

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

**Parliamentary Record**

Tuesday 12 July 1977

Wednesday 13 July 1977

Part I—Debates

Part II—Questions

Part III—Minutes

Part IV—Bills Introduced

## **The Committee of the Whole Assembly**

Chairman—Mr Roberston  
Deputy Chairmen—Mr Ballantyne  
Mr Perron  
Mr Tungutalum

## **The House Committee**

Mr Speaker  
Miss Andrew  
Mr Steele  
Mr Vale  
Mr Tuxworth

## **The Standing Orders Committee**

Mr Speaker  
Mr Ballantyne  
Mr Everingham  
Mr Ryan  
Mr Vale

## **The Publications Committee**

Mr Ballantyne  
Mrs Lawrie  
Mr Dondas  
Mr Perron  
Mr Pollock

## **The Privileges Committee**

Miss Andrew  
Mr Kentish  
Mr Tungutalum  
Mr Withnall

## **The Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee**

Mr Ballantyne  
Mr Kentish  
Mr Robertson  
Mr Tungutalum  
Mr Withnall

PART I

THE DEBATES

Tuesday 12 July 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a message from His Honour the Administrator.

*Dear Speaker, Attached is the report of Mr A.R. Neilson who was appointed to inquire into aspects of the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance in accordance with an instrument of appointment dated 20 January 1977, a copy of which is also attached.*

*The report is forwarded for tabling in the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory pursuant to section 4A(4) of Inquiries Ordinance.*

*Yours sincerely, J.A. ENGLAND, Administrator.*

I table the report.

PETITION

QANTAS SCHEDULES

Mr DONDAS: I have a petition that has been signed by the heads of some 250 Darwin Greek families. The petitioners feel that many Darwin residents have been inconvenienced because of the Qantas route rescheduling for travellers between Darwin and Athens. The petitioners feel that they have been further disadvantaged by having to transfer flights or stay overnight in Rome, especially the older travellers who prefer to travel direct. There would also be some language difficulties. Whilst a special excursionary return fare Darwin-Rome-Athens-Darwin of \$958 is considered reasonable, the direct flight to Athens via Rome is now \$701 compared to the previous cost from Darwin to Athens direct of \$542, a difference of \$159. I move the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER  
AND MEMBERS OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

*The humble petition of the undersigned residents of Darwin respectfully sheweth that they are deeply concerned because of the decision made by Qantas Airways and the discontinuance of its direct flight service between Darwin and Athens and the special fare concession rates which existed previously. Your petitioners feel that the new flight schedule treats Darwin residents unfairly as it requires travellers from this area travelling to Athens in future to stay overnight in one foreign country en route as well as to bear a substantial increase in fare cost. Your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the appropriate authorities to take immediate action to restore the direct flight service between Darwin and Athens and to reimplement the former special fare concession rate as soon as possible, and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.*

PETITION

DRUGS BILLS

Mr TUXWORTH: I present a further petition from citizens concerning the Drugs Bills before the Assembly. I move that the petition be received.

Petition received.

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO  
NORTHERN TERRITORY PUBLIC  
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr PERRON: I table the report of the Inquiry into Public Electricity Supply in the Northern Territory and I move that the report be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

CHURCH LANDS LEASES BILL

(Serial 205)

Continued from 16 June 1977.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to support the bill. I am a bit confused because the Church Lands Leases Ordinance as it presently exists provides machinery for the leasing of land by churches. Religion is quite a difficult thing to put one's finger on because there are so many differences in people's religious beliefs and who their one God is. I believe the definition of a "church" is a place of holy worship. The Islamic Society of the Northern Territory has had to go through the machinery of having an amendment to this ordinance made to enable them to build a mosque. A mosque, a church, a synagogue or any place of worship is a place for God yet they have to go through the rigmarole of being harrassed by the Department of NT. They have said, "We would like to build a mosque. We have a block of land; when can we start?" The reply must have been, "You cannot start because mosques are not covered by the Church Lands Leases Ordinance. You must have an amendment passed through the Assembly to allow this type of construction to take place". The definition of "Islam" is to be free, safe or devout to God. The Muslim faith as set forth by the prophet Mohammed is taught from the writings of the Koran. A church or a mosque as far as I am concerned is the same: it is a place of worship for people.

The Cabinet Member in his second-reading speech stated that the Northern Territory, and especially Darwin, has a multi-racial society. In fact, I alluded to this in an adjournment debate at the last sittings when I said that some 64% of people living in the Northern Territory are not of Anglo-Saxon descent. If we are going to start worrying about our ethnic groups, the time to do it is now because there are so many of them. This amendment will allow the Islamic Society of the Northern Territory to build. I feel that they could have possibly gone ahead without this particular amendment because mosques or synagogues are places of worship. When this ordinance was originally implemented to allow the department to grant land for churches like the Greek Church, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church, they were not trying to discriminate against the Islamic Society. If their appli-

cation to build a mosque had been seriously looked at by the Department of the Northern Territory and the Lands Branch, this particular amendment would have not been necessary. I support the bill.

Mr TUXWORTH: I rise to support the bill because I believe that it is not only timely, it is also an acknowledgement of the support that we members of this Assembly are giving to the growth and development of one aspect of our community life in the Northern Territory. The legislation that is currently in existence was drawn up in the dark ages when the influence of our immigrants had not had a great effect on the nation and when the traditional churches were the predominant places of worship and there was very little cause for provision to be made in law for other places of worship.

One of the great things about the Northern Territory is the tolerance that exists between Territorians of different colours, ethnic background, language and religion. I do not think that there would be another place in this country where a man's religion is accepted so tolerantly as it is in the Northern Territory. I was brought up a very strict Catholic and, after I had travelled overseas, I began to realise that there were many other forms of worship in the world. In fact, at one stage of my youth, I became involved with a young lady who was a fire worshipper. This was a very interesting period in my life. One jests now but it was not funny in those days. It did bring home to me that we are all of one species and it does not really matter a tinker's cuss what our religion is. We are all entitled to practise our religion and to carry on our worship wherever we are, irrespective of what the people in that place think. Sixty per cent of the people living in the Northern Territory are from a non Anglo-Saxon tradition. This suggests that many people here have backgrounds that should be retained and from which the whole community can benefit.

The concept of the establishment of a mosque in the Northern Territory has never been an abhorrent one, it has just been one that we have never had

any need to recognise. I would like to extend my compliments to the honourable member in charge of this bill for having the foresight and the humanity to introduce the bill into this House to enable the people who have come to this country to carry out their traditional worship in a place that is foreign to them.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to support the remarks of previous speakers, in particular, the member for Barkly who spoke of the tolerance and the diversity of religious views which are prevalent in the Northern Territory. Being a non-Christian, I appreciate his remarks and I can speak with first-hand knowledge of the tolerance for non-Christians by this particular community. However, I am afraid that my Oxford Dictionary gives a somewhat different definition of "church" to the dictionary from which the honourable member for Casuarina quoted and which has caused the proposed amendment to the 3 ordinances. In the Oxford Dictionary, "church" is defined as a building or a public christian worship especially according to the established religion of the country. Given that definition and assistance given to me by parliamentary counsel, it does seem that, for any other organised religions to avail themