Not having had the benefit of further discussion with officers, I did not reply to him at the time. But I might put to him a couple of significant factors underlying the closure of the program. These are technical reasons which would not normally come to the surface. The advice I have had is that, in considering the priorities of the department and the economic factors involved, it is not the wonder breed that the honourable gentleman would have us believe. I am advised that the cattle were out-performed on occasions by buffalo-Brahman-cross.

We are looking at commercial animals and at genetic engineering. That is what we are trying to do. Weaning percentages were very low. Calving was abysmal. They were not very good mothers at all. These cattle are very sensitive and temperamental. All in all, I think that the program was terminated for very good reasons.

I am very pleased that we have finally stung the honourable gentleman into raising the matter of the agricultural scheme in the Assembly. It has not been aired for some time and he has obviously had plenty of opportunities to raise any matters that were concerning him and I am very pleased to hear them. Unfortunately, he was not able to enter the debate in February. I think he was still suffering from a broken leg.

Mr Doolan: I replied to the debate in February.

Mr STEELE: Did you? Oh, I'm sorry. In his policy speech he made a few remarks on the subject.

We were advised that we should go into rice farming on the Adelaide River. If there is a need to be flexible and to go into other crops, I am not too proud to say that it would be very unwise not to take advantage of any flexibility that may be available to us, particularly in the experimental stage of getting agriculture and horticulture launched successfully. The reason for some of the delays has been that we want to do this thing properly. The chairman himself only took up his duty on 20 October.

The honourable gentleman raised so much detail that it was hard to write it all down. But he is straining in the right direction when he says that the costs are a bit awry. I believe that a lot of recosting will be needed on the establishment of the farms. I am quite happy to say that. The costs have changed. The very basis on which some of the costs were established have shifted ground. In this early experimental stage, there is no guarantee that we can do everything that we would like to do as far as rice production in the Adelaide River area is concerned.

I am pleased that his advisers have come to the surface on the Keep River. I do not know if he knows the Keep River as well as I do but I would hate to be involved with a government on the other side of the border, particularly as there is no channel - we could not afford the cost. That is not to mention the constitutional problems that we could not handle in trying to grow rice on the Weeber Plains. I think that would be too ridiculous to even contemplate. There is no other like situation in Australia today. The fact that you can grow rice on the Weeber Plains is tremendous. But we have facilities out of Darwin. We have a port here which we hope to develop and for which we need reasons to develop. We have the human resources based here and we took that into consideration in the decision. I am not apologising for that. I do very much regret that one of the farmers has sought to pull himself out of the commitments and arrangements that were made. I am not going to mention his name. I am not too worried whether he is in the Assembly today or whether I bump into him in the street. I have been dealing with farmers and cattlemen for many years and I am not frightened of any of them.

The honourable gentleman raised the question of buying stations. In hindsight, maybe he is right. If I could have a bet on my wife's horse after it had won a race by 9 lengths, I would have gone and taken advantage of the bookmaker's price. That is not the way the system works. We are not in the business of buying cattle stations. I indicated this morning that we are currently negotiating with owners of pastoral properties to extract from them suitable land for the project stage of the agricultural development and marketing scheme.

That is the way to go about it. Why should we buy a whole cattle station and have to run the station? We are not in the business of running cattle stations. We want to select the right land for the project. All the soil surveys that were undertaken show us which areas are right.

As I said, I am very pleased that the honourable gentleman raised the matter of the scheme. I am pleased that he has finally met the Chairman of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority. The services of departmental officers are available for briefings to every member of this Assembly. However, his accusations that public servants were pushed out because they criticised the Lapidge Report is a load of rubbish. I think there are a lot of people who criticised the Lapidge Report. But there must be a basis for commencement. If there is no basis, where do we start?

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister) (by leave): I advised the honourable Leader of the Opposition last week that I would announce to this Assembly during the course of this sittings the identity of the new Administrator for the Northern Territory. I am now able to make that announcement. I am authorised by the Minister for Home Affairs on behalf of His Excellency the Governor-General to inform honourable members that His Excellency has appointed Commodore Eric Johnston as Administrator of the Northern Territory with effect from 1 January 1981.

Commodore Johnston has been a regular naval officer since 1950 and was awarded the OBE and the United States commendation for his service in Vietnam whilst in command of HMAS Vendetta. After promotion to captain in December 1973, he was posted as Naval Officer Commanding North Australia area and of course was located in Darwin. He was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1975 for post-Cyclone Tracy services to the city of Darwin. I am sure that all honourable members would have a very favourable recollection of Commodore Johnston in that respect. Since May 1979, Commodore Johnston has been Director of Public Information in the Department of Defence in Canberra.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader) (by leave): I am sure that every Territorian will welcome the news of the appointment of Eric Johnston as the new Administrator with a great deal of affection. I am sure that this appointment will be received extremely well, not just in the Territory but right around Australia. Eric Johnston played a very significant role in the rebuilding of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy. I remember his being installed in the sixth floor of what was known as HMAS MLC in Darwin and he was extremely well regarded by everyone as a man able to get things done with a very cheery attitude. As I say, his appointment will be extremely well received right around the country.

REPORT OF MINISTERIAL MISSION TO SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I present the report of the Northern Territory ministerial mission to South-east Asia in September-October 1980.

I move that the Assembly take note of the report and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

COMPANIES (TRUSTEES AND PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES) BILL (Serial 49)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is in substantially the same terms as a bill of the same title which was withdrawn with the leave of the Assembly last November. As I informed honourable members when I introduced the original bill, the purpose of this bill is to replace several private acts of the state of South Australia which give exclusive rights to certain public trustee companies of that state

to operate as trustee companies in the Northern Territory. As I have already said, this bill is in substantially the same terms as the bill which was withdrawn. However, the opportunity has been taken to rearrange and combine certain sections and generally tidy up the bill. I draw honourable members' attention to the following significant differences between the old bill and this one.

In the original bill, an authorised trustee company could have its authorisation cancelled by the minister if it ceased to have the required attributes or failed to comply with a condition of its authorisation. The government does not believe that such a serious matter as the cancellation of an authorisation should be left entirely in the hands of the executive. Clause 10 accordingly gives the power of cancellation to the Supreme Court on the application of the responsible minister.

Clause 13 is a new clause which requires trustee companies to make twice-yearly statutory declarations on a prescribed form. The sort of information that will be required to be given will include details of the trustee company's capital, shares, assets and liabilities. A similar clause appears in most other trustee company legislation. It is designed to enable the government and all other interested persons to monitor the finances and structure of trustee companies and ensure that any conditions which may have been imposed on companies are being complied with.

I turn now to clause 25 which deals with common funds. The government has received representation from trustee companies seeking to be able to invest a proportion of the moneys constituting a common fund in the purchase of land, notwithstanding that land is not itself an authorised trustee investment. The government believes this suggestion is reasonable but only if such investment is limited to freehold land and a strict limit is placed on the proportion of the moneys constituting a common fund which can be so invested. Subclauses (3) and (4) reflect the government's present view.

I turn finally to clause 27. In the original bill, a trustee company was not entitled to draw commission on more than half the value of an estate that had not been realised. Representations were received from trustee companies arguing that, where life interests were concerned, a company may have to wait many years to receive half its commission. The government sees some merit in this argument. Subclause (4) now provides that a trustee company can draw capital commission of up to 50% of a portion of an estate that has not been realised. This will place the company in a better position where part only of an estate is subject to a life interest. This scheme is similar to that in force in Queensland. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PORTS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 58)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend the Ports Act to bring about a change in the constitution and membership of the Northern Territory Port Authority. Members of the Assembly will appreciate that, in many respects, the Port of Darwin is central to the overall economic development of the Northern Territory. Since self-government, we have made strenuous efforts to modernise the Port of Darwin. A new land-backed wharf project and the Frances Bay small ships

harbour, which is now under construction, are positive evidence of this commitment.

I believe that the importance of the port in relation to the future trade and transport links both to our neighbours in the south and overseas cannot be over-emphasised. For example, current planning for future development of the port is closely tied in with plans for the proposed rail link between Darwin and Alice Springs. The government is fully aware of the vital importance of establishing a rail link to the port. Not only will this enhance the viability of the railway but it must also guarantee the future operational prosperity of the port in terms of increased cargo throughput.

Now more than ever, forward planning and management control of the port needs to be handled by a compact and efficient team more completely directed to port management and marketing. With this objective in mind, this bill aims to streamline membership and management of the Northern Territory Port Authority by replacing the present 6-member board, which includes a part-time chairman, with a 3-man board, one of whom is to be a full-time executive chairman. Members of the board are to be appointed by the Minister for Transport and Works and the new board is to be subject to the policy direction of the minister. Further, it is proposed that the Northern Territory Port Authority from now on will concern itself only with the Port of Darwin. Provisions for the declaration of other separate ports are to be removed from the Ports Act.

As a further step towards tidying up administrative controls for the port, the bill allows for the boundary limits to be rectified so as to exclude certain foreshore lease areas in Frances Bay and include a parcel of land in the port area proper which was recently handed over to the care and the control of the authority. I emphasise that the government intends our Territory to have the most cost-efficient port for Darwin operating under the management guidance of a closely knit team of board members: a board directly responsible to government initiatives and one which can participate effectively in an overall co-ordinated approach to transport developments in the Territory.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of the present chairman and the members of the Port Authority, many of whom have served for several years. I have outlined the need to streamline the organisation to meet our future requirements but this in no way reflects adversely on the efforts of the Port Authority in past years. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL (Serial 57)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Honourable members will see that this is another bill in the series that I have indicated to the Assembly previously would be introduced in connection with reprinting the laws. Members will see that, as with previous bills, the amendments proposed are of an inconsequential nature. The bill proposes the repeal of a number of acts that remain on the books but which have no continuing application having served their purpose or the functions of which have been superseded. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

POLICE ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 43)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

There are 2 main purposes to be effected by this bill. The first and the one of most immediate concern relates to promotions of commissioned officers within the police force. Under the terms of the principal act, promotions made by the Commissioner of Police within commissioned ranks of the force are subject to appeal to the Police Promotions Board. This bill will remove the right of appeal against such promotions. I wish to stress, however, that the appeal right is proposed to be omitted only in respect of commissioned officers. There is no intention to remove the right of appeal against promotions to other ranks.

The now repealed Police and Police Offences Act provided only for appeals against promotions to the non-commissioned ranks. Appeals for commissioned officers came into being indirectly in 1976 by virtue of the application to the police force then, which was resisted by the police I might add, of the Northern Territory Public Service Act. It rather appears as though the usual public service type positions were carried over into the Police Administration Act without consideration.

The persons responsible for giving effect to the policies and decisions of the Commissioner of Police, who has the ultimate responsibility, are the commissioned officers. The choice of people to fill those positions is an important one for the commissioner. It is not a question solely of qualifications. It is based also on in-depth observation and consideration of that person's particular abilities over a period and an assessment by the commissioner of his capacity adequately to perform the duties of the position, especially in an emergency. Therefore, the commissioner must be personally satisfied that the person selected will implement his decisions and policies adequately and effectively. It is not appropriate that this decision of a commissioner be subject to an appeal to the Police Promotions Board.

It would be possible to give that power of appointment to the government and remove the right of appeal, but this government sees no reason to interfere with police administration. Accordingly, I propose to remove the right of appeal of promotions by the commissioner to commissioned ranks and to vest in the commissioner the total responsibility for such appointments. Excluded of course will be appointments of commissioner, deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner which are made by the Administrator on the advice of Executive Council and are not subject to appeal. Ultimately, the commissioner is subject to direction by the minister and, in extreme circumstances, his appointment as commissioner could be revoked by the Administrator on the advice of Executive Council. I mention this not because it is a current possibility but to reassure honourable members that, although the government wishes the commissioner to have adequate and necessary powers to organise the command structure of the police as he considers best, there is a power to exercise control over the commissioner if need be.

This matter is an urgent one. I am not proposing to seek urgency but it is an urgent matter because of the current need to reorganise the command structure of the police force so that the police are better able to perform their many duties. To effect the restructure, the commissioner intends to create the rank of chief superintendent and promotions to this rank will require contingent promotions to other officer ranks. There are as well

several existing vacancies in key positions. We wish the commissioner to have a free hand to select those persons capable of performing the required duties and the experience and knowledge of the commissioner are considered adequate for this task. I wish to emphasise that the amendment has the support of the Police Commissioned Officers Association.

The second point covered by this bill is action to be taken when a senior officer is absent or unable to act. The act presently provides that, when there is a vacancy in the office of commissioner, deputy commissioner or assistant commissioner, the Administrator may appoint a member to act during the vacancy. This is a needlessly complex and difficult process and proposes difficulties in emergency circumstances such as a sudden illness. The general practice in such matters is to empower the minister to make such acting appointments as is done with departmental heads and that is the action that I am proposing. I propose further to expand the provision to enable springing appointments; that is, for example, if the commissioner is away or unable to act at any time, the deputy commissioner will be empowered to act as commissioner. You will have seen that I proposed the same matter the other day in respect of the law officers.

The opportunity has also been taken in this bill to make minor statutory amendments to keep the act updated for eventual reprinting. Those amendments appear in the schedule. I repeat that it will be my intention to pursue this matter in the course of the next sittings. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 44)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr DONDAS (Transport and Works): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Traffic Act in 2 important ways. Firstly, it introduces a new requirement for drivers to give way at T-junctions. This is part of an uniform change by all states and territories. Secondly, it will rectify any existing anomaly involving a driver's obligation at intersections controlled by 'Give Way' or 'Stop' signs. The new T-junction requirement is for a driver on the terminating part of an uncontrolled intersection to give way to all traffic on the continuing road.

It is important that the Northern Territory should introduce this legislation now for 3 reasons. First of all, it reinforces normal driver expectation that the motorist on a terminating road will stop until the intersection is clear. I will say more about this later. Secondly, it is a further step in the government's ongoing program to enhance road safety in the Northern Territory. Thirdly, a large proportion of our traffic comprises interstate drivers who tend to drive according to the laws in their home states regardless of the Northern Territory law. Thus, the Territory will gain from adopting nationally accepted and standard legislation of this type.

The Australian Transport and Advisory Council, which is comprised of all Australia's Ministers for Transport, including myself, has endorsed the proposal that a uniform T-junction rule should commence nationally on 1 March 1981. The rule has been in force in Western Australia since 1975. That state reports that there has been clear public acceptance, a reduction in rear-end collisions and a smoother traffic flow through intersections. It is easy to

see why this is so. A driver exiting from the terminating part of a T-junction must reduce speed to make either a left or right turn. As a result, he often tends to give way to the faster traffic on the continuing road even when he knows the other traffic has a legal obligation to give way to him. Similarly, a driver proceeding along a continuing road who has a terminating road on his right must consider: (a) whether the intersection is controlled by a 'Stop' or a 'Give Way' sign; (b) whether there is any traffic on his right; and (c) what the other driver is going to do. The less certain one driver is of the likely action of another driver, the greater the risk of a collision. The T-junction rule will substantially reduce the level of uncertainty. It will also speed up the traffic flow.

Prior to the introduction of the rule in Western Australia, it was found that only 4% of terminating road drivers forced their right of way and that only 20% of continuing road drivers in fact attempted to give way. Therefore, as the law stood, it attempted to enforce a rule which was disobeyed by at least 80% of drivers. While no specific figures have been determined for the behaviour of Northern Territory drivers, we have no reason to believe that their behaviour is any different from drivers in Western Australia.

I have spoken of the new rule as the 'T-junction rule'. That is a convenient general term. Of course, there are some intersections which are not of the geometric nicety of a right angle 'T'. The responsible road authorities - the local government authorities and my department - have been asked to identify intersections where the motorist may be confused and to erect traffic signs or to take any other action necessary to remove doubt.

The second purpose of this bill is to reinforce a rule for obeying 'Give Way' and 'Stop' signs and to have that rule conform with the practice in the rest of Australia. For a driver who has a 'Stop' or 'Give Way' sign to his right, this amendment will clarify that his obligation is simply to drive with care. The present act infers a further obligation to give way to the right. That inference cuts across the basic intent of the signs and is unique to the Northern Territory and the ACT. As the Traffic Act reads at present, a driver approaching a 'Give Way' sign has to give way. Once he has passed the sign, that obligation ceases. This bill corrects this anomaly by requiring such a driver to continue to give way until he can safely clear the intersection even after he has passed the 'Give Way' sign.

In summary, Mr Speaker, the effects of the amendments are threefold: first, the give way to the right rule will only apply at cross intersections which are uncontrolled by signs or signals; secondly, the only real difference between the obligations of a driver confronted by a 'Stop' or 'Give Way' sign or exiting from a terminating road is the mandatory obligation to first stop at the 'Stop' sign and not merely reduce speed; and, thirdly, a driver on a continuing road will still have an obligation of due care but will no longer have a further special obligation to give way to the right to traffic passing through a 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign, or exiting from a terminating section of a T-junction.

To conclude, there will be Australia-wide publicity prior to the commencement of this legislation but it is important that the public recognise its obligations at T-junctions and obey the current law until the new T-junction rule is brought into effect. I will also make a strong plea to motorists to drive defensively and courteously to avoid unnecessary accidents, both before and after any change is implemented. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS) BILL
(Serial 36)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

I am sure that honourable members will welcome the introduction of this bill into the Assembly. The philosophy behind the bill was accepted by the previous Assembly where a resolution was passed in June 1978 requiring all members to disclose details of their financial affairs. The scheme of disclosure established by that resolution operated during the life of the Assembly and was the subject of a report by the Clerk following its first year of operation. The report of the Clerk noted certain shortcomings and I had a study undertaken by the department to suggest ways of overcoming them. The end result of that study is the bill presented here today.

It is worth while noting that this Assembly was the first parliament in Australia to introduce a scheme requiring members to disclose for public scrutiny the particulars of their financial affairs. Victoria has since followed suit and now has an act in operation. A decision has been taken to introduce this new scheme using a legislative base. This accords with the general views held by the various other parliaments. While most, at this stage, have not implemented any scheme of their own, the matter has been considered and the unanimous view is that any scheme should be implemented by way of an act of parliament. The decision to use legislation was also prompted by the experience gained by the operation of our previous scheme. It was evident that any scheme based on a resolution of the Assembly would be effective only during the life of that Assembly. The main substance is contained in clause 5 which sets out the information required to be supplied in each return. Without going into each heading separately, the purpose of the clause is to require disclosure of the name and or the source of any personal interests which could possibly conflict with a member's public duty. Honourable members will note that there is no requirement to disclose the amount of any financial interest. This is a conscious decision of the government which believes that the disclosure of the source, as distinct from the amount, of an interest is all that is required to make the scheme effective. It also accords with the philosophy that a person, even a politician, is entitled to a degree of privacy in his personal life.

Mr Speaker, the form of the return is to be approved by you, Sir, doing away with the need to prescribe any particular form. In allowing this degree of flexibility, it is believed that a standard form can be devised to ensure that information supplied by all members will be uniform as to the amount of detail provided. This was one of the greatest shortcomings of the previous scheme. There was no uniformity in the amount of detail supplied by the various members.

Clause 4 provides for returns to be lodged annually within 90 days of 30 June. The returns are to be supplied to the Clerk who is required, by clause 6, to maintain a register which, pursuant to clause 8, shall be tabled in the Assembly. Clause 9 prohibits inaccurate or biased reporting on information contained in the register and clause 10 determines that a breach of a provision of the act will constitute a contempt of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I look forward to hearing honourable members' comments on this bill and especially any suggestions that may improve the scheme envisaged. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

PROHIBITED DRUGS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 52)

Continued from 25 November 1980.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am satisfied that the delay of one month provided by Standing Order 153 could result in hardship being caused. Therefore, on the application of the Chief Minister, I declare this bill to be an urgent bill.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, there is very little to say about this bill. The opposition supports the urgency of the bill. I understand from inquiries that I have made that, at present, there are no patients who need to avail themselves of the provisions of this bill. However, I am told that it is quite common in the Northern Territory for 5 to 6 people to be in need of this kind of therapy. The opposition certainly agrees with the government that it is completely unnecessary to place people in need of the use of heroin in any distress whatever. We support the bill totally.

Mr VALE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I would also like to speak in support of this legislation. I find it somewhat ironical that a drug that has caused so much death and distress in a community will now be used to ease the passage of death. As one who has used a prohibited drug for over 28 years, I sympathise with the medical use of certain drugs. I support this legislation.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, the bill's content has my support. I was one of the members of the Assembly, along with the honourable member for Arnhem, who gave evidence to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs. In my evidence, I stated on oath that I thought that there was far too much hysteria generated in the community and that the people now tended to regard all drug use as abuse and we were, in fact, in danger of throwing out the baby with the bath water. My views have not changed at all. I see this as significant recognition by people making decisions that many drugs, if used properly and not abused, are beneficial. This is an instance where a drug which has the most unfortunate connotations in society can be used to the advantage of the patient on the advice of a medical practitioner. I only hope that this sense of realism extends into the use of other drugs which at the moment occasion near hysteria in response to hearing their name. Drugs such as heroin, cocaine and marijuana, which I do not consider to be a hard drug at all, have very beneficial uses in many circumstances. I am very pleased to see that some of the hysteria may abate when we see permission for the use of heroin under medical supervision.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Health) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the motion that the bill be now read a third time be moved forthwith.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

INQUIRY INTO LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR EMPLOYEES IN NT - REPORT

Continued from 21 August 1980.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I would like briefly to speak on this report. Firstly, we thank the Chief Minister for making available to us these volumes which included some very valuable information collating all laws relating to the matter of leave of absence for employees in one document and and the full transcript in the other. The matter which concerned the

commissioner, Mr Taylor, did not relate to a large number of people. It was estimated that approximately 7% of employees in the Northern Territory were affected by the matter which the commissioner had to consider. This is because most other employees have some award under which they are covered and the terms and conditions, particularly with respect to leave of various categories, is determined by these awards. Nevertheless, those 7% who are not covered by awards were still a significant proportion of the workforce and, in that segment at least, this report is well received. Certainly, we support its recommendations.

The question of leave of absence was raised by the opposition in the last Assembly. The opposition introduced a number of bills relating to sick leave, annual holidays and long service leave. At that time, we were not successful in having those bills passed into law. The reason given by the Chief Minister was that he wished to consolidate all leave questions into one act in the Northern Territory. This particular matter of the consolidation of the provisions of leave was considered by the commissioner. He came to the conclusion that the nature of various types of leave - annual leave, long service leave and sick leave - was so different that they required separate pieces of legislation. This conclusion was also supported by those who gave evidence to the commission as witnesses and as interested members of the public. The commissioner also came to the conclusion that sick leave was not a matter for which we required a specific bill.

Having received the very excellent and detailed conclusions of this report, we look forward to the enactment of the recommendations which will specifically benefit the 7% of the workforce who are not covered by any form of award.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Speaker, most reports of this nature end up with give-and-take recommendations. After reading through this report, I believe this seems to be the case here. Both the employer organisations and the union movement have put a great deal of time and effort into preparing their submissions to the inquiry. Basically, the recommendations regarding the legislation are good given that we already pay the highest price in the country.

There are only 2 areas where the employer organisations and the unions do not seem to see eye to eye. The first area which is noticeable is that of pro rata long service leave after 7 years. Except for South Australia, we have the most generous long service leave provisions in the country. We already provide for long service leave after 10 years. The recommendations then suggest making the provisions even more generous. It all adds up to an extra cost to the business community. As I have already said, the awards provide for long service leave after 10 years now. That will remain the same. In the non-award areas, after a period of 7 years, you will be able to receive pro rata long service leave.

Mention was made by both parties that the period of employment in the Northern Territory was somewhat less than in other states of Australia. That has been the case in the past but I would like to say here that, as we progress towards eventual statehood and as we develop and provide more incentive to people to stop here in the Northern Territory, this will change. I think that our population is stabilising a lot more and that there is a tendency for longer durations of employment than there has been in the past in the Northern Territory. The provision of pro rata long service leave after 7 years will be a big cost factor to industry. There are a number of industries which employ many people who fall into this non-award category. This will be an immediate impost on them.

The second point on which the employer organisations and the unions lock horns is to do with the payment for persons who work on public holidays. Being realistic, I feel that some provision will have to be made for other options in this particular area. I think that we should provide the alternative of a day off in lieu or the payment of a penalty rate. There should be that option. I do not think that anything could be fairer than that.

We have some very complicated working and contractual relationships in the non-award areas. Some people receive a percentage commission. If someone is working in the fishing industry, how would he be paid 2½ times a percentage of the catch? You could end up paying more than you could possibly catch in fish. For instance, if you are sitting in a boat in the middle of the Gulf of Carpentaria, you cannot just chuck an anchor over the side every day. This to me is crazy.

I do not want to debate every individual item in the report because I believe the basic content is good. The recommended legislation is good; it does appear to be well drafted. It is only those 2 points that I have raised where there does appear to be a difference of opinion between the 2 groups. There is a need for cooperation between the employers and the unions and they are experienced at these negotiations.

One thing that does worry me is that this report will be an outline of the philosophy which is used in the drafting of legislation. There has been a tendency for the commissioner to act like an arbitration judge and find the middle of the road rather than look at the minimum acceptable conditions that should be provided. There is a bit of an inconsistency in Commissioner Taylor's report in that he does accept that the legislation should keep its nose out of conditions of employment. This is a matter that should be dealt with by the Arbitration Commission because it is experienced in this particular field. I believe a non-award person should not receive more than somebody on an award. In some areas, non-award employees are in fact being given better conditions than already exist in almost every other part of the country. This point is also causing concern. I do not think anyone minds being fair and reasonable in what is provided but I do not see why we in the Northern Territory should have to be the pace-setters for the rest of Australia.

The only other point I would like to raise, and this worries me greatly, is that already the unions have mentioned that what they do not obtain by way of legislation they will push through by award negotiation. It is already working as a standard-setting activity. I believe that is wrong. It is not what this exercise is about. It is an inquiry. We should not be here to set standards; we should be looking at protecting the interests of those who are not covered by an award.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the basic content of this report is good but the points that I have raised are of concern to the community.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I would like to join with the other members in thanking former Deputy President Taylor of the Arbitration Commission for a typically meticulous report. I agree with the member for Sanderson that the 3 volumes provide excellent informative reading and, at times, somewhat hilarious reading. I am sure those members who struggled through it will agree.

Can I clear up one error in concept held by the member for Port Darwin. It relates to people not covered by an award in relation to long service leave. Long service leave is not normally covered by an award. It is covered in legislation around Australia and it has been covered in the Northern Territory by legislation. There are approximately 20 long service leave awards which

apply in particular industries. It is not the norm to have long service leave awards. By and large, most employees in the Northern Territory are covered by long service leave legislation. Just to give an example, I think the waterside workers have a long service leave provision in their national award. I do know that it was a provision in a number of local awards such as the building award and the brewing award. Some years ago, I was instrumental in having those awards set aside simply because the awards had less satisfactory conditions in them than the legislation approved by this Assembly in 1974. It is the case that the majority of employees in the Northern Territory are covered by legislation rather than a particular award in their industry.

I was interested in the calculations by Mr Taylor that only 7% of the Northern Territory workforce was not covered by an award. I believed that the figure was much, much higher. In fact, I recall obtaining a figure some time ago - and I am not quite sure of the origin - which said that the figure was something like 20%. However, I have read the submissions carefully and I must say that Mr Taylor's calculation appears to be sensible and realistic. Thus, we are talking about a fairly small number but it is important that those people be given proper legislative coverage.

Like the member for Port Darwin, we believe that legislation, in covering non-award people, ought not to be used as a basis by which to set the pace. Commissioner Taylor has set a very cautious and careful course in not seeking to establish pace-setting arrangements. I do not believe there is anything in the documents which would give a suggestion that employees who are covered by an award are in any inferior position in relation to holidays, sick leave, etc to those who are not covered by an award.

Mr Speaker, with regard to the question of people who earn a commission, my recollection is that Mr Taylor said that those people who earned more than a certain amount of money, which I think was average weekly earnings, would not find themselves in the position of doubling up. That might be the problem that the member for Port Darwin was alluding to. It is a problem because contractual arrangements between employers and employees, especially in the higher salary range, very often are on the basis of an annual amount that is designed to take into account such things as public holidays, working long hours and so on. In fact, members of parliament are in much that sort of position. There is a problem from the employers' side. Obviously, they do not want to be in a situation where they have to double up. My reading of Taylor's recommendation is that he sets a ceiling above which the penalty rates and so on do not apply.

In conclusion, we would ask the government to implement the recommendations of Mr Taylor's excellent report as quickly as possible. There is still 7% of the workforce which is not covered in such ordinary matters as annual leave, public holidays etc. We believe that the recommendations are sensible, practical and, in some ways, cautious. They ought to be implemented speedily.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Speaker, I am pleased to have a few words to say on the report of the inquiry into leave of absence. As has been stated by members opposite, this award will only cover a small number of people - about 7% - but this is an important group of people and they should be provided for. I do not think there is any argument that these people should not be covered in matters of leave of absence, long service, annual leave, sick leave etc. In the main, I certainly do not oppose what has been proposed by this inquiry. I would like to make a few general comments.

In Alice Springs, there are many people who come from the United States of America and these people are frankly astounded at the number of holidays and the conditions of service that we enjoy in Australia. Their public holidays,

for example, are Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter and New Year. The length of their annual holidays is 2 weeks. We enjoy fairly good conditions by comparison.

However, Mr Speaker, there must be a cost to employers. Reading through the report, I had the very distinct feeling that, if I was a prospective employer, I would find the extra payments above the ordinary pay rather daunting: the 17.5% holiday loading, the long service leave starting at 7 years pro rata as has been suggested, the length of annual leave etc. These things are costly, and they are a deterrent to people who are looking to employ people. There is also the public holiday loading for those who earn under \$300 a week and also workers' compensation insurance which is a heavy bill. The employers do have a few problems.

The point is that these costs of employing people in essence have to be passed on to the community because if the business does not make ends meet, it goes out of business and then the employers become unemployed and that of course is not desirable. The cost of employment is passed on to all consumers: the employers, the employees and the unemployed. The latter are possibly the ones who are hit the hardest by inflationary trends.

We all say that we are concerned about the unemployed and we genuinely believe that we are. I would pose one question, Mr Speaker: would the employed be prepared to accept fewer benefits to have more people employed? That certainly is a burning question. If each one of us asked that and we were honest with ourselves, we might have a few qualms of conscience on the matter. Obviously, a balance is needed: a balance between the socially desirable necessity for leave for mental and physical health and the relative productivity which affects inflation and unemployment. This balance is a question to which the nation must address itself. The 35-hour-week campaign can only exacerbate inflation. I cannot see it being a great help to anyone in trying to reduce unemployment.

There are 3 points in the report which I would like to mention specifically. One relates to the suggestion concerning extra public holidays. Since we already have some 11 public holidays, any extra public holidays should only be given after very considerable thought. The long service leave suggestion is that, if you have worked for 7 years, you jump from nothing to seven tenths on a pro rata basis if you leave under the 10 years. A fairer suggestion is that you could have a sliding scale: nothing at 7 years and, over the next 3 years, you slide up to 13 weeks leave and pro rata after that. One other point that I have picked up relates to the suggestion that employees should be paid on the public holidays. It might be only a minor point. As I read it, if the holiday fell on a Saturday or a Sunday that was not a normal working day, the employee should be paid. I do not think this should be the case. If it falls on a normal working day, well and good but, if it falls on a Saturday or Sunday which is not a normal working day for the person concerned, pay should not be given.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, I am only going to speak very briefly on this bill and I only do so because, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition mentioned earlier this morning, we have a strong interest in this report. The opposition attempted on quite a number of occasions to introduce bills covering these matters into the Assembly. In fact, I was the last member to do so. I was very pleased to see the report. It has been covered sufficiently well already, so I will just say that I support the honourable Leader of the Opposition's statement that it is a very meticulous report indeed.

I would like also to refer to some of the comments that were made by the honourable member for Port Darwin. From my reading of the report - I read it very carefully - I would have to disagree with him that the report in any way attempted to set the pace in the Northern Territory for conditions of work that people in other parts of Australia do not enjoy. I thought that the report was certainly meticulous - an excellent report. In fact, it seemed to me to be a conservative and a careful report.

The honourable member also said that the report should not be seeking to set standards but should simply be protecting people's working conditions. I find it difficult to understand how it can do that without setting some standards. The report certainly does seek to do that.

The Leader of the Opposition has already mentioned that some members, at least, would be intimidated by the size of the report. Of course, we all have a great deal of work to do and perhaps some of us did not bother reading it very carefully. Could I recommend to honourable members that they do have a close look at the appendices to the report - in particular, the volume that deals with the evidence that was given before the commissioner. I must say that I commend that gentleman on his extreme patience and tolerance. Some of it, I can assure honourable members, is very entertaining indeed.

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying that I support the call of the Leader of the Opposition for the government to implement the recommendations of the report as soon as possible.

Mr PERRON (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I too would like to commend Commissioner Taylor for his report. It seems that he has taken on the task, consulted with all the interested parties in the usual detailed fashion and come up with recommendations which seem, by and large, to have the consensus of the Assembly.

I am also a firm believer that, in establishing legislation on subjects like long service leave, annual leave and public holidays, governments should be very mindful that they are there to establish minimum standards and no more. In no way should they be pace-setting in the industrial relations field. I believe that, by this report, the government can analyse the recommendations and hopefully come up with quite modern legislation as far as Australia is concerned. There is no reason why it should not.

Mr Speaker, I have said before in the Assembly that we should be mindful not to be reinforcing established patterns which I believe may be detrimental to this country as a whole in the long term. I have spoken before on the question of anti-social hours. In Australia, and particularly through awards for work, we have isolated Saturdays and Sundays and we have isolated night work as being anti-social in that a person should not be required to work in those periods. If he is required to work during those periods, then we have determined in all sorts of awards and acts that the person should be compensated for the anti-social hours that he has been required to work.

Because of this pattern that has been established, we have prevented a person from going to an employer and saying that it would suit his lifestyle down to the ground if he were to have Wednesday and Thursday off instead of Saturday and Sunday, or any other 2 days of the week that a person may feel in his circumstances might be far more suited to a better lifestyle. It might provide him with an opportunity to take his children on recreational pursuits to uncrowded places; he could take a Sunday drive on a Thursday and why should he not? We might have a better chance of surviving on our roads if we all split what we call the traditional Sunday drives.

I think that the pattern that we have set in this country to date has made life very rigid for us. I would like to see night work along the same lines as I mentioned for the flexible weekend. We say that anyone who has to start at midnight and work through until dawn is under some sort of awful penalty and therefore should be paid much higher rates than the person who works from 8 am till 4.30 pm. We have missed the point. There may be quite a number of people in our community who are quite happy to work from midnight to dawn or from 6 pm to midnight or whatever hours that shift work demands. As a result of this, we have a tourist industry in this country which has virtually no hope whatsoever of competing with the standards of service that are available in some other countries. This is because we require every person who works at odd hours to be paid quite high rates.

If a person is not particularly inclined to work odd hours, preferring to work during the day, and he is required by his employer to work at odd hours, then I believe there should be a penalty rate. But I do not believe that we should require every employer to pay people who work during unsocial hours penalty rates. It may come one day in this country and, as I foreshadowed before, I think that, if unemployment continues to be a serious problem in this country, the day may come when we will have a call for a redistribution of jobs rather than the traditional call for a redistribution of wealth.

The honourable member for Port Darwin mentioned employer objections to the findings of the report. I tend to support that as well. One was the penalty rates for persons working on public holidays and the second was reducing the period after which long service leave should be paid on a pro rata basis.

The member for Arnhem mentioned that he did not believe the recommendations in the report, if adopted, would make the Territory a pace-setter. From the information I have, it would make us a pace-setter if a person who resigned or left his employment after 7 years was entitled to pro rata long service leave payments. There is no other state in Australia that requires that as a matter of law. I will reserve my further comments on those 2 matters until legislation comes before the Assembly.

We have a recommendation in the report that annual leave should be taken in one continuous period except by agreement whereby it can be taken in a maximum of 3 periods. I have some reservations about accepting that in a blanket fashion. It is a reflection of the mentality that, if a person is to have annual leave, he will have it because he has earned it and because he may be somehow physically or mentally harmed if he does not have a spell. We feel that we must compel him to take it in specific periods. We are being asked to set down in law that a chap cannot go to his employer and ask to have 2 days extra on every weekend until he has used up his leave. He might be building his house at Howard Springs. The recommendation indicates that we should be fairly rigid in the way that leave can be taken by various employees. I think that we should be fairly cautious so that we do not go too far in reinforcing the attitudes that have been built up in this country over a few years. I think there is plenty of room for questioning these. I support the report.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in reply I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate. Certainly, Commissioner Taylor has done a very thorough job and his report will not soon be forgotten. The points that honourable members have made will be considered by Cabinet in arriving at policy decisions relating to the preparation of legislation.

Broadly speaking, the report recommends that we forget about the Employment (Leave of Absence) Bill which was introduced in 1978 and recommends that 3 bills be introduced dealing with annual holidays, public holidays and

long service leave. The logic of why there needs to be 3 bills escapes me but, as I am a neophyte in the field of industrial relations and as there is no need to have it in one bill, I certainly would not push that matter.

The commissioner also has indicated that legislation should not be the vehicle for prescribing sick leave for employees and I accept that without any demur. No doubt the legislation that the government will introduce will be looked at particularly with reference to the 2 questions that seem to have been those that most vexed honourable members today: pro rata long service leave after 7 years and double time and a half for shift workers. Those obviously are the 2 principal questions that the government will have to address itself to in formulating the legislation.

I am very pleased that we have been able to have this debate before Cabinet has formally dealt with the report in any substantive way. I am quite certain that Cabinet will bear in mind the views of honourable members.

Motion agreed to; statement noted.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I shall be presenting The Address in Reply to His Honour the Administrator at 11.45 am. I invite all honourable members to accompany me to Government House for that purpose.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): I move that the Assembly, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday 24 February 1981 at 10 am, or such other time as set by Mr Speaker under Sessional Order.

Motion agreed to.

DARWIN CYCLONE TRACY RELIEF TRUST FUND - MONTHLY REPORTS, NOVEMBER 1979 TO JUNE 1980

Continued from 20 August 1980.

Motion agreed to; reports noted.

REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL DETERMINATION - 28 OCTOBER 1980

Motion agreed to; determination noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Education): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): I would like to raise 4 matters in the adjournment debate. Firstly, I would like to report to the Assembly on 2 conferences that I have had the pleasure of attending since the last sittings in August. The first was the Commonwealth Conference of Delegated Legislation Committees which was held in Canberra. This conference was attended by myself, the member for Nightcliff and Mr Chin. It was one of the most informative conferences that I have attended. There were delegates from all of the states of Australia and delegates from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Ghana, Papua New Guinea, United Kingdom and Gambia. There was also a delegation from the Australian Senate Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances. Last but not least, there were 2 delegates from India. Mr Speaker, I have never attended a con-

ference in which a delegation from India has been involved and indeed it was interesting listening to them debate the title of the conference. The word that came under fire was 'delegated' and, for some time, the Senate Chamber where the conference was held echoed with cries such as 'We delegate nothing; Parliament is supreme'. It is something that I will never forget, Mr Speaker.

The conference itself was set up by the Senate Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances. The committee believed that the various committees charged with the important task of examining delegated legislation on behalf of their respective parliaments would benefit by a discussion on their methods of operation, the problems that they have encountered and any ideas that we had for future development in this particular field.

The conference opened with the chairmen of the various state delegations giving a brief run down on the trends and developments in the supervision of delegated legislation in their respective parliaments and discussions and questions took place after these addresses. The conference was also addressed by Professor Reid, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Politics at the University of Western Australia, Sir Robert Speed CB, QC, Mr Speaker's Counsel at Westminster, Dr Eugene Forsey, the former Canadian Senator, Professor J. Richardson, the Commonwealth of Australia Ombudsman, and Dr D.C. Pearce, Reader in Law at the Australian National University. The questions and discussions that took place following these addresses were very informative indeed. I am sure that other members who attended that particular conference would agree that our attendance was well worth while. I will have copies of these proceedings placed in our library.

The other conference that I attended was organised by the Advisory Council on Inter-government Relations in association with the USA National Conference of State Legislatures which was held in Hobart at the Wrest Point Casino. This conference was to have been attended by myself and the member for Arnhem. Unfortunately, there was a mix up with travel arrangements and I was the only member from this Assembly who attended. There were 2 participants from each state parliament and also members from Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin. The purpose behind this conference was to engage in debate on issues of common concern to both countries at state level. The format was that the participants from each of the areas would address the meeting and introduce a topic and then that would be debated.

On the Saturday, there were 3 sessions. The first session was concerned with federal grants to states and the introductory speaker was Professor Russell Matthews who is a member of the Grants Commission. The second session dealt with road funding. It was interesting to hear that some of the roads in America cost up to \$9m for one mile. There is tremendous cost in this particular area over in the States. The third session dealt with the provision of health and welfare services and the introductory speaker was Dr Sax. Unfortunately, I had to come back before the Sunday portion of the conference which dealt with state-local government relations and a review. It was interesting to note the jealousies that were expressed at the conferences that I have attended where the big states always seemed to have a go at the smaller states. Victoria, for example, said that population density caused social problems. I had to point out that we had our problems regarding isolation and communication. I just made that comment because they do seem to criticise us at times. Over all, it was an interesting conference and I believe that I was able to learn something from it.

Getting back to the home front, I would like to talk about the construction of the Naval Patrol Boat Base at Larrakeyah, in particular about the

discomfort that some residents are experiencing at the present time. Recently, I had a number of complaints about the blasting that is necessary for excavation work to be carried out. Because of representations, I have been in touch with the Controller of Works for the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction to ascertain the reasons for the increase in the force of these particular blasts. About midday yesterday, an enormous shock wave came through the city area. I am sure that members in this Chamber would be aware of that shock wave. You can imagine what it was like for those people living next to the area where the blasting was being carried out. The reason for the abnormally large blast was because this charge was exploded above ground level. This is not a common occurrence and I understand that the Controller of Works will be getting in touch with the contractor responsible and asking him to reduce the size of the charges used.

I have also been informed by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction that the work on this particular stage of the project is ahead of schedule. It is 80% completed and they are looking to completing this stage by the end of January. The Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction has been very helpful to me over this period and has responded to any request that I have made. This is how it should be. We are not trying to stop development. All we wish to do is to make sure that development is carried out in a responsible manner.

Everyone to whom I have spoken has been in favour of the patrol boat base being built but the people living in the area must be given foremost consideration during this construction stage. These residents have been very patient throughout this whole exercise and I believe they will continue to be so. I do ask residents of Port Darwin to contact my office if there is any area of concern and I am sure that the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction will continue to make sure work is carried out with as little inconvenience to the residents as possible.

Another point I would like to raise concerns dental therapists. I asked the Minister for Health in this Assembly last week if consideration was being given to introducing legislation which would enable dental therapists to carry out treatment on adult teeth. I am very concerned at the answer he gave because he indicated that the matter was under consideration. I am all in favour of dental therapists carrying out checks and inspections on children's teeth and I am very pleased to see that the program has been extended to include the inspection of secondary schoolchildren's teeth. The treatment of adult teeth is a very serious matter and that includes secondary schoolchildren. This treatment must only be carried out by fully qualified dentists. I do not believe that dental therapists should be allowed to carry out or recommend treatment on adult teeth. I speak very strongly against using people who are not qualified as dentists in this particular area. I urge the minister to think very carefully about the implications of a move to allow dental therapists to carry out treatment on adult teeth.

The final point I would like to touch on today is whether or not nude bathing should be allowed to occur in certain areas. This has been debated in this Assembly and, indeed, in many other parts of Australia and probably right throughout the world. Unfortunately, I was not a member of this Assembly when that issue was debated but I was aware of the proceedings that took place. As an alderman of the city council, I came in for some criticism at the time - not a lot I might say - because I was not in favour of the establishment of a free beach within the municipality of Darwin. If people want to go gliding or parachute jumping, then they have to go to another area to carry out those activities. There are many individual and group-type activities that require participants to travel some distance.

I was not so much against people getting their gear off. If they wanted to do that type of thing, they could go ahead and do it. What I was against was having a situation where people who visited Lee Point could not move to Casuarina Beach without going through an area where people had no clothes on. However, the appropriate laws were passed and the people who worship the sun were able to have their own beach where they could take their clothes off legally. I do not wish to try to alter that situation. The subject was debated and a decision taken and I accept that decision.

Unfortunately, it now appears that there are a number of people in the community who think that they can go down to any beach in the city and take their gear off to go swimming or sunbathing. I have received a number of complaints about people going down to these beaches. Families who use Mindil Beach, in particular, are being confronted with people swimming with no clothes on and also sunbathing. The area of Mindil Beach where this activity is on the increase is the end nearest to Myilly Terrace. This particular area is a beautiful spot. It is a shaded area where people are able to take their children and have picnics. We have a free beach, a place where people are able to remove their clothes legally. I am asking the people who go down to Mindil Beach to respect our laws and move to the areas which are designated for that purpose.

As I have always said, I am not against people getting their gear off or doing their own thing. I am against people not respecting the law and I will be asking the Police Commissioner to step up patrols of the city beaches, particularly on the weekends and public holidays, to make sure that this type of activity is not continued. People and families should be able to move around freely without being imposed upon by someone wishing to take part in an activity in which the majority of people do not wish to participate. There are areas set aside for that specific purpose and I again urge those who want to take part in this type of activity to go to those areas where that activity can be carried out legally.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): At the moment, we have a fair bit of activity going on around Australia as far as the airline industry is concerned. Last week, we were fortunate to have members of the independent inquiry into airfares visit the Northern Territory. Some honourable members and representatives of the government appeared before this committee of inquiry to state their views. This morning, we had the announcement by the federal minister that something will definitely have to be done about Qantas, our international flag carrier. This is a result of Qantas incurring a loss of some \$21m over the last financial year.

Mr Speaker, I want to traverse some of the more local events in our own airline industry which relate specifically to Northern Airlines. Recent events are certainly causing some concern to this side of the Assembly. I particularly request that the Minister for Transport and Works address his mind to the question of what will become of the airline industry in the Northern Territory.

In September last year, when this Assembly was considering the Aviation Bill, the former Minister for Transport and Works, who is now the present Minister for Primary Production and Tourism, stated: 'The bill has been specifically drafted to reflect operating conditions and requirements within the Northern Territory'. He went on to say: 'The same conditions make it necessary to have and to be able to apply strong enforcement provisions if any efficient aviation industry is to exist here'. At the time, the minister was backing up a statement which had been made by the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister had reaffirmed his government's interest in seeing a soundly based regional airline designed specifically with one objective in mind. The Chief Minister stated quite unequivocally that the objective was that the people of the Territory

would benefit.

Very commendably, the government appointed a committee to examine proposals received from interested parties for the establishment of a regional airline. That committee submitted its report in December last year and subsequently Cabinet adopted a recommendation that East West Airlines would be given the job of establishing a regional airline. Mr Speaker, things were certainly looking up. Territory people were told that we would have a regional airline over which we would have control. The Chief Minister had reaffirmed this objective continually through 1979 and, in August 1979, he said, again in relation to the powers under the Aviation Act: 'I want to make it quite clear that the Territory government will use these powers available under the Aviation Act to ensure the allocation of routes to the new regional airline that will ensure its economic viability as well as maintain an existing or better standard of service to the people presently being served by other airlines'. The other airlines were the domestic twins, TAA and Ansett, MMA and the local airline, Connair.

The Chief Minister further confirmed the paramount importance of the community when he was considering the establishment of a regional airline and its economic viability. He said: 'The new airline will operate the regular services within the Territory and these will include services to the communities presently provided by Connair with the benefit of the Commonwealth subsidy'. He also went on to say: 'The new regional airline will operate without a subsidy'.

The position at the beginning of 1980 was as follows: East West Airlines would establish a regional airline and maintain or improve the standard of service to Northern Territory communities; the service would be conducted without the benefit of the Commonwealth subsidy; and the government would have power to ensure all these things by the passage of its Aviation Bill which all members of this Assembly supported at the time. To use the minister's words: 'The benefit of the consumer and the community at large is the bill's paramount objective' - an objective that we all heartily applauded.

On 20 February this year, in a ministerial statement, the Minister for Transport and Works informed us that there had been a memorandum of understanding relating to the establishment of a regional airline and that this had been signed by the Managing Director of East West Airlines. The minister said that the main provisions of the memorandum of understanding were specifications used by the investigating committee in making its recommendations. These were specifications that had been originally issued by his government.

Let us have a look at these specifications. They were: continued employment for all Connair personnel without reduction in salary; control over timetables, frequencies, routes, aircraft types and capacity; control over fares and freight rates by the Northern Territory government; the introduction of turbo-prop aircraft on routes formerly serviced by Connair; the use of F27 and F28 aircraft on the internal routes which were operated by Ansett, MMA and TAA; and the issue of licences by the Territory government under the Aviation Act of 1979 to enable all these services to be provided.

In January this year, the Managing Director of East West Airlines, in reference to the involvement of his company, said that the new airline would result in a service specifically designed to meet the needs of the Northern Territory and its people. This was the same sentiment which was expressed by both the Chief Minister and the former Minister for Transport and Works. The situation, so far as Territorians are concerned, was that both the government and the parent company had guaranteed a service at least equal to the one that was then in existence and had gone so far as to say that, in fact, the service

would be likely to be much better and that it would be done without a subsidy. All Territorians applauded those sentiments. They showed firmly that, as far as the establishment and operation of the Territory airline was concerned, the minister would have the last say. The buck stopped firmly in front of the Minister for Transport and Works.

It was about this time that things began to fall apart at the seams a little. On 3 February 1980, the company increased fares unilaterally by 12.5% with no consultation with the government. Of course, we have a provision in the Aviation Act which says that the government must approve all airfare increases. When the government heard about it, the government said no. The fare increase was withdrawn and the company was forced by the act to submit proposed fare increases to the government for approval. The government acted responsibly on that occasion. It was making the new Territory airline observe the provisions of the Aviation Act.

In March this year, the Northern Territory News ran a story relating to the latest Northern Territory Pilots Federation newsletter. The newsletter stated that Northern Airlines planned to make a general downgrading of its services in the Territory and give a larger share of routes to charter operators. A Northern Airlines executive at the time was quick off the mark to reassure the Territory community that the contents of this newsletter were a fabrication. We assume that the government investigated the contents of this newsletter and reminded the airline of its responsibilities to the Territory community and to its undertakings given earlier in the year. I reiterate that the government has these powers available to it both in the memorandum of understanding with the airline and also by application of powers in the Aviation Act.

Then there came to the Northern Territory the wonderful aircraft called the Metroliner. It was found that these were the prop-jet aircraft referred to in the memorandum of understanding which was signed between the company and the minister in January. This again was an area in which the government was to have responsibility: the type of aircraft which would service the various routes. The government also had the responsibility to decide whether the aircraft were suitable before granting a licence. Northern Airlines said that the introduction of the new Metroliner was the first stage of a long-term program of improvements. The company described the aircraft as 'perfect for servicing people in the remote areas'.

I stress that the government was the party that had the final say. It had the act behind it to give it teeth. By the middle of June this year, the Territory's regional airline was not proving to be quite as exciting as had at first been thought. An airline executive, Mr Menzies, said that, over the 12 months to March 1980, the weekly service to Oenpelli had attracted only an average of 4 passengers each way. He said that the economic viability of all other routes was marginal at best. This is really an amazing admission. We would have assumed that, in considering its application for a licence to operate an air service in the Territory, East West would have taken a passing glance at least at the economic viability of some of these routes and, based on that information, a decision as to the viability of the operation of these routes would have been made. Now we are belatedly told that some of the routes are too marginal and that the airline cannot operate economically.

Again this morning, I asked a question about continued airline services to some of the more remote communities. The minister now says that he cannot guarantee the continuation of Northern Airlines air services to these routes if they are not economically viable. What became of that paramount objective of the community's well-being in this decision to establish a Territory airline? The government had guaranteed that in no way would the community lose out by a new regional airline because it had the final control.

The next question to be asked is what became of the guarantee that there would be no subsidy required for the airline to operate. The improved airline service has led to a series of incidents like schedule changes, often without notice, and increased fares. The one-day tour from Alice Springs to Ayers Rock increased from \$150 at the end of June to \$195 at the beginning of October. This increase was sanctioned by the government. In August, things had become so bad that even the CLP's annual conference voiced criticism of the regional airline. It said, in effect, that the Territory was not getting the regional airline benefits that had been promised by the government in January.

In October this year, the company had the task of announcing that the Metroliner had been found to be incapable of handling Top End conditions and that it would have to be replaced by older Herons. Part of the agreement had been that the services would be upgraded by the introduction of prop-jet aircraft and now we are told that the Territory is not equipped to handle that type of aircraft. Why did the airline not know this before? Why did the minister allow the introduction of this particular aircraft if it was so unsuitable?

In the Northern Territory News of 5 November, we find a letter by the General Manager of Northern Airlines. He told us that the company's workforce had increased, that the company had taken over the milk run only on 15 September and the aerial medical service on 1 October. He said that the Northern Airlines increase was less than the increase of Ansett and TAA. It was less: TAA and Ansett increased their fares by 5% and Northern Airlines increased theirs by 4.7%. I ask if all of this was worth a discount of 0.3% in airfares.

It appears that the cast iron guarantees that we have been given cannot be upheld. I bring these matters to the attention of the honourable Minister for Transport and Works because it looks as if a further 4 communities will suffer because Northern Airlines finds that it cannot live up to its responsibilities in providing air services to these particular communities.

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

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, this afternoon I would like to report to the Assembly on a seminar which I attended. I had the pleasure of being one of the delegates attending the Fifth Australasian Parliamentary Seminar. I appreciate that honour paid to me. This took place in last August and September. We went from Canberra to Singapore, to Kuala Lumpur, to Penang and to Hong Kong. There were 25 people who took part in this seminar and they came from 13 countries. I will list the countries to show the interests of the people who attended. There were members of parliament from Australia, Western Samoa, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Hong Kong, Kota Baru, Nauru, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu.

I found the seminar very interesting, particularly the subtle interplay of the political interests of the people, their personalities, their national origins and their ethnic backgrounds. The discussions in the different places referred, in the main, to the particular city or the country in which that particular part of the seminar happened to be held.

As the seminar started off in Canberra, it dealt firstly with the views of the main political parties in our federal parliament. Different members of these political parties spoke to us. We learnt about the party political makeup of these parties and of the workings of the different political parties. We had discussions with the members. We learnt about the history of the political parties and also we were taken on extensive tours of the federal parliament building. I personally found this very interesting because I had not been

to the federal parliament before.

From Canberra we went to Singapore. There was a complete change of scene. The Singapore government, as were all the other governments in the places we went to, was very hospitable to us and made our stay as pleasant as it could. It was extremely interesting to hear the governmental views on the Indo-Chinese situation, particularly the political situation in Vietnam and Kampuchea, and how it affected Singapore and the Malaysian Peninsula.

From Singapore we went to Kuala Lumpur and we were given a very comprehensive rundown on the commercial and industrial situation in Malaysia. What I found particularly interesting was an excursion to the Rubber Research Institute. I was very interested in the work they were doing with a fine rubber base spray material which is used to stabilise soil in reclamation conditions. I had heard about this before but not in such detail as it was presented to us. I was particularly interested in the work they have done with this very fine rubber based spray in certain porous soils to encourage water holding capacity. I feel that this would be of great benefit in certain drought areas of Australia, but I understand this is a very expensive proposition. Provided the financial side could be brought within certain parameters, it would be of interest to us in the drier parts of Australia. In Kuala Lumpur, the seminar dealt, in the main, with the situation of the free press as it affects past and present political situations, both in that country and, by open discussion, in other countries.

From Kuala Lumpur we went to Penang, which is an island in Malaysia, and this was where I felt most at home. Travelling from the airport to the big city of Georgetown was not very different from the rural area of Darwin. The people had rather interesting domestic arrangements. I imagine that some of their dwellings were not permanent but were like many of the temporary dwellings in the rural area outside Darwin. Perhaps they gradually improve their dwelling until they can afford to build a permanent house. Just like our rural area, there were a few cattle wandering loose, a few goats, the inevitable dogs and the inevitable poultry. It was interesting to hear about the political party situation in Malaysia which is completely different to ours. I thought they had a very complicated interplay between state and federal governments.

From Penang we went to Hong Kong. I was overwhelmed by the concrete jungle and the millions of people. Coming from the open spaces of Australia, I would find it very hard to adjust. The highlight was being taken to see the very big industrial housing estates which the government is building in an attempt to house the millions and, at the same time, to provide work for them. These are immense complexes and the residential building program is most comprehensive. Complete commercial, recreational and service facilities are provided in these complexes. It was very interesting to compare the workings of their current Legislative Council with our old Legislative Council and our current Legislative Assembly. There were many similarities between their council and our old council. Of particular interest was the peculiar political situation in relation to leases over the new territories in mainland China.

I would like to express my appreciation for my attendance at the seminars. I think the Northern Territory fits in between the older established state and country legislatures and the newly-emerged independent parliaments. I think the group that comprised this seminar was a very happy group. Of particular note was the beautiful singing by the island people. Some of us joined in. I hope that many permanent friendships have been made from this seminar.

Mr TUXWORTH (Barkly): I would like to deal with the issue of outpatient

services at the Casuarina Hospital. Earlier in the week several members were quite beside themselves in some of the things they said about medical services at Casuarina. I listened to what they had to say and went away to study the problem. I would like to start off by reading a letter that I wrote on 8 September this year to the member for Sanderson who had asked a question on 20 August relating to a similar problem. I think it canvasses some of the issues that other honourable members raised this week:

Dear Ms D'Rozario,

On 20 August you asked me the following question: 'Is it the policy of the Department of Health to discourage attendance by the public at Casuarina Casualty clinic and, if not, upon whose authority are physicians who attend that clinic informing patients that they should not attend that clinic but should seek the services of a private practitioner instead?'

The policy of the Department of Health is to ensure the provision of prompt and efficient casualty and emergency services at Casuarina on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis and, in addition, to provide a first contact primary care service for the public at large. However, to protect the prompt and efficient services that are necessary for emergency cases, it is necessary to contain the attendance of large numbers of patients seeking treatment for minor and non-urgent conditions such as coughs, colds, body aches and mild fevers etc. A notice has been posted at the Casualty Department, therefore, which states: 'The Casualty section is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergencies, recent illnesses or urgent cases of illness. Outpatients for non-urgent conditions by appointment only from 8 am in the morning till 4.30 pm week days only, not public holidays. Outside these hours, any patient with a non-urgent condition may be seen by the Casualty duty doctor but only after urgent cases have been dealt with. To avoid a long wait, patients with non-urgent conditions are asked to make an appointment at a time to suit themselves: (1) with the Community Health Centre in their local district; (2) with the general Outpatients section in the hospital; or (3) with a general practitioner'. This policy is not new and, in fact, it has remained unchanged for many years.

As a result of the discussion the other day, I have asked the Acting Secretary, Dr Reid, to look into the matter and his reply to me is as follows:

I have perused the Hansard copies of the statements to the Assembly of Mrs Lawrie and Mr Collins concerning Casuarina Hospital. Their criticism relates to the general Outpatient service as distinct from the specialist Outpatient service and the Casualty service which are not attracting criticism. All people attending Outpatients are seen within a few minutes by a nurse and those with acute or serious illness are given priority. Those with non-urgent matters are advised there may be a long wait and they should consider approaching a general practitioner as well as consider making an appointment at the local health clinic or at the Outpatients in the hospital. This information is displayed in notice form at the hospital and I have attached a copy of the notice for your information.

The notice is as follows: 'The Casualty section is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergencies, recent illnesses or urgent

cases of illness. Outpatients for non-urgent conditions by appointment only 8 am to 4.30 pm weekdays only, not public holidays. Outside these hours, any patient with a non-urgent condition may be seen by the Casualty doctor but only after urgent cases have been dealt with. To avoid a long wait, patients with non-urgent conditions are asked to make an appointment at a time to suit themselves (1) with their Community Health Centre in their district, (2) with the general Outpatients section in the hospital or (3) with a general practitioner'.

The honourable member for Arnhem spoke about the very large numbers of people who are being turned away from the Casuarina Hospital by the staff. I gathered from the support he received from interjections from other members that the problem was probably widespread. It seems that only the honourable members opposite have any details about the problem. I contacted the members for Casuarina, Port Darwin, Jingili, Stuart Park, Tiwi and Ludmilla about these large numbers of people and they, all being people whom I regard as having their ears very close to the ground in Darwin, have not received the same vibrations as the honourable members opposite and that, Mr Speaker, is a matter of concern in itself.

I receive a great deal of mail concerning the Department of Health. I have never received a complaint by phone or writing or any other way concerning the issue that the honourable members raised. If I had, I would have been happy to investigate it. I am also concerned that honourable members are not detailing and documenting the complaints that they receive so that they can be investigated. They are happy to make general allegations but we are not given any details. When I take these matters to my department, the first thing they say to me is, 'What day are we talking about? What section are we talking about? Who is the complainant? Which member of the staff did the wrong thing?' All I can say is that the honourable member for Arnhem said that there are large numbers of people and it happened at Casuarina Hospital. I take the view that, if members of the Department of Health are saying and doing the things that the honourable member says, I would like to know about it so that the matter can be rectified.

I tried to ascertain today how many of the complaints have been raised with members of the Hospital Board, the Hospital Superintendent or the Secretary of the Department. I found that none of these complaints has been taken up at that level by any of the members. That is as much as I have been able to do in the time available to me. On previous occasions, the member for Fannie Bay complained about the service, the conditions and the treatment of people from whom she had received representations. On 2 occasions, I asked the member for the details and the names of the people complaining. Again, Mr Speaker, I did not receive any reply to that request.

I am quite happy to stand by the actions of the department at this stage because I have not received sufficient detail from the honourable members opposite to be able to pursue the matter to the degree that is required. I do not mind if honourable members want to criticise me because they are entitled to do that and it does not interest me in the slightest. However, they are criticising in very broad terms people in the department. The members are saying that large numbers of people are being told by staff at the Outpatients section at Casuarina Hospital that they must go to a private practitioner. I put it to honourable members that I am prepared to take up any representation about the Department of Health and its activities. It would be extremely helpful to myself and the officers of the department if we could receive some details about the matters that are being raised.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I have never heard so much rot in all my life. The honourable the Minister for Health said he approached members on his side of the Assembly and they did not know anything about this matter. That does not surprise me at all because they seem to be a remarkably ignorant bunch. In his reply, no mention at all was made of the queries we raised regarding the 1 pm start at the Outpatients clinic. There was no mention of that yet he is supposed to have investigated the matter to the best of his ability.

The honourable member wanted details of people complaining. You will appreciate, Mr Speaker, that I am most reticent about naming people in this Assembly. However, when one enters the field of politics, one gives up a certain anonymity one otherwise has. I well recall one of my constituents, a Mrs Anne Amos, writing to the Minister for Health in great detail - and she sent a copy of her letter to me - seeking certain information regarding the operation of his Outpatients facilities at the Community Health Clinics. One year after her initial letter, I followed it up and asked why we had not received a reply. I will not name names in this but staff of the Minister for Health said, 'Yes, I guess you should have had one'. At that stage, I did not know who the lady was. It makes no difference; she has a perfect right to make representations to the minister and to me. I followed it up again but I never received a reply. However, I understand that, after approximately 15 months, the lady did receive a reply. I was not given the courtesy of a copy although I had pursued the matter on her behalf. This rot about needing details and names is just some fallacy thrown in this afternoon by the minister. He does not know what his department is doing and he could not care less. In this case it was a direct approach to him and he had neither the wit nor the courtesy to take follow-up action when names, dates and events were given to him.

I will give another example of the peculiar attitude of the Minister for Health towards the people of the Northern Territory and to members in this Assembly who supply dates, medical practitioners' and patients' names and events to him. Some time ago, I raised the problem of the gentleman who had suffered an industrial accident and who had been taken to Darwin Hospital and went through all the agonies of hell in trying to have his own practitioner attend him because specialist surgery was necessary. The honourable the Minister for Health, whom I am even more sure should resign after this afternoon's efforts, said at first that it could not have happened but that he would investigate if I supplied names. I gave him a copy of the submission from the person who had approached me. It had the name of the practitioner, his own name, details of the accident and the chronological sequence of events. Do you know what happened, Mr Speaker? That letter was lost. I have never received it back. I supplied it on the understanding that I would receive it back. It was such a clearly documented case that I was not going to let it drop. In fact, the procedures which were then followed at the hospital were changed by order of the Medical Superintendent. To this day, that gentleman sitting opposite, taking the taxpayers' money, has not had the courtesy to reply to me advising me of the change in procedures yet he has the affront to expect that I should have confidence in him.

Note: Mrs Lawrie became indisposed and Mr Isaacs moved that Standing Orders be suspended to allow her to continue her remarks later. The motion was supported by an absolute majority and the Speaker declared the question resolved in the affirmative.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): Mr Speaker, I am sure the honourable member for Nightcliff will continue on the same theme, but I would just like to raise a couple of points that the minister has not replied to. One is the question of the Outpatients section at the moment not opening until 2 pm on 3 days a week.

The minister did not refer to that at all in his so-called reply. There could well be a sound reason for it. They might have problems obtaining doctors. Why did the minister not tell us the reason? It is certainly happening. I recall the member for Arnhem giving facts, days and so forth to the minister yet he has not answered that question.

The other question he has not considered is the inconvenience faced by people who have to travel all the way to Casuarina Hospital by bus. For some of my constituents, that means 3 bus journeys. People who live in Parap need to change buses twice. When they eventually arrive at Casuarina Hospital, they are confronted with this notice. If the minister would accede to the request of the honourable member for Arnhem and publish this policy widely, I for one would not object. I think that a policy to discourage the use of hospital services for simple, primary care is a good thing. People should be encouraged to go to Community Health Centres or to private doctors. To perform this type of service at a hospital is a very expensive way of doing things and, if the minister announced that policy, I would support him.

However, he has not informed people who, for traditional reasons, are accustomed to going to the Outpatients at the hospital. Some people do not know that, if they go to a private practitioner, their fees may be waived in cases of hardship. They go to the Outpatients at the hospital as I said. They may not be desperately ill or it may not be an emergency but they are certainly unwell. Some people may have to make 3 bus trips to get there and then they are confronted with this notice. It is not good enough. They need the courtesy of being advised in advance. People need to know that, if this is the way the Outpatients is to be conducted, then they need to make other arrangements. It is not too much to ask the minister to let people know that this is his policy and that this is the way that things will be done. I for one would support him in that policy because we know that hospital services are immensely expensive. All members of the Australian community are aware of the drain hospital services place on our finances. I think the policy would be applauded if it was outlined and advised to people.

Mr Speaker, I have a couple of other matters I want to raise in the adjournment. One relates to the question of Aboriginal camping facilities in urban areas. Recently, I visited Tamarind Centre which is in my electorate. Members will know that this is the former Baptist Hostel. It has been taken over and set up to house and care for refugee people arriving from Vietnam. I visited them there and I was very happy to see the effort that is being made to provide facilities for these people. You could say that no effort is being spared in this regard. Special food is being imported from Singapore and there are special teachers in the English language, health facilities and a sister there full time. No effort is being spared to enable these people to adapt to their new life in Darwin. I support that.

Immediately adjacent to Tamarind Centre is a large vacant area of land which was formerly occupied by the Arafura Hostel. There are also other vacant areas of land in my electorate and Aboriginal people visiting Darwin are in the habit of camping on these places because they have nowhere else to camp. I raised this in the Assembly some 12 months ago yet nothing has happened. I think that the comparison between the facilities properly offered to these refugees from Vietnam who have arrived recently and the total lack of facilities available for the people who have been here for as long as any of us know about is utterly deplorable.

It is not as if there has been no study on the subject or as if it is a new problem. The problem concerns Aboriginal people visiting Darwin for medical reasons or simply for a holiday. I also support your view, Mr Speaker,

that the declaration of dry areas by the Liquor Commission is increasing the numbers of Aboriginal people visiting Darwin and other towns in the Northern Territory. I think that there is a lot of evidence that that is happening. However, there is nowhere for people to stay when they come. They are camping on vacant areas of land without even running water sometimes, certainly without toilet facilities. It is very detrimental not only to the people concerned but also to residents in the area in which they camp.

I have complaints from residents. People complain to me when they are inconvenienced or a fight occurs or other things happen because the campers are drunk. People also complain to the Department of Community Development, to the Aboriginal Liaison Unit of the Chief Minister's Department, to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, to the Darwin city council, to the police, and to the member for Stuart Park yet nothing happens. This has been going on for a long time. I have in front of me 3 reports on the need in Darwin for camps for Aboriginal people. There are 2 requirements: for permanent fringe dwellers and for visitors. There is no question that these are required yet this government seems to keep putting off making a decision. I know it is a hard decision but the longer the decision is put off less and less suitable land will be available, antagonisms will increase and the situation will deteriorate.

I was immensely depressed to see that we will have another report on this issue rather than take some positive action on it. I saw an advertisement in the paper from the Department of Community Development inviting suitably qualified persons to apply to assist in the development of a comprehensive strategy with respect to the provision of accommodation for Aboriginal people in major urban centres in the Northern Territory. In my humble opinion, that is not necessary. We have had enough research. We know what the problem is and we know that the solution is to find some area of land and provide the appropriate basic facilities. I do not want yet another report and then have action delayed again because some people do not like the idea. We have to face the fact that it is necessary and, the longer it is put off, the worse the problem will become.

I have some of these reports by various government officers and I thought many of them made a lot of sense. I would like to quote from one which was written nearly 2 years ago, in February 1979. This is the concluding paragraph:

It appears that the problem with Aboriginal transient camping accommodation in Darwin will only grow in the future and it cannot just be ignored and set aside. We feel that it must be confronted, not only by Northern Territory government departments, Aboriginal organisations and other parties associated with Aboriginal campers around Darwin but also by the Aboriginal communities from whence they came. They should be encouraged to take a greater responsibility for what is happening to their people in Darwin whilst also taking into consideration their homeland situation in their own community and the possible reasons for this outward migration.

Mr Speaker, I concur very strongly with those sentiments. Those words were written nearly 2 years ago and they certainly were not the first words on the subject. It would have been good if they were the last, but we are to have yet another report. I certainly hope that we will not have a further period of lack of action.

Finally, I would like to address a few words to the Minister for Transport and Works. I think most of us - certainly I would - wish the connector road

from Nightcliff through Ludmilla to Fannie Bay would go away. It is still creating problems for my constituents. While I appreciate that the matter I raise is primarily the responsibility of the Corporation of the City of Darwin, it is worthy of the minister's attention, particularly as he might be asked for some money to rectify it. There is a very serious problem with the intersection of Dick Ward Drive with Ross Smith Avenue and Phillip Street. This is a very badly designed intersection indeed. It has created problems for the local residents who need to get from one part of the area to another.

I can speak with heartfelt emotion on this, Mr Speaker. I go through that intersection to take some of my kids to music lessons and others to football practice. It really is very difficult to get across. Certainly, this should not be the case. I believe that the new roundabout at Lambell Terrace - Gilruth Avenue is very desirable. I would have thought that some arrangement like that might possibly be suitable for that intersection in my electorate. I hope that the minister will support this call to have that intersection examined again.

I know that the city council is aware of this problem and I know that there are proposals to try to overcome the problem simply by further restricting right-hand turns and access into the north-west area of Fannie Bay along Phillip Street. This large area of my electorate is zoned R2. There are an increasing number of flats being built there. I think there are something like 330 or more dwelling units in the area already. In addition, there are the Kurringal flats. As a result of the connector road, the number of points of access and egress to this area have been cut off one by one. Those people are being surrounded. They only have 1 or 2 roads by which they can get in and out. I would oppose the proposal to prohibit a right-hand turn into Phillip Street. This is a band-aid proposal; it is being put forward for the best of reasons but I do not think it is good enough. The whole intersection needs to be re-designed.

I have to disagree with what the member for Port Darwin has to say about dental therapists. I know that they are treating schoolchildren for minor repairs. I think that they do a very good job. While I have no objection to the dentists lobbying any member in order to protect what they see as their interests, I heartily support the extension of the dental therapy program into high schools. If we say that only the best qualified professionals should undertake dental care or health care, we will create an immense financial rod for our own backs. We cannot afford to continue to have dentists, with their very specialised training, doing very minor repairs. We cannot afford to have doctors putting stitches in which could well be done by sisters. I hope that, in the Northern Territory, we will see a trend towards using therapists and workers of this sort rather than expecting unrealistically to continue to have specialist professionals doing very simple tasks.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, firstly I would like to reply to a couple of questions that the honourable member for Nightcliff asked me. The first question related to the stage reached in the design and construction of the proposed extension to the Supreme Court building. There are currently 2 items on the capital works program for the court building. First, there is the upgrading of air-conditioning in the Supreme Court building at a cost of \$560,000. This project will be completed within its budget and is nearing completion. There is also conversion of a lower court room to a Supreme Court room with provisions for a judge and jury. Early design work has commenced and the project will be committed towards the end of the financial year. Construction should commence mid-1981 at a cost of \$450,000. No consultants have been engaged on either project as yet nor has any interstate travel been involved in the design stage.

There is no current project or proposal to extend the Supreme Court although a court building adjacent to the Port Authority building is proposed. Design work began in 1979 and the department used 2 contract draftsmen to assist the project architect. These draftsmen had been engaged in the early self-government period. In line with normal practice, these contract staff were sent interstate to collate information relevant to the design brief. They visited the cities which had recently been constructing court buildings.

The honourable member for Nightcliff also asked me another question relating to the Mandorah ferry. Her question was a private one in that she asked why was the Mandorah ferry able to operate with only one engine from Darwin to Mandorah. On investigation of that particular complaint, I have ascertained that the Harbour-master had issued the licences for the ferry services. He based his decision to allow the Mandorah ferry to operate with one engine on the fact that it did have good communications and back-up services.

The honourable member for Sanderson asked me whether I would contact the federal Minister for Transport, Mr Hunt, in regard to the press release about Qantas and the empty seats that it has between Melbourne and Perth. I had discussions with the new chairman of Qantas who advised me that Darwin was included in the submission to the federal government. A press release had said basically that Qantas had put in a submission only for Perth to the eastern states. The chairman advised me that it was not true and that the submission requested also that Darwin be included. I asked the chairman for a copy of that particular submission and I have not received it to date. I believe I will receive it shortly.

With regard to Northern Airlines, I believe that we should look at the history leading up to the government's decision to select East West Airlines. When Connair was up for sale, there was a list of interested organisations including the 2 major domestic airline companies. At that particular time, East West Airlines came in very strongly because it had proved itself to be a competent airline in the eastern states. Consequently, a decision was taken by the government to allow East West Airlines to take over from the regional airline in the Northern Territory which, at the time, was Connair. We made our decision because of the experience that East West Airlines had shown in its operations.

The honourable member referred to the powers available in the Aviation Act to enforce the memorandum of understanding. Nobody disputes that for one minute. She said that some charter operators were presumably sneaking a little bit of the Northern Airlines market. She asked why the government was not enforcing the Aviation Act. As I said yesterday in my speech on the Address in Reply to the Administrator, we have had teething problems with Northern Airlines and we will have to show a bit of patience.

A couple of months ago, an ad hoc special advisory committee was set up to advise the minister on aviation matters. One of the jobs that this advisory committee had was to give me some recommendations with regard to RPT routes and the general aviation industry which represents the charter industry. A decision was taken to compromise, to allow charter operators to operate over RPT routes which Northern Airlines have held. We now know that that particular decision to allow the charter industry to operate over RPT routes has not been successful. We will have to have another look at it. However, if we had not agreed to at least a trial period of that particular proposal, Catholic missions and various other missions in the remote areas would have been faced with the problem of Northern Airlines being in its infancy stage and not being able to provide an immediate service. We know that the Metroliner has had its problems but the Metroliner, at face value, was the best type of aircraft available at that level for the service to those particular areas. As the

Chief Minister said: 'It still is'. It is the best, but it is still not doing the job that we want it to do.

Nevertheless, the memorandum of understanding does have everything that the honourable member for Sanderson noted. We do give them approval to increase their fares. We do give them approval to alter their schedules. In one particular instance which she referred to just before the election, Northern Airlines said that it would increase its fares. As soon as we heard about it, we reminded it of its obligation under the memorandum of understanding that it was unable to increase its fares unless it had the permission of the Northern Territory government.

Communications have been far better administratively since I became Minister for Transport and Works because I receive the applications, process them and then give the okay to proceed with a fare increase or decide whether to amend a schedule. They started the milk run in early September and there were some problems. You, Sir, were very involved in the early days of the milk run when TAA and Ansett stepped out of the operation. You were on the phone every couple of days to tell me about the lack of services being provided by Northern Airlines. Nevertheless, I believe that, over the last couple of months, the service has improved. MMA have been operating in Western Australia for many years but people in Kununurra still complain about the MMA service. People in Broome still complain about the MMA service. It is the type of service that will always draw some kind of complaint. I believe we have a responsibility to minimise the complaints because...

Mr B. Collins: There have been too many complaints about the MMA services.

Mr DONDAS: Yes, I remember that adjournment debate. Nevertheless, the memorandum of understanding is there. I can remember the honourable member for Arnhem interjecting this morning when I said the Heron aircraft is most suited to this particular type of work for the time being. I believe that Northern Airlines' decision to put the Metroliner on the Alice Springs - Ayers Rock route was sensible because, after all, we want it to become viable. I believe we have a responsibility to make it viable because, as you all remember, Connair was working on a massive subsidy from the federal government, a subsidy which the Northern Territory government has denied and will deny Northern Airlines.

It has a responsibility to its shareholders. Eventually, 49% of that airline will be owned by Northern Territorians. Nevertheless, if it intends to move the aircraft around to suit the service, I believe it should be given that chance. However, the memorandum of understanding clearly states that it cannot provide a service which is less than that provided at the takeover of Connair and the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

The honourable member for Sanderson asked me some questions this morning relating to 4 particular matters. She asked if I could guarantee that today's service would be still in operation after March. I was very sorry that I could not give her that assurance because some flights into remote areas are only carrying 4 and 5 passengers a day and, in some cases, the monthly figures do not reach double figures. How can I give an assurance in this Assembly that that particular service will be continued after a certain date?

I have noted the question raised by the honourable member for Fannie Bay relating to the connector road. I will certainly have the department investigate a particular query that I had in relation to the questions that she raised today.

The Leader of the Opposition asked me a question regarding the specific arrangements made by our government to employ Aboriginal labour in the upgrading of airstrips at remote Top End communities. Prior to a decision to submit to public tender a programmed item for work on Aboriginal land, the government is first obliged to assess whether or not the local Aboriginal community is capable of undertaking the proposed work. Three airstrips have been or are being upgraded at this very moment. Bathurst Island and Hooker Creek airstrips were recently upgraded by private contractors with community approval and Maningrida airstrip is now in the process of being upgraded by a private contractor, also with community approval. The department is now negotiating with the Elcho Island community concerning ways in which that community could be involved with the project.

My government has adopted the attitude that, before any project is undertaken in any Aboriginal community, discussions will take place to ascertain, firstly, whether or not the community is interested in tendering for the work proposed and, secondly, whether or not, if the first does not occur, that community is capable of undertaking a proportion of the proposed project. This procedure has the full support of the communities involved. Tender board approval naturally comes into this. If the community is unable or unwilling to carry out the works, the department will then call public tenders for the contract. The successful tenderer must then establish its acceptance by the community where the work is to take place. To maintain liaison with the community in this regard, tender documents for work on Aboriginal land state that, where work is to be carried out on Aboriginal land, it shall be the responsibility of the contractor to obtain all necessary permits required and pay all costs involved. Obviously, employment of Aboriginal labour by the contractor is a matter for the contractor and the Aboriginal community. I have at least first bite of the cherry with the contractor in obtaining employment for their people in that particular area. If they do not, they do not necessarily have to accept that particular contractor.

Mr B. COLLINS (Arnhem): I have an obligation to this Assembly this afternoon to discuss my attendance at the CPA conference in Zambia and I will certainly do that, but the temptation to address all of my remarks this afternoon to the honourable Minister for Health is almost overwhelming. When you compare the performance of the honourable Minister for Health with that of the rest of the front bench, his performance as a minister is pathetic and that is the nicest thing you can say about it. I have had some experience of the absolute nonsense in relation to correspondence with the minister that the member for Nightcliff pointed out so accurately.

This morning, I asked the honourable Minister for Health for the third time this week if he would give an undertaking in this Assembly that he would make the services available at the Casuarina Hospital and other health centres in Darwin public and cause them to be published in a prominent place in the media. I asked that in my first question 3 days ago. That was the third time this week that question was asked of the minister. I waited for his promised reply in the adjournment this afternoon but the minister failed to address himself to that subject at all. We are still waiting for the minister's undertaking to either do that or not do it. He is the only minister who performs in this pathetic fashion 3 times in one week. He also promised an answer in the adjournment this afternoon yet still nothing was forthcoming.

I said yesterday that Australia has good relations with Zambia. I also said that there certainly are some similarities between the one party participatory democracy in Zambia and our own system of government in the Northern Territory. The Australian government strengthened those ties with Zambia in August this year by establishing a High Commission in Lusaka. The

Acting High Commissioner is Mr Michael Potts. I want to say now that the assistance that that gentleman gave to the Australian delegation in Lusaka was tremendous. I suppose that diplomats are paid to be nice people otherwise they would not be diplomats but Mr Michael Potts certainly bent over backwards to give us all the assistance that he possibly could while we were there. I want to put on record my appreciation of that.

The conference itself was held in the Mulungushi Hall which is adjacent to the Parliament House in Lusaka. The Parliament House is set in beautifully landscaped grounds and, adjacent to the Parliament House, is a conference centre, a most magnificent building, with a huge oval table along the lines of the United Nations with translation and other kinds of sophisticated facilities provided. It also has attached to it a political museum which was certainly a fascinating place. The other night, I was very pleased to attend a CPA function at the Travelodge. I was seated opposite a very well-known gentleman in the Northern Territory, a man who to my great surprise the other day had his name on the front of a piece of communist propaganda, Mr Harry Giese. I must admit that I have long suspected him of being a cupboard communist. That honourable gentleman mentioned a magnificent political museum in South Australia. I am told by people I have spoken to since that it truly is a quite remarkable achievement. Apparently, only 3 people were primarily responsible for that. I would strongly recommend to the Northern Territory government that, should one day this Chamber be abandoned for a better one, perhaps the government could look toward preserving it for precisely that same purpose. Of course, many people may be disappointed because Mr Bulldozer Perron indicates that the bulldozers will go through this one too.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the conference was opened by Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the President, and a very impressive opening ceremony it was. It was a very moving ceremony. The president opened the conference by welcoming delegates. The public galleries in the conference centre were not just on the floor of the centre but around the perimeter of the upstairs area as well. These were packed with Zambians. The president was accompanied by all of the members of the National Assembly and his Cabinet. He stopped in the middle of his opening remarks and said, 'Perhaps I should extend to you a traditional Zambian greeting and I would ask all members of the government to join me'. He then began to sing in a superb baritone voice, a song which I heard many times in Zambia. He was accompanied by the Cabinet and the members of the parliament. I did try to imagine Malcolm Fraser or even our own Chief Minister doing that but my imagination failed me.

The conference commenced on the following Monday. It was split into 11 plenary sessions and panel sessions. Some of the topics which were discussed were very interesting indeed. I spoke on 8 of the 11 occasions that I had an opportunity to speak. The opening plenary session was devoted to current threats to international peace and security and the second plenary session to the Brant Report, a new strategy for improving relations between the north and the south. This is a very interesting document indeed and I would recommend it to all honourable members because it has been published in book form. The third plenary session was on the subject of Africa south of the Sahara. The fourth plenary session was international collaboration in combating drug addiction and trafficking. The fifth plenary session was on the law of the sea. There were 2 panel sessions that same day on race relations within the Commonwealth and the role of parliament in relation to public enterprises. There was a session on the relative advantages and disadvantages of one-party and multi-party parliaments. Considering where we were, that was a very interesting debate indeed. There was a session on parliament and the scrutiny of public finance, another on parliament and the mass media and another on the MP's functions and responsibilities. A special meeting was held within the conference on the proposal to set up a seminar of small parliaments to

discuss the common problems that small parliaments have.

The session of particular interest to me was the one on Africa south of the Sahara. What was very interesting to me about that session was the extreme depth of feeling by the delegates present about apartheid and South Africa. Delegate after delegate spoke on this particular subject. Certainly, the depth of feeling in African countries and in South Africa's neighbours was evident in no small way at that conference. People made no bones about what they thought of apartheid, particularly the African delegates who were present at that conference.

The session on current threats to international peace and security was one in which I took part. It would be fair to say - and a reading of the transcript will bear this out - that the major concern was in relation to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. I do not think that there is any doubt about that. Of course, the current state of affairs in South Africa, with its quite public possession of nuclear capability and nuclear artillery - something that was highlighted recently in the Bulletin - was discussed. In the law of the sea session, much of the discussion centred about the proposal by Japan to dump nuclear waste off the coast of the Mariana Islands. I condemned the attitude of the Australian government of giving tacit approval to it and, to my great surprise, was joined by the delegate from Victoria, a Liberal member; in fact, the gentleman who will be the next regional representative for the CPA. He also said that he was disappointed that Australia had taken this attitude.

The session on race relations within the Commonwealth was a very interesting one. The question of Noonkambah raised its head at the conference. It was with great interest that I found out that, at the time, the Noonkambah incident made the front pages of Zambian newspapers. The Western Australian delegate at the conference, the Government Whip of Western Australia, put one point of view and I put another, thereby giving Zambians an opportunity to witness multi-party governments or systems of government in action.

The session on parliament and the mass media was interesting, particularly in relation to the discussion on the televising of parliamentary proceedings. I put my own view, as all members at CPA conferences do. That is a point that must be made. Delegates go to those conferences as individuals and not to present a government point of view. That particular ground rule makes the conferences very lively and much more interesting than they would otherwise be. I was joined in my particular view, which is one of opposition to televising parliamentary proceedings, by a number of other members from small parliaments. I think it would pose particular problems for us here. I spoke in favour of broadcasting parliamentary proceedings on the ABC.

I found the visit to Africa, my first visit overseas, fascinating. There is no doubt about that. Zambian people themselves are the most extraordinarily friendly people; they are a great race of people. I must also say that, if you happen to be short and fat and have a thing about it, Africa is certainly not the place to go, particularly not Zambia. They are all about 6'2" over there - very big people indeed.

The tours that were conducted in the week prior to the conference were fascinating. I managed to take quite a lot of both movie film and still photographs, particularly of Zambians dancing, which I know will be of the greatest interest to people in my electorate. It was difficult to take photographs there because of the fact that they have just come out of a total war situation with their neighbours to the south. For obvious reasons, people were a little bit wary about having cameras pointed at them. That resulted in

the most unfortunate incident of an ABC journalist being shot in Zambia when he had gone to a war zone against the specific advice of the government. After having a look at Nkomo's house and at the High Court in Lusaka which had been damaged by bombs only the year before, I was quite willing to comply with directives not to point anything at anybody while I was in Lusaka. I was very careful about that.

I would like to go on record as saying that attending this conference has given me a renewed interest in the activities of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. These conferences really are most worth while for parliamentarians not just because they are able to participate in debate on subjects of great importance but because there is an opportunity to develop social relationships with parliamentarians from overseas. For example, I rang the head of the protocol section of the Chief Minister's Department yesterday about a letter from the Clerk of the Sri Lankan Parliament who asked me where we had our Northern Territory badges manufactured because they were of a much better quality than he could obtain. I had given him one at the conference.

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

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that everybody would agree that rice is probably the most important cereal of all so this afternoon I intend to make a serial out of the speech I made yesterday on rice cropping on the Adelaide River. I will continue my remarks on this subject because my time expired in the adjournment debate yesterday.

On Tuesday I asked the minister the following question: 'When has the minister publicly stated that crops other than rice will be grown?' The minister replied that he did not believe that he had made such a statement but said that, if I read page 80 of the Lapidge Report, I would see such a statement there. The relevant section on page 80 says: 'The upper Adelaide River area also has a suitable climate with rainfall in excess of 1,300 millimetres and a growing season of 22 to 24 weeks. Suitable crops are rice, maize and soya beans while peanuts may have some potential'. Mr Speaker, I would say with regard to what Mr Lapidge said: what is new? Everyone knows that these crops have some potential. Some of them have been grown successfully in Adelaide River. I do not think anyone will dispute Mr Lapidge's statement but telling me to read what Lapidge said is no answer at all to the question I asked.

The minister made a bald unqualified statement: 'We would expect 45 farms to come into rice production'. There was no mention of any other crop at all when the bill was presented. The facts are that 2 crops of rice, which must be grown each year if the scheme is to be viable, cannot be grown on the Adelaide River without the expenditure of many millions of dollars. No mention of this fact was made at any time. The minister quoted a figure of \$9.4m for the rice project and my advisers suggest a figure of between \$30m and \$40m. I was pleased to see that, in his reply to what I said yesterday, the minister did concede that his figures were awry and that I was, as he said, straining in the right direction. He further stated that he was happy to say that a lot of recosting would have to be done on the establishment of the farms, that costs had changed and that the very basis on which some of the costs were established had shifted ground. I must say I admire the minister for having the guts to admit this.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when the Ord River scheme was set up by the Commonwealth, the policy was that it would be of mutual benefit to both Western Australia and the Northern Territory. I would ask why do we not take advantage of such a unique opportunity to promote agriculture in the Northern

Territory and, by utilising the water and soil commanded by the Ord scheme, help to make the whole Ord scheme more viable.

As Graham Melville said in his letter to the press yesterday, many Adelaide River farmers believe the whole thing is a fraud. I have had similar feelings for quite some time. We do not want another Tipperary and we do not want another Willeroo. We do want agriculture to grow and to flourish in the Northern Territory and I do not believe that large-scale agricultural schemes are doomed to failure in the Territory just because earlier schemes have failed. They can work up here provided the right area is selected for their establishment and provided that good management techniques are employed in their establishment and operation.

Some of my constituents in the Darwin rural area have contacted me to complain that it is apparently the Liquor Commission's intention to deny them the right to drink outside the Coolalinga Store. Most honourable members will be aware that people are no longer able to drink around Casey's Store at Berrimah. This matter received considerable attention in the local press and some very ill-informed comments were made which inferred that the crowd drinking at Casey's was comprised solely of the great unwashed or at least some lower order of humanity and that nice people really would not have a drink at Casey's. This is mad. The idea is totally incorrect.

I contacted the proprietress of Coolalinga Store who informed me that she had received a telephone call from a Leigh Bateman from the Liquor Commission who had advised her that the commission would be extending the area around the store inside which people are not permitted to drink - if necessary, until it reached the Stuart Highway where it becomes a police matter. The drinkers could then be charged with drinking in a public place. I do not know what the thinking behind this is but at present people are permitted to drink in the vicinity of the store provided they do not drink within a radius of 20 feet.

I think that to prevent local people from having a few convivial drinks with their friends after work at a bush store is quite unfair. The people who have been drinking there are all working people. They are respectable citizens living in a widely scattered area who come to the closest store to buy stores and have a few beers. The nearest hotels are at Berrimah, Humpty Doo and Noonamah and they are quite some distance away. A can of beer at a hotel costs 90¢ whilst a can of beer at Coolalinga Store is 75¢. They save money, meet their friends and are not obliged to drive a long way to hotels.

The residents of the area cannot understand the reasoning behind the Liquor Commissioner's latest decision. Frankly, I cannot either. I would ask the responsible minister to look into this matter. It is quite unfair to local residents of the area to have to travel all the way to a hotel and pay 15c more for a can than they would at the store. If they feel the need for a bit of company with their friends and a few convivial drinks, the natural thing is to go to the store and sit outside. They behave themselves, they are all good types of working people and, to my knowledge, there has never been any trouble out there. I would ask that the minister have a look at it because it just seems strange. I can understand what happened at Casey's because the Berrimah Hotel is almost next door. However, the Coolalinga Store is right out along the track.

Finally, I would like to comment on some remarks made last Tuesday by the Chief Minister in relation to an incident at Hayes Creek and an article I had in the News. He said: 'The article also quoted an incident at Hayes Creek when police had advised that they could not assist because of the 10-kilometre travel restriction. The police did attend the incident at Hayes Creek and at no time

was the police action affected by the travel restriction. Currently, the Police Department is implementing a policy of patrol radius limitations for the purpose of controlling the use of official police vehicles'. Now I do not know where the Chief Minister got his information from but I think that the Chief Minister is a past master at the art of telling a half-truth. He is right; the police did attend, but there was an awful lot of trouble before they did attend.

I will go through the story again. I pulled into Hayes Creek. The publican, Mr Dave Dunstan, was very concerned about a prospector there. He is commonly known as Paddy and he has been in the area for years. He was mentally deranged; he did not know where he was. He was wandering off in the bush. The publican was on his own so he rang the Pine Creek police. As long as I can remember, the Pine Creek police have serviced Hayes Creek and made regular patrols. The Pine Creek police refused point blank to come up. They said that the matter was not serious enough to warrant a visit because they would be in trouble for going up there unless they got prior permission from headquarters. He had rung for 2 days. Finally, he prevailed on Harry Cox at Adelaide River to send a policeman down. I was there at the time. A young policeman arrived. He asked me if I knew this fellow. I said I did. The publican, the policeman and I went over and talked to him. The policeman said: 'I am reluctant to take him. I will have to put him in the back of the paddy-wagon. I will have to take him to Adelaide River, lock him in the cells over night and get an ambulance down from Darwin to take him to the Casuarina Hospital'.

We had a bit of a yarn. The poor fellow was terrified when he saw the paddy-wagon. Although he was pretty sick, he recognised me. I said to the policeman: 'I could take him back for you'. He was delighted. He said: 'It would be good if you could because I could be in trouble for taking him. I do not know what the procedure is. All I can do is take him in the van and lock him in the cells tonight'. As it turned out, I took him back. I had a mate with me and it took 2 of us to look after the fellow.

The police no longer go anywhere near Hayes Creek. I could name a dozen other bush pubs that they do not go near. I think this case was urgent. As a matter of fact, if the Chief Minister wants to make a federal case out of it, I will get statutory declarations from the publican and the other people involved. It is wrong to say that at no time was police action effective. It was. I was there on the spot. I do not know where he got his information from but it is not strictly correct. I think the Chief Minister is a past master at the art of telling half-truths.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsey): I must side with the honourable member for Victoria River. If an elected representative of the people of the Northern Territory requests the police to come to anything like that, the police should automatically obey. Whether the honourable member is on the opposition or not, he is part of the Northern Territory parliament.

Mr Deputy Speaker, last Tuesday I gave all members a copy of the Communist Party of Australia's 'Full Human Rights for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders' of June 1967. The honourable member for Victoria River said: 'I was fascinated by the signature on the top right hand corner. It is God's gift to the Aboriginal race, one Harry Christian Giese. It is the kind of garbage that I would expect Harry Giese to disseminate. I worked for him for many years. I worked for him for more years than I would care to remember'.

The fact is that, whether Harry Giese distributed this or not, it is authentic. It came from the Communist Party; Harry Giese did not write it. If you refer to it, you will see a lot of interesting facts because the Communists are not always wrong. You can see how right they are in Afghanistan. It says on

page 1: 'The lack of grain crops suitable for agriculture and of native animals suitable for domestication in Australia prevented the development of the pastoral and agricultural pursuits which form the basis for economic advance in other continents'. This is quite right. Too often we find that Australia before the white man came is represented as a land of milk and honey. The facts were that its original people were facing extinction. They could not hack the pace in Australia as it was.

If you refer to what some of the early explorers such as Cook, La Perouse and Van Dieman said about the people and about the land they saw, you will see that they were scathingly critical of not only the Aborigines but Australia itself. 'This desolate, rocky place', they called it. The settlers came to a place which was not only underdeveloped but completely undeveloped. It is fashionable these days to say that the early settlers decimated the Aborigines. That is quite true but I did not and the Aborigines who were killed are naturally not here now. I feel that we have no responsibility for what happened in the past because it was done by people we did not know and it was done to people we did not know and to people whom the present day Aboriginal does not know. I think we are making a stupid fuss over what happened in the past. There have been plenty of massacres and they were not all in Australia. We should certainly take a share of the blame for what our ancestors did, but I take no personal blame because I did not do it. I have never employed anyone whom I have not paid and I have tried to help all I could.

When you read what most of the media says and what some of these fashionable lobbies say, you are inclined to think that Australia was a land of milk and honey. It was not; it was a much tougher place than it is now. We must remember that, while we did cause all this trouble, while we did decimate the Aborigines, we also brought them the advantages of civilization. We brought them mosquito nets. If anyone has been out in the mosquito country without a mosquito net, I think he would remember those nights. We brought them flour, tea, sugar and tobacco, if you can call tobacco an advantage. They did not have cattle, horses, pigs, goats or sheep. There was not very much that they did have. They were fighting a losing battle. Australia was a very tough place 200 years ago.

On page 2, it states: 'The estimated Aboriginal population declined in this period from 300,000 to 200,000'. That could be so but to try to sheet the blame home to this generation is wrong and we are doing it in the wrong way. What is occurring now is a divisive attitude and discrimination. In the uranium province people work hard while their neighbour becomes unbelievably rich merely because he is a different colour. The land rights legislation is allowing Aboriginal people to buy cattle stations and other places with the taxpayers' money and then to turn them into Aboriginal land. I forecast, and I am not necessarily original in this, that this will become a black state. Do we want it? Do we want Australia to be split into all these places or do we want to become one? That is the last thing we want but that is what we are getting from this legislation conceived by the Communist Party, born by the Labor Party, fostered by Fraser and adopted by the Northern Territory. It is a forced adoption, I am afraid. This is what we have. I do not know whether people, apart from me, feel the same or if their constituents feel the same but my people in Katherine are not very happy and that includes the Aboriginal people.

I have spoken to many oldtimers lately. When I was younger, the Aborigines did not get much money and beef was not worth much either. A good homestead had one kerosene fridge and an ant-bed floor but everyone was happy. We are not happy now. Apart from the corroborees in Katherine that are put on by Woody Martin and his mob, I have not heard a corroboree for 15 years.

Every night at Moroak you used to have to say to them, 'Come on fellows, we have to get a bit of sleep; we have to get up early for the horses'. You do not hear it now. All you hear and see are the fights and the trouble. Do not tell me we are not doing our best to look after them.

I put it to you people that this trouble is caused by Canberra. Certainly, they are trying to do their best. I remember Gordon Bryant, the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the man with a smile like a twisted sandshoe. He was doing his best. No one could deny that, but he was on the wrong track. He thought if you threw in a few million dollars that would solve the problem, but it did not. Jim Cavanagh tried.

Mr B. Collins: What sort of smile did he have?

Mr MacFARLANE: He did not smile. He was very effective; he was a left-winger. Johnston was not there long enough; I did not get to know him. None of the ministers have been on the right track because the advice was coming from Canberra yet here is where the action is.

I would like all members of the Assembly to come to Katherine - it might be cleaned up now; I believe we have a litter committee - to see what I see every day. It is not what somebody tells me; it is what I see and what I know. That is why I despair sitting up there in the Chair all the time; I think it is not where I should have been. And I hope members will be kind.

I have a report commissioned by the Honourable R.I. Viner: 'The Impact of Mining Royalties on Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory 1977'. It is available from DAA. The summary reads:

111. The impact of mining royalties is considered on the basis of the present level of \$3m per annum with 26,000 Aboriginals in the Northern Territory.

112. An estimated level of \$50m per annum for 52,000 Aboriginals in the Northern Territory in 20 years time at the end of the century.

113. The possibility that the ownership of all presently known uranium reserves in the Northern Territory will revert to its residents by the end of the century to provide profits before tax in excess of \$900m in 1974 prices when total resident income of the Northern Territory was \$300m with over 10% of this being provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Who should be getting this if this is Australia Fair first? One group of Australians? We talk about tax frauds yet this is being permitted. The legislation allows this kind of thing.

121. Impact on Aboriginals. The substantial discretionary revenue which will accrue to Aboriginals without the checks and balances of accountability even to their own people will seriously jeopardise their traditional life in undesirable ways to themselves and the community at large.

122. In the longer term, the discretionary revenues provide a basis for Northern Territory Aboriginals to obtain economic self-sufficiency and self-determination to maintain their culture yet develop a new society without any need for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and little need for other government services.

123. *The distribution of mining royalties and rents through the new institutions created in the Northern Territory especially for Aborigines will rapidly force the introduction of Aboriginal political and economical self-management on a pan-Territorial basis for which they have currently little interest, understanding or preparation.*

124. *The receipt of mining revenue by Aborigines will provide the basis for building a cultural umbrella to shield not only affected areas such as Oenpelli, Yirrkala and Groote Eylandt from the intrusion of white society but all Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.*

There is a fair bit more to read but the point I am trying to make is that, if Australia is not to become an Aboriginal state, what will these people do with the \$900m if they do not buy all the cattle stations in the Northern Territory?

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

Mr ISAACS (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, a short while ago, the member for Nightcliff was discussing a matter in this adjournment debate and, unfortunately, had to stop because of her voice. We all know that she has been ill for the last couple of days. She has asked me to thank honourable members for agreeing to suspend Standing Orders to enable her to continue her remarks later on in this adjournment but, unfortunately, she will be unable to take advantage of that resolution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to comment on the remarks which the member for Elsey has just made. I am delighted to see a bit of a running debate on the matter of race relations. Quite contrary to the views of the Chief Minister and the member for Elsey, it is not my intention to stifle debate; I am eager for it. I do not think anything I have said in this Assembly or at any other time could possibly be construed - unless you have got a nasty, twisted mind - that I would like to stop people from having freedom of expression.

The member for Elsey said in his contribution to this adjournment debate that we - and I presume that he means modern day 1980 Australians - have no responsibility for what happened in the past - he was referring to previous treatment of Aboriginal people in days gone by - and that we are making a stupid fuss. I would like to discuss that and other matters because I disagree completely with that point of view. We do have a responsibility - when I say 'we', I mean Australian society as it exists now - for what we have done to Aboriginal people over the years.

He spoke about massacres. I do not hold him responsible for them. It would be absurd to do that. In exactly the same way, I hold no person alive today responsible for those massacres unless they were personally involved. That is common sense. But I do believe that, as a community, we have a responsibility for what our predecessors have done to Aboriginal people. It is not so many years ago that white people did massacre black people. It is not so long ago that the Coniston massacres took place.

Mr Perron: Did they not massacre white people as well?

Mr ISAACS: No, the Coniston massacres were white people killing black people.

I was at Wattie Creek recently and the people there told me of a massacre in the late 1930s so it is not so long ago that white people did shoot black

people. I am not passing judgment at this stage - simply stating a few facts. A deliberate policy of the Liberal government - it may even have been a policy of the Labor government in the late 1940s - in the late 1950s was to gather Aborigines together in easily locatable settlements and missions. We have examples all over the Northern Territory of different clans of Aboriginal people brought together because it was easier to provide services to them; to give them food, water, sewerage and so on. It was done with the best of intentions.

We now see that the Aboriginal people would rather be located in areas of their own choice. At times, you have the mixing of groups that do not particularly get on with one another and sometimes traditional enemies are lumped together. You see these people, I think rightly, seeking to go to those areas which they regard as their traditional country. Notwithstanding the fact that it is more difficult to provide them with educational services, health services and the benefits of civilisation, as the member for Elsey put it, I think we all support the outstation movement - the desire of Aboriginal people to go to their traditional country. It is not so long ago that decisions were taken by non-Aboriginal people with regard to Aborigines although, as I say, with the best intentions.

As a society, I believe we have a responsibility for what was done and we should seek to overcome it where possible. That is why, where we perceive a group of people - whether they are Aboriginal people, poor people, pastoralists or small businessmen - where we see that it is appropriate that taxpayers' money - a dreadful term - can assist those people then, in the interests of ensuring that the whole community has a proper and viable life, we determine that specific amounts of taxpayers' money will be used.

I wholeheartedly support money being given to pastoralists in times of trouble, in times of drought. I wholeheartedly support a program by the Northern Territory Development Corporation to assist small local Territory businesses to get on their feet and become viable. Give them the necessary money so that they can get cracking in the interests of the Northern Territory. In exactly the same way, I support taxpayers' money being used on behalf of the Aboriginal people, if it is deemed by them to be in their interests, to ensure that they can live a lifestyle in which they are happy and where they are contributing also to the community. I do not see that as discrimination. It is the sort of direct government policy which applied right across the board. We welcome new people to Australia. We are only too happy to provide them with necessary assistance - short-term loans, cheaper rates than they would get elsewhere to establish themselves etc. We provide social services to those people in need again on exactly the same basis. I believe it is important too that we are able to give Aboriginal people the necessary financial backing where it is shown that such backing will improve their position.

When I see the cattle stations which the member for Elsey spoke about which have been purchased on behalf of Aboriginal people - Willowra, Utopia and so on - where that money is being spent on their behalf, it has been money very well spent indeed. The member for Stuart says that he was one of the people involved in getting money for Willowra. It means that those people out at Willowra have a sense of purpose on their own terms. They are able to run that cattle station extremely well indeed. That is where money is being spent. I do not know whether the member for Elsey objects to purchasing a cattle station for Aborigines. He certainly seems to object to taxpayers' money being spent. That money has been used very effectively by the Aboriginal people themselves.

We all know that policies which are drawn up by non-Aboriginal people have

significant effects on Aboriginal people. Sometimes we attempt to implement policies which we know are requested by Aboriginal people. The one which the member for Elsey spoke about on Tuesday drew a bit of flak from myself. The matter which the member for Fannie Bay spoke about today is a case in point; that is, some Aboriginal communities have a desire to have restrictions or otherwise on the sale and consumption of alcohol in their community. I believe the member for Fannie Bay made a most constructive contribution to that continuing debate. Unfortunately, it was in stark contrast to the contributions that I have read from the member for Elsey, especially as they appear in the Katherine Advertiser. I do not want to read them out but his article appalled me. I do not mind saying that; he does not mind me saying that. There is nothing constructive about making comments about hosing out unwanted people from public toilets and so on. That does not help.

We know that the establishment of dry areas does create a problem in the major towns. The member for Fannie Bay knows that probably better than most because her electorate - as does mine - happens to have a number of vacant lots. Aboriginal people, by custom, have sought those blocks out near the business areas. As the member for Fannie Bay said: 'It is a problem not just to the residents but it is a problem to the people themselves because they are living in conditions that are unhygienic and ought to be improved'.

We make those decisions, which we believe are in the interests of Aboriginal people, because it originates from them. It does create problems. It seems to me that, rather than hose it out, we have to come to grips with the reality of those problems. Certainly, it is a question of land being made available so that Aboriginal people who come in to town for whatever reason are able to be accommodated in a way which is not detrimental to their health or to other people. It is true that liquor in the Aboriginal way of life has certainly created problems. There is no question about that. I take exception to the member for Elsey's comments about my attitudes to it. All I said was that Aborigines and alcohol are not problems unique to the Territory. I believe, as he does - or at least as I thought he did - that alcohol amongst Aboriginal people is a very serious problem indeed. It is especially so when we comply with their requests for dry areas because they come into town. They have no accommodation and nothing very much else to do.

I was surprised when I was reading through the Liquor Commission's report which has just been tabled in the Assembly today to read what the member for Elsey had to say with regard to the Roper Bar store. I can only give you what the Liquor Commission reports the member to have said. I will read from the decision of the Commission:

Another witness called by the applicant, Mr Les MacFarlane MLA, testified to the inconvenience he had suffered through not being able to obtain liquor at Roper Bar. He said that it was an unreasonable imposition on travellers to require them to carry liquor long distances over rough roads since it was difficult to keep it chilled and, in the case of beer, was shaken up thoroughly by the journey.

Mr MacFarlane acknowledged the serious problems posed by liquor to Aboriginal people in the area but said that there were more important interests to be considered.

Just to break in there, I hope that he was not inferring that it was more important for a tourist to be able to keep a cold beer and make sure his beer was not jostled by a journey.

He also said that the most effective answer to these problems lay in

the declaration of a restricted area coupled with action to prevent the sale of liquor to Aborigines at outlets like Roper Bar. Mr MacFarlane argued that such action, even if apparently discriminatory, would be in the interests of local Aboriginal people.

Mr Speaker, I can applaud some of the sentiments there. I agree that at times it is appropriate to take discriminatory action. But the whole argument from the member for Elsey is that you cannot take discriminatory action. We know that it can be appropriate at times and, in the case of dry areas, it seems to me that we have to recognise that one of the patently obvious outcomes of the creation of dry areas is that those Aborigines who do wish to drink will come into town. That being so, we have to ensure - whether it is Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Elliott or Alice Springs - that appropriate land is made available.

Mr Robertson: Nhulunbuy does not exist, does it?

Mr ISAACS: Well, the member refers to Nhulunbuy. It is not such a great problem there as the minister would well know. Where that does happen, land with appropriate services must be made available to ensure the effectiveness of our policies which were implemented in response to the desires of Aboriginal people.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Alice Springs): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 3 matters which I would like to raise this afternoon. The first matter has to do with the Law Reform Commission's discussion papers Nos 13 and 14 which are about privacy and intrusions, and privacy and personal information. Apparently this inquiry has been going on for something like 4 years. It was only brought to my attention due to some strong feeling about the issue of children's privacy. There was a fair bit of information in the local press and over the radio about it. There are other aspects of these papers which are vitally important to everyone in the Territory and in Australia. When one considers that satellite surveillance can enable one to count the bricks in the courtyard of Red Square or tell the brand of cigarette being smoked by someone in the White House and computers have such a high capacity to store information, then our privacy is under considerable threat. These papers are about that and I would commend them to honourable members. Submissions may be sent to Mr Justice Kirby before the end of December.

The second point relates to COGSO. I am a member of the Ross Park Primary School Committee. We had a meeting the other night and the president presented about 8 or 9 pages of material from COGSO. They wanted us to study the material thoroughly and convey our feelings by means of a representative who will be coming up to Darwin. Since the president had only received it in the post that particular afternoon, he was not au fait with it by any means. The matter was of considerable depth yet there was only one copy. The rest of us did not have a chance to read it; we just had to take the president's word about what it contained. I commented that there was no way in which we could adequately consider the matter COGSO wanted us to deal with. I do not know whether this is an isolated incident. I know similar things have happened at Ross Park before. I suspect it may be what happens in other schools. It may be that COGSO, instead of truly representing the councils of all of the schools in the Territory, may end up becoming just an executive and make the majority of decisions. That body is supposed to represent all school councils. It must disseminate its information in such a way that it can be properly discussed.

There was an article in yesterday's Australian which caught my eye. I think it is particularly relevant to education in the Territory. It relates to secondary education, particularly to mathematics, and it has grave

implications for any university which we may attempt to establish. At the risk of boring people a little, there are certain things that I would like to read out from this article. It is called: 'A Step in the Wrong Direction'. The word 'step' there has a particular meaning. It stands for 'Secondary Tertiary Education Planning'. The article reads:

The future of commerce and industry is directly threatened by a generation of high school students virtually without mathematical skills. This is the conclusion of a massive report from high school graduates about to be published in Victoria. While the report is being kept under wraps until 27 November, the Australian has exclusively learned that the findings contained in the 3-inch-thick volumes have shocked and dismayed executives of some of the biggest companies in the nation as well as the Monash University scientists who supervised its compilation. The report is the second to be compiled under the title 'STEP'. 'STEP' stands for 'Secondary Tertiary Education Planning'. The first report, sponsored by Shell Australia, investigated standards of education in Victorian high schools in the period 1975-77. The second STEP report covers 1976-79 and has confirmed the disastrous findings of the first report.

The Australian has learned that among these are: the flight from mathematics by schoolchildren begins in the 11 to 12 age group when they are being encouraged by humanities orientated teachers to take soft option subjects. Tens of thousands of primary school-children are being taught by teachers who are themselves total mathematics dropouts. Thousands of unqualified high school students are being admitted to universities and colleges of advanced education purely because those institutions want names on rolls to secure government funding.

One of the findings that has stunned executives involved is the fact that better-qualified Asian students are rapidly taking the place of Australians in the engineering faculties of the nation. The problem is that these young Australian-educated Asian engineers must take their qualifications home to Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand or any of the countries sending students here. 'I just hope we can get some of them to come back here before our own engineering industry collapses for want of trained people', one executive attempted to joke this week.

According to the STEP report, the problem confronting the science faculties of the universities and colleges is that the current student intake is probably the worst qualified in the history of tertiary education in Australia. 60% of girls presenting themselves for tertiary education have no mathematics at all. Only 8% of girls have passed in 2 mathematics subjects while the figure for boys is 25%. Another shock statistic relating to the girls is that the 60% who have no mathematics subjects at all also have no language subjects. This means that the best they can hope for is admission to the various commerce faculties not presently insisting on mathematics or a language. Commerce faculties have become increasingly popular in Victoria and other states have cut back hard on student teacher intakes. The number of young women in commerce faculties jumped from 26% to 36% in 4 years. The Australian understands the clear message in the final STEP report is that commerce degrees not including mathematics are not acceptable to employers. In short, those undertaking such courses as yet another soft option are wasting their time and taxpayers' money.

The Australian understands the STEP report strongly makes the point that, when primary school teachers persuade students as young as 11 to opt out of mathematics and science subjects, those students are then totally disadvantaged for life. Teacher union critics of the STEP report are expected to attack it on the ground confined to Victorian high schools. The experts involved in the compilation of the report are quite certain that it tells a story for all of Australia. In fact, the business people involved with all the companies with natural ramifications state that what the report has done is confirm the worst possible fears of commerce and industry about what has been going on in schools: a teacher-inspired flight from mathematics and anything else thought to be too hard. As one commentator noted this week, 'There is a flight from mathematics and other similar supposedly regular subjects into subjects which may be easier to pass but which effectively will not allow any career opportunities after they have completed their tertiary education'.

Mr Speaker, I do not believe that we have reached the stage where we are encouraging new high school students not to take up any mathematics. God forbid that we do. However, over the years, there has definitely been less time spent on mathematics and there has been less effort expended towards encouraging students. Mathematics is not an easy subject. A great deal of effort has to be put in by the teacher and by the students and encouragement is needed. I have noted from personal experience that certain staff have taught at a rapid rate when they had problems. They said that they did so because maths is not applicable to everybody and they were only really interested in those who had latent talent. I challenge this. I have taught mathematics for a considerable time at higher levels. I believe that there are many people who have definitely no aptitude for mathematics but they can be taught it.

One particular student comes to mind. She was of Italian descent. I remember the first discussion I ever had with her. She was helping to sell vegetables at the fruit barrow at the market down by the Todd. She said that she could not do mathematics. Years later, I had the pleasure - and it was a real pleasure - to teach that student mathematics for 2 years and she was encouraged to go on. She is now finishing off her law degree at the University of Western Australia.

I deplore the attitude which says, 'If they do not have the aptitude, then do not bother'. I know that many students who have suffered under my mathematics teaching have had the ability to go on and have had their options kept open. If we look after our mathematics education in the Territory and ensure that it does go well, maybe our university will have the jump on some of the established universities if this report is at all true.

I wish to make one last point relating to the core curriculum which is being introduced. The principle sounds pretty good. I have been aware of the practice behind it and I will not be saying anything new to the Minister for Education because he has heard my views on it before. I have been worried. The core curriculum is designed to ensure a minimum standard. It does nothing to encourage excellence yet that is what we need in education.

The other day, I was talking with a former colleague who happens to be the acting principal of the school at which I taught. He has given me his blessing to mention this in the Assembly. He said that he has studied this core curriculum and, in his estimation, it is nothing more than what he would have expected an average student to have covered by the time he leaves grade 7.

Mr Robertson: That is precisely what it is.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: The core curriculum, as I understand it, is to use half of the time of the first 3 years of high school for the average student to be tested to 85% efficiency etc. If it has already been achieved by the average student in grade 7, then this is something of great concern to me. If he is wrong, I would be delighted. However, I have a great respect for his ability. He is a man of considerable experience and I think this matter should be investigated. It is not encouraging excellence yet that is what we will need if we are going to run a university.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, firstly, on behalf of the government, since this will be the last time I will have an opportunity to speak in this Assembly before Christmas, I would like to wish the staff of the Assembly, all honourable members and yourself a happy and festive Christmas and all the compliments of the season. I can assure you that we will do our best to endeavour to see that it will be a prosperous New Year in 1981.

I feel that we should pay some tribute to the staff of the Assembly who have performed in their usual impeccable way throughout the year and have managed very well under certainly not the best of conditions here. I would also like to place on record our thanks to the Hansard staff who have been getting Hansards up very promptly these days. All in all, I do not think - not that I have had experience elsewhere - that one could expect a parliament to run better than this one does.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate into Hansard the report of my overseas visit rather than perhaps detain members here by reading out 25 or 30 pages. I do not wish to table it because it is not the report of a trade mission or anything like that.

Leave granted.

OVERSEAS VISIT OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1980

REPORT BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, THE HONOURABLE PAUL EVERINGHAM

Honourable members will be aware that I recently visited a number of overseas countries during a four-week tour focussing primarily on energy matters. The trip was largely in response to an outstanding invitation from the UK government to visit Britain as a guest of the British government. I took the opportunity provided by this trip to explore matters of interest in a number of other countries both on the way to the UK and on the way home. During the trip, I was accompanied by my wife, the Director of Policy and Planning in my Department, my press secretary and my personal assistant.

GREECE - KALYMNOS

The first port of call was the Greek island of Kalymnos. Honourable members will be aware that a very significant proportion of Darwin's Greek community comes from the island of Kalymnos and I was pleased to be able to accept an invitation from the Kalymnian community to visit the island. I want to express my very sincere gratitude to the people of Kalymnos - both those here in Darwin and those in Kalymnos - for the hospitality we received during our stay. The whole party was quite overwhelmed by the hospitality of the people and by the beauty of the island. Clearly, a great deal of effort had been put into ensuring that our visit was an enjoyable one.

On our arrival at the island, we were met by a crowd of about 2,000 people, including the Mayor and the Prefect of the island. It was the most enthusiastic reception that I have ever received. In welcoming us to the island, the Mayor spoke of a special bond between Kalymnos and the Northern Territory. During our two days in Kalymnos, we met with local officials, visited hospitals, orphanages and churches and saw much of the island including its scenic, cultural and religious points of interest. The highlight of our visit was the official opening of Darwin Street in the city and I was greatly honoured to be able to perform this ceremony. I look forward to reciprocating in an appropriate way with a project here in the Northern Territory.

During a civic reception in the Town Hall I was made an honorary citizen of Kalymnos - an honour which I was pleased to accept on behalf of all Territorians.

The two days on Kalymnos gave me a better appreciation of the background and values of the Greek community and served to consolidate the very close ties between Kalymnos and the Northern Territory. My thanks go particularly to the members of the Kalymnian community here in Darwin for the time and effort taken to prepare for our visit. I can assure them that the time spent on Kalymnos is something which all members of the party will long remember.

UNITED KINGDOM

From Greece, we travelled to the United Kingdom to undertake the program prepared for me by the United Kingdom Central Office of Information. The theme of the visit was energy, and I was anxious to obtain a first-hand picture of the United Kingdom experience with offshore oil and gas, and with nuclear energy. During my stay in the United Kingdom, I also had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat and I attended a luncheon given by Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom at which leading figures in United Kingdom commerce and industry were present. I also visited the University of Cambridge and inspected the diaries of Samuel Pepys, credited with being the founder of the English Civil Service, as well as visiting several of the university colleges, including King's College and Trinity College.

In Scotland, I also inspected the operations of a large fish-processing company in Aberdeen. Aberdeen is a major world fishing port and the company we visited, Allan and Dey, exports frozen and smoked fish products all over the world.

My visit to the North Sea Oil Field was certainly one of the highlights of the trip. I flew by helicopter to British Petroleum's Forties Field and landed on the Forties Charlie Oil Rig. Regrettably, the weather proved to be somewhat difficult and our visit was curtailed. However, seeing the North Sea operations in gale force wind and dense fog conditions helped to confirm the clear message we had been given that the technology of offshore oil and gas exploration and recovery is highly advanced and certainly adequate to meet the challenges of Northern Territory waters. The Forties Field is at present the largest field in production and pumps ashore something like 500,000 barrels of oil a day, as well as significant amounts

of gas. The field is a complex of four oil rigs supported by a permanently anchored tender ship. The scale of the operation is extremely impressive. The documents to be placed in the Assembly library give the various statistical details.

Exploration in the North Sea is moving progressively into deeper water and even larger fields than the Forties Field are contemplated further to the north. Clearly British skills and technology are very much to the fore in offshore oil and gas exploitation. The British can probably now regard themselves as world leaders in this industry.

Our subsequent visit to the nuclear plant at Windscale in north-west England proved an interesting contrast to the North Sea oil development. Windscale is essentially a reprocessing plant for nuclear fuel. It is located adjacent to Calder Hall, the world's first commercial nuclear electricity generating plant. Calder Hall has been operating very successfully for over 20 years. My main interest was in the reprocessing and waste disposal aspects of nuclear power. I was able to have in-depth discussions with officials of British Nuclear Fuels Limited, the operators of the Windscale plant, as well as to inspect all stages of reprocessing and waste disposal operations.

It is clear that a great deal of nonsense is talked and ignorance perpetuated about nuclear power. The so-called problems of waste disposal are problems of emotion rather than reason. The amounts of actual waste products after the reprocessing of 20 years irradiated fuel in the UK would fit within an average suburban house. Of the total irradiated fuel received by the Windscale plant, actual waste amounts to only 0.3%. Moreover, the development of the vitrification or glassification process for the storage of waste means that storage can be undertaken in a totally safe and totally effective manner, with options for eventual storage of the glass cubes under the ground in suitable rock formations, on the seabed or under the seabed.

The United Kingdom nuclear power generation program has been proceeding now for over 20 years. Nuclear power now accounts for about 14% of Britain's total electricity generation. The British government has recently announced a 10-year program to build 10 more nuclear power-stations. This program will bring the proportion of nuclear power in the national grid up to 20%.

I was impressed with the fact that nuclear energy is really quite conventional in the United Kingdom and is generally accepted in that country. I was also impressed by the technology and economics of reprocessing nuclear fuel and by the minuscule scale of the waste disposal problem. The development of techniques for the vitrification of waste has produced a situation where disposal of nuclear waste is much less of a problem than the disposal of other forms of chemical waste.

Our return to London from Windscale took us through the Lakes District of Cumbria where we were fortunate to inspect the poet Wordsworth's house overlooking Grassmere before going on to the ancient City of York. The Lakes District is, of course, one of England's best known scenic areas and it is impossible not to be impressed by its beauty. While in York, we visited the Minster, the old part of the City, the National Railway Museum and paid a fleeting visit to the Yorkshire village of Everingham a few miles from York. Our return to London

from York was via one of Britain's new 125 mph high speed trains. We were able to follow up our field visits with discussions in London with senior officers of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Agency. We were told of the program for nuclear power development in the United Kingdom and given a picture of some of the recent developments in nuclear energy in other countries.

Other highlights of our stay in the United Kingdom included a visit to the Houses of Parliament during which we were able to sit in on the Prime Minister's question time in the House of Commons. We also visited Westminster Abbey where we met with the Dean and Chapter of the Abbey and saw something of the restoration work which is being done. I also had the opportunity to address the Royal Commonwealth Society on the situation and prospects of the Northern Territory. This particular occasion was very well attended and I was impressed by the extent of interest shown in the Territory.

FRANCE

Our visit to France also focussed on energy matters. France is the country most committed to nuclear energy and has targeted to produce 50% of its electricity from nuclear sources by 1985. This means a program of commissioning one new 900 MW reactor every two months - and this program is being achieved. Officials of the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) were able to explain to us the latest French thinking on nuclear power and outlined some of the development techniques for uranium enrichment. French nuclear technology is particularly advanced in two areas of interest to the Northern Territory - the development of small nuclear reactors and the disposal of waste products.

The French have developed small scale reactors of 100-300 MW size and are currently examining the possibility of using these for certain special purposes such as the heating of some urban areas. In the European context, small-scale reactors will not normally be economic, although figures provided to us suggest that the costs would not be far out of line with the current costs of producing electricity in the Northern Territory.

In the area of waste disposal, the French have developed and refined the vitrification process and are now confident that the waste disposal problems have been completely overcome. France has constructed a vitrification plant at Marcoule and has begun the process of vitrifying nuclear waste. The vitrified waste will be subject to constant inspection for up to 30 years as part of the comprehensive safety regulations. One point of particular importance in any discussion concerning the disposal of nuclear waste is that radioactive wastes have a limited life. Over time their radioactivity breaks down and decays away. The half-life of the radioactivity is such that within 20 years the level of radioactivity in nuclear waste from nuclear reactors is 90% dissipated. This process continues and, over time, the radioactivity completely disappears. This is in sharp contrast to certain non-nuclear industrial wastes - such as those from lead - which may be toxic and dangerous but which do not have a half-life and do not break down.

It is clear that the French are firmly committed to the generation of power by nuclear means. They are completely satisfied, on the basis of more than 20 years experience, that it is safe, clean and economic. For example, at the present time, the cost of generating

power in France by nuclear means is approximately half the cost of coal-fired electricity and considerably less than half the cost of oil-fired electricity. The energy authorities are very interested in uranium mining developments in Australia and are in regular and close contact with the Australian authorities, including the Uranium Enrichment Group of Australia.

Our visit to France was greatly facilitated by the excellent arrangements made for us by the French Electricity Authority (EDF) and CEA. These arrangements enabled us to see more than we could otherwise have hoped to accomplish in just 2½ days.

We inspected the tidal power-station at La Rance in Brittany. This station, of 240 MW capacity, is probably the most advanced of its kind in the world. It has been operating for 15 years during which time there have been virtually no operational problems. The French are currently investigating the possibility of constructing a very large barrage to enclose a vast tidal area around Mont St Michel. If constructed, the generating capacity which could be developed would be something like 6,000 MW. The tidal rise and fall in this part of France is extremely high - in fact greater than around Darwin.

Tidal power offers interesting possibilities, although it is unlikely to be satisfactory as a primary source of power supply. Currently, the cost of generating power from La Rance is comparable to the cost of nuclear power in France, although it would be considerably higher given investment costs at current values. Another drawback is the restricted operating hours.

While in northern France we paid a brief visit to the famous monastery of Mont St Michel and were taken on a tour of the abbey.

In the South of France, we were the guests of CEA and visited the nuclear establishments in the Tricastin area. We inspected the uranium enrichment facilities of Eurodif - a consortium of European Nuclear Agencies. This huge plant enriches natural uranium using the process of gaseous diffusion. We were fortunate enough to be able to inspect part of the complex under construction and hence were able to see in considerable detail the various phases of the operation. The scale of uranium enrichment in France is huge. This one plant covers 250 hectares and will cost F9.5 billion (\$A1.8 billion) to build.

Associated with the enrichment plant is a large pressurised water reactor (PWR) nuclear power-station. This power-station is to have four 900 MW reactors of which two are currently in operation. The other two reactors will be commissioned by mid-1981. Uranium enrichment by gaseous diffusion is extremely energy intensive and it is anticipated that the enrichment plant will require virtually all of the power from the adjacent nuclear station when fully operational.

The French commitment to the enrichment process is understandable given the basic economics. France has virtually no coal, oil or gas and hence is dependent on nuclear energy. The cost of nuclear power in France is F13.5c (A2.6c) per kilowatt hour of which the fuel cost is F4.3c. 40% of the fuel cost - i.e. approximately F2c per kilowatt hour is the cost of enrichment. Enrichment adds greatly to the energy which can be produced from uranium. Enriched uranium produces

about 30 times the amount of power that the enrichment process consumes. The Tricastin plant, when fully operational, would be able to provide enriched fuel which could produce more than twice the total currently installed electricity capacity in France.

The French program for nuclear power development is a very ambitious one. This year about 21% of France's electricity production will be from nuclear sources. By 1985, the proportion will be up to 55% and, by 1990, 73%. By 1986, France plans to have thirty four 900 MW nuclear reactors and, by 1990, twenty two 1300 MW nuclear reactors. In addition to this, France is also proceeding with the development of breeder reactors. A 250 MW breeder reactor has been in operation since 1973 and the target is for 15% of French nuclear power to be produced from breeder reactors by the year 2,000. Again on the matter of waste disposal, the technology to handle waste from breeder reactors is no more difficult than the handling of wastes from conventional reactors. Waste disposal is a very minor aspect of the process.

ISRAEL

Our stay in Israel was regrettably very short, although we were able to cover quite a deal of ground. The difficult physical and economic circumstances of Israel have placed a premium on the ingenuity and inventiveness of the people. In many respects, the Israeli response to these problems is of great interest to the Northern Territory.

We were particularly interested to assess what Israel was doing in the area of solar energy. Israel is currently almost entirely dependent on imported oil for electricity generation. Clearly this is an untenable situation, and coal-fired power-stations are currently being developed. In addition, Israel is actively looking at all of the alternative energy possibilities. Israel leads the world in the development of certain types of solar energy, in particular the use of solar ponds. We visited the Ormat Plant near Tel Aviv and saw various applications of a patented energy converter which uses chemical vapour to produce electricity. Most of our discussions focussed on the possible applications of this technology to solar generation of heat as a source for the Ormat converter. The Ormat Company has developed solar pond technology and has a solar pond in operation adjacent to the Dead Sea. While the technology is still rather new, it is nonetheless very promising in its potential application to some of the communities in the Northern Territory. The system utilises saline water which can collect and store heat - this heat being used to produce the chemical vapour which operates the turbine. The technology is fairly well established for a 150 KW generator and work is currently in train to extend this to a 5 MW plant. The company is spending \$20 m on this project and expects it to be fully developed within four years. The Ormat Company is also engaged in experimental work in southern California for the development of solar ponds with a 50 MW capacity. A feasibility study for this project has been completed.

In Israel expectations are high for solar ponds as a means of producing electricity. The Ormat Company spoke of plans to use the Dead Sea as a solar pond to produce 2,000 MW within ten years. (This is currently more than the total installed electricity capacity in Israel). In subsequent discussions with Israeli officials, these plans were confirmed. The government is committed

to this program. The government officials also explained that the the objective of the program in California is to reach a capacity of 600 MW within the next five years through a series of 20-50 MW stations.

The Ormat Company has recently appointed agents in Australia and the Northern Territory government will be in contact with them so that we are able to be fully informed about progress in the development of this technology. The potential benefit for communities in the Northern Territory is obvious. Rising oil costs, isolation, and the problems of small scale demand a non-conventional approach to the provision of electricity. Solar ponds may offer the best prospects. I have suggested that the Ormat Company and NTEC should survey communities in the Northern Territory to assess the prospects for solar ponds. This proposal will be taken up in due course.

A further point of interest which emerged in our discussions with the Ormat Company is the availability of equipment to operate lights at unmanned airstrips. A system is currently operating in Alaska and could have useful application in the Territory.

Our time in Israel also enabled us to visit the Institute for Desert Research - an adjunct of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. The institute, located at Sede Boquet, near Beer-Sheba, is engaged in particular research into all aspects of desert settlement including solar energy (collection, utilisation and conservation), desert architecture and community planning, techniques of plant production (particularly studies into closed systems of agriculture), locating water resources in desert areas, desert meteorology, collection, storage and utilisation of flood water from desert run-off and desert ecology. Some of the specific projects currently in progress include techniques of housing and construction using adobe bricks in combination with the use of the sun for heating and cooling through various radiation processes, community village and settlement planning, social problems in isolated communities (such as apathy) and the use of existing deep-lying, underground water resources together with a study of crops most suited for irrigation with this saline water.

We were particularly fortunate to be able to visit Jerusalem where we had discussions with officials of the Ministry of Energy and a brief tour of the old city.

ALASKA

Our brief visit to Fairbanks, Alaska was designed to obtain a better understanding of the structure and functioning of the University of Alaska. Fairbanks is the main campus of the University of Alaska. We met with a number of officials including a member of the Board of Regents, the president of the Fairbanks campus of the university and the heads of various schools within the university. I was impressed by the number of similarities between the situation in Alaska and the Northern Territory. Alaska is a developing region with features such as a small population, harsh climatic conditions, remoteness and isolation. Alaska and the Northern Territory share much in common, with the obvious exception of temperature.

Of particular interest for university planning purposes was our discussion concerning the relationship between community colleges and the University of Alaska. In the Alaskan system, a Board of Regents -

appointed by the Governor and confirmed by a joint sitting of the legislature - has overall responsibility for the administration of tertiary education - i.e. both community colleges and university institutions. Alaska has a number of campuses of the university plus a large number of community colleges. The community colleges and the university are integrated under the general umbrella of the Board of Regents.

Historically, the university is now quite old. The provision of higher education is guaranteed by the state's constitution. The origin of higher education in Alaska was clearly to serve the local community. Both the community colleges and the university have a long history of community orientation with research and instruction focusing particularly on the needs of Alaska and the Arctic. The university began largely along community college lines with particular attention to mining, agriculture and engineering. The university developed capacity in both research and instruction side by side. The Alaskan experience provides a number of points of interest for the Northern Territory. One of these is the apparent exercise of pressure by various groups to have community colleges established in locations where they cannot reasonably be justified. This has seriously weakened the tertiary education system in Alaska. There may be a lesson for the Territory in this.

I was also impressed by the Alaskan experience in the admission of students. The University of Alaska had been innovative in devising policies for attracting students, particularly from the southern states. These policies have been very successful and have served as a means of promoting new expertise in the state. Many of the students recruited by the university have remained in Alaska. The university also provides liberal entry for older age students, and this has been regarded as an extremely worth-while approach. The university has therefore served not only to encourage Alaskans to remain within the state but also in a very significant way as a means of recruiting new expertise.

The third point which emerged was the need for any fledgling educational institution to have the support of a longer established institution with high standing and reputation. The University of Alaska has a special relationship with the University of Washington in Seattle with mutual support links in a number of fields. As a result of discussions in Fairbanks, I believe there is great merit in the concept of an integrated post-secondary education system with community colleges and a university working together in appropriate ways to meet the needs of the community.

In Anchorage I called on the Mayor and held discussions with officials of Alaska International Air Incorporated. A point of practical concern to emerge from my discussion with the Mayor was Australia's apparent poor image in industrial relations. We were informed by the Mayor that South Korean interests are undertaking major investments in Alaska to develop Alaskan coal deposits as an alternative to Australian coal. The costs of Alaskan coal will apparently be higher for the South Koreans than Australian coal, but the Koreans accept this as a premium they are prepared to pay in the face of uncertainties about the supply of Australian coal due to stoppages and delays resulting from industrial action.

Alaska International Air Incorporated is Alaska's largest home grown company with revenue this year in excess of \$US100m. The

company, in conjunction with an Australian partner, is planning to enter the air freight business in Australia using a Hercules aircraft. The Hercules is widely used to support and supply mining ventures in Alaska and was particularly valuable during the construction of the Alaskan pipeline.

CANADA

My visit to Canada was intended to give me an opportunity to examine the operation of national parks in Canada and, in particular, to discuss with Canadian officials the problems of handling large numbers of people in a national park system. I had an opportunity to visit Banff and Jasper National Parks, both of which are located in the Canadian Rockies in the Province of Alberta.

There is a commitment by the community to the preservation and extension of the system. I was impressed, however, by the evidence of a commonsense approach to the relationship between parks and the community. Particular attention was being paid to the management of people inside the parks and to the protection of flora and fauna.

In Jasper, we were able to visit the National Park Service Warden Training School. This establishment provides facilities for various Parks Canada training courses as well as being available for various other uses by organisations looking for meeting facilities away from the main cities.

Of particular interest was the attitude of Parks Canada to visitor control. National parks in Canada receive an enormous number of visitors each year. On top of the problems of catering for such a large number of visitors, there is the requirement to protect the flora and fauna. A feature of visitor control was the lack of fuss with which the park service meets these requirements. Indeed, it was surprising to observe that there are no rigorous procedures for visitor control and few significant restrictions. Parks are, of course, well posted and important rules are clear for all visitors. There are also well equipped visitor centres to handle inquiries of all kinds.

A feature of both the national parks we visited - certainly a feature which is in stark contrast to the Northern Territory - is the lack of litter. It was unusual, but extremely encouraging, to be able to drive for hundreds of kilometres without the accompaniment of rubbish and litter. The impact on the attractiveness of the parks for visitors is striking.

In Edmonton, the capital of Alberta, I had the opportunity of brief discussions with Alberta's Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. I was interested to learn that a major park is being established by the Alberta government adjacent to Banff National Park. The province will spend something like \$200m to set up the park. The Alberta government is at present considering the provision of services for the public. No permanent residences will be permitted in the park. Accommodation and commercial enterprises will be largely established by private enterprise under a tender system. Building standards and other guidelines will be laid down by the provincial government. The park will be designed to provide for all-year activity. The government is currently considering whether to limit the maximum term which visitors may stay in

the park in summer to, say, two weeks as a means of visitor control. Other proposals for limiting traffic, especially in summer, are being considered. The government is concerned to ensure that development within the park will blend with the natural environment. In the establishment and administration of the park, the provincial government is being assisted by a Local Citizens Advisory Committee.

The provincial government will permit mining or other appropriate land use activities in the park, but only under a regime of strict supervision and control. The government does not see such activities as incompatible with the concept of a park.

My discussions with the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs naturally touched on Canada's present constitutional controversy. The federal government in Canada is pressing for patriation of the Canadian constitution - the British North America Act - to Canada. This has aroused considerable hostility in some of the provinces, particularly Alberta. Alberta is a resource-rich but sparsely populated province. The government is concerned that the actions of the federal government will be prejudicial to Alberta's interests by giving the more populous but less-well-endowed provinces too great a degree of control over matters which are currently the prerogative of the province. The strength of feeling is particularly high within Alberta with repeated murmurings about cessation and separation from the federation. The minister suggested that much will depend on the attitude of the federal government in the negotiations to come.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, I would like to extend my thanks, and the thanks of the party who went with me, to the commune of Kalymnos, to the Greek government and to the Sub-Prefect of that part of the Dodecanese group of islands for the tremendous lengths to which they went to ensure that our visit to Kalymnos was such that all of us will never forget the warmth, the hospitality and the truly extraordinary time that we had in the 2½ days that we spent there. It is invidious to mention names but I would like to place on record especially my thanks to Mr Alex Alexiou, the President of the Darwin Kalymnian Brotherhood about 20 of whom appeared to be there with their families and who played a great part in making the arrangements and ensuring that a truly magnificent time was had by all.

Mr B. Collins: How are you handling the dual citizenship?

Mr EVERINGHAM: As the honourable member for Arnhem points out, I was made - and I accepted the honour on behalf of all Territorians as I pointed out in my report - an honorary citizen of Kalymnos during the proceedings. I forget how many speeches that I made in response to various toasts. As I said, the hospitality was just incredible.

I would also like to thank the British government which not only organised our visit around the British Isles but also paid a good part of the piper. They are extremely efficient. They must handle a tremendous number of visitors every year but they certainly handle them with aplomb. In the 10 days or so we were in Britain, we were made welcome and saw all we had asked to see.

We could not get a program out of the French with any certainty almost until we landed at Charles de Gaulle Airport. We were then whisked into the arms of a very comprehensive and complete program organised by the French government. The hospitality shown to us there was on a magnificent scale. We were in France for only 2½ days and, regrettably, only about 3 hours in Paris. If I have one regret, it is that we were such a short time in France. It is probably the one country that I would like to explore in greater depth. The

vigour seemed to come through from all the people whom we met. Their pride astonished me and I felt that it is not a decadent old country. This is a country that is really going places.

Israel, too, looked after us handsomely. I must thank the Israeli government for showing us their country in 2 days. It is possible to drive, as we did, from almost one end to the other in less than a day. One is staggered at how they manage to defend what amounts to really a pocket handkerchief of a country. The ingenuity, determination and drive that these people showed is tremendous. One really feels small in the presence of these people. We really just do not know how fortunate we are in this country of ours. That is the biggest impression one gets. One is glad to get back to Australia. It is the best country in the world. There is no doubt about it and yet we just do not know that we are alive.

I would just like to touch on a couple of other matters. One thing that did concern me and I am seeking further details on it - I kept reading about it in the newspapers as we moved around overseas - was proceedings at a UNESCO conference in Belgrade and no doubt honourable members may have read about it here in Australia. It is very difficult to get precise details. Newspapers everywhere - in France, the United Kingdom and the United States - were fulminating about proceedings being taken to pass some sort of charter or resolution through UNESCO that would amount to a muzzling of the media. I am attempting to find out full details of this but it appears that the third world countries have joined together to effectively set up a charter that will control the dispensing of information. If what I read is correct, Australia should certainly be on guard against this. It seems that the British, from what I read, strongly oppose the passage of the resolution but that other countries, including Australia and the United States, did not oppose it and perhaps even went along with it.

I think this is to be very strongly denigrated. It is something that I think we should become more aware of. I am seeking full details through diplomatic sources and I will make them available to this Assembly. I believe that we should do our best to try to make the Australian public aware because, if this type of thing is permitted to happen under the cloak of respectability conferred on these sorts of things by reason of the fact that they are promulgated by an arm of the United Nations, it amounts to a very strong attack on the basic rights guaranteed by the United Nations Charter itself. It is a great shame to see that the United Nations is being perverted in this way by self-seeking member governments who have things to hide.

One of the governments that is promoting the whole thing is the government of the Republic of Zambia. Whilst I am sure that the honourable member for Arnhem will, in due course, comment on my report on my overseas visit, I would like to say that it is obvious that the honourable member has learned a lot. I think that the conference that he attended, by what he said, was well worth attending. But there is no getting over the fact - and it was rather a shame, I thought - that he did attempt to rationalise and explain the reason for the one-party dictatorship which exists in that country. The fact of the matter is that the Republic of Zambia is blotting out democracy in that country and the basic freedoms that are guaranteed to people by the United Nations Charter.

I notice that the honourable member did not mention the number of political prisoners in the gaols in Zambia and Tanzania. No doubt, no one asked any questions about these sorts of things while they were there either. It is a great shame that at some of these CPA conferences some people, while they have the guts to get up and put their own point of view about things that are

happening in their country, do not say something about some of the things that are happening in the host country. Surely, they would need a constitutional museum because it is a total dictatorship over there now and there is no doubt about it.

Mr B. Collins: Gordon Bryant said exactly that in the conference.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Well, that is good. Mr Gordon Bryant, the former member for Wills, was a man whom I admired, a man of character and I knew that he had some guts. I might not have agreed with him but by gee he has guts.

Mr Speaker, there is just one final remark before I sit down. I thought that the honourable Minister for Transport and Works gave a very good explanation of the events that led up to the choice of Northern Airlines as the Territory's regional airline but there was one point that was made by the honourable member for Sanderson before she was cut off by the effluxion of time. For all I know, she may have been about to call on the government, for instance, to enforce the provision in the Air Navigation Act which provides that charter operators shall not operate over RPT routes.

One very essential element left out by the honourable member for Sanderson is this fact that the very communities for which we are trying to provide a high-standard, regular passenger transport service are the ones who are doing the most to sabotage the provision of the high-standard service by their continued use of charter flights. No airline can operate and maintain a frequency of flights in circumstances where charter operators continue to operate over the routes within minutes of the RPT flights.

Mr B. Collins: It is quite a bit cheaper. That is why they travel that way.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, we have the answer. They do not want the RPT flights because the others are cheaper. Perhaps then we should reconsider our policy on whether we should maintain the RPT services at all. You cannot have RPT standard and have charter as well. The simple fact is that it costs a lot more money to run an RPT service. Charter operators can operate more cheaply and obviously pass on the lower costs to their customers for the simple reason that charter operators do not have to bear the overheads, the burdens of the RPT operator. In passing the Aviation Amendment Act this Assembly passed the provision which makes reference to limitation of charter operations over RPT routes. I can certainly say that, to ensure the viability of Northern Airlines, the government will have to seriously look at the whole question.

I am not an expert on aircraft but, as far as I am concerned, on the information available to me, the Metroliner is the best aircraft available in the world today to do the job that was asked of it: to provide a pressurised turbo-prop service. When the strips are bituminised, I have no doubt the Metroliner will be able to provide that service. I am certainly not backing away from the Metroliner.

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): Mr Speaker, over the last few weeks, I have been giving very serious thought to a matter raised by the honourable member for Arnhem in his capacity as Shadow Minister for Education on the first day of this sittings. I very consciously refrained from commenting on what he had to say at that time because I believed I needed time to think about it, to rationalise what I had to say and to put things in their proper context. The honourable member, in his capacity as the shadow minister, read into Hansard a letter from a former officer of the Department of Education.

Mr Speaker, it is an extremely difficult thing for a minister of a government to defend his position when a person is named in a parliament and that name is used to attack a government with some of the most serious accusations that could possibly be levelled. I think it would serve the honourable member well in his shadow ministerial capacity to bear in mind the consequences of using someone's name in that manner. What it means is that the only way the minister can defend himself and his government from such grave accusations is to tear apart the very character of the person that the shadow minister has used to attack the government.

Mr B. Collins: I am well aware of it.

Mr ROBERTSON: The honourable member interjects to say that he is well aware if it. Let it then be on his head.

Mr Speaker, it is a totally cowardly act to write a letter of that nature having fled the state boundary. It is even more cowardly, in my view, to use a letter like that in an attack on a government knowing that the only defence of which the government can avail itself is to tear apart the character of the person who provided the material for the attack in the first place.

The allegations made in the letter which was sent to the Darwin Star - and I understand it has been circulated more widely than that - contained quite serious allegations. Coupling the contents of that letter and the fact that I am the Minister for Education, on my advice, it would probably be actionable. Why did the honourable member read it into Hansard? Is it because he wanted to attack the government or is it because he thought it gave some sort of protection to read it into the Hansard? Let me assure this Assembly that I will not belittle myself or this government by being so petty as to take legal recourse.

Before reading it into Hansard, the member prefaced it with statements like this: 'He was a man with over 30 years' experience in teaching. Many of those years were spent as principal of various schools and in senior positions in education departments, both in Australia and overseas'. That, of course, is not part of the letter. It is the personal understanding of the member for Arnhem. Therefore, one assumed that the honourable member had done his homework and that this person had held various principalships in this country and overseas and held various senior positions in departments of education. Those statements, of course, are quite untrue. I know this is a rather sad way for me to finish off a year in this Assembly. As I said, the only way I can defend myself against these grave accusations of corruption, political expediency and dishonesty is to attack the source of the evidence which was presented in this Assembly. Mr Speaker, I do not propose to do that. I merely caution the Shadow Minister for Education, the honourable member for Arnhem, against that course of action because, next time he does it, I will do my homework thoroughly and I will use the only defence available to me.

Mr Speaker, what of the year we have just been through? I think it has been a very interesting one on both sides of the Assembly. In the Northern Territory, we have had 2 elections and, in my own area, 3 because of the local government election. I have seen rather interesting patterns evolve and I am quite sure that honourable members on both sides of the Assembly have drawn their conclusions from those interesting patterns. I do not think that it is a source of any comfort to any of us to reflect upon those patterns.

I know the opposition has made reference to the disparity of the vote between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. It seems to me that probably, while the opposition needs a better understanding of what the

non-Aboriginal population wants, it behoves us to come to a better understanding of what the Aboriginal people want - not so much what they want but what is practical and reasonable in the circumstances. In the Legislative Assembly elections, one would have thought it was because of the personalities. I have been in Arnhem Land on more than one occasion when the honourable member for Arnhem has been there. There is no question that his staggering vote of 80% is an extraordinary return by anyone's imagination. I assume that there was an enormous personal following. Of course, from watching the honourable member in various centres in Arnhem Land that was quite obvious. Nonetheless, the federal election reflected a very similar sort of return. The honourable gentleman was in Zambia at the time so it certainly was not the Pied Piper bringing in the mice. I do not suggest for a moment that it was.

Quite clearly, this side of the Assembly in reflecting upon a new year has certainly got to look at why it is that the governing party of the Northern Territory is failing so miserably to attract the votes of Aboriginal people. Despite the sorts of images that the opposition might try to create in our relationship with Aboriginal people, this government desires a far closer and more harmonious rapport with Aboriginal people who, as you accurately point out, Sir, are Australians and Territorians. That has always been my attitude to it. I have also said, and the Chief Minister and I have little asides with each other on this, that I am first and foremost an Australian. I expect people who participate in this country to be first and foremost Australians; that includes newcomers from overseas and our oldest people whose ancestry dates back 40,000 years.

If we are going to establish this rapport, I think that this side of the Assembly has to bear in mind that it must not be merely for the sake of reversing the vote. There has to be that understanding which quite clearly has been missing. As long as the present political trend continues, I believe that the CLP will continue to govern anyway because of the broader spectrum it offers to the majority of people. Nonetheless, I think the honourable member for Arnhem, by saying that he was glad to see me in Arnhem Land, would be aware that I have made a series of trips right around the Northern Territory. I have done nothing like the Chief Minister has to try to understand Aboriginal people, to understand what their aspirations are and how we can fit in with them. It is no use being critical of their way of life. After all, we have an evolution of attitude whereby the Aboriginal people are seeking self-fulfilment in their own way. I suppose it is true that, while I do not hold to this invader-invaded concept, nonetheless, these people were existing here long before we arrived and it behoves the European arrivals to accommodate themselves to that.

The problems were raised in these trips I have made. Of course, it was the usual routine of climbing out of an aeroplane and getting back onto it without even getting your shoes dirty - such is the time demand upon a minister. We are not even starting to understand the problems, much less come up with the solutions. I am having difficulty expressing my feelings about my experiences in this Assembly since 1974 when the people first put me here. I look forward to next year. I look forward to a constructive attitude which I think inherently does exist between the opposition and this side of the Assembly - I certainly talk well with my counterparts on the other side of the Assembly - a constructive attitude with community leaders, a constructive attitude between departments and the opposition and the opposition and government. After all, I have never known a member of parliament who takes on the tasks and responsibility of elected representation of the people not to be sincere about his targets and objectives. I mean that quite honestly. I have never come across a member of a parliament who is not sincere about what he is trying to achieve. The vehicles, the methods, the philosophical approach to

those problems might be quite different in a political sense but I think the sincerity is there.

Of course, all of us will read letters to the editor indicating public cynicism and questioning of the honesty of politicians in the same totally unfair manner that people criticise the public service. How many dedicated, hard working, sincere officers have we in our public service systems who serve the people through their ministers and through this place yet people condemn a person out of hand simply because he is a public servant. Looking towards 1981's parliamentary year, I would like to see a higher sense of cooperation among us all.

Mr Speaker, I would like to join the Chief Minister, particularly in my role as Leader of the House, in thanking the Clerk and you, Sir, and all of the staff of the Assembly for the tremendous assistance and guidance you and the Clerk's staff have been to me. I know that we tend to blunder from one tactical, administrative and procedural mistake to the other but, of course, without the guidance and help of your staff, Sir, through the Clerk, it would have been a lot worse than it has been in the last parliamentary year.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: I extend to all honourable members, the Clerk's staff, including Hansard, including all their families, the seasons greetings and my thanks for yet another year's cooperation.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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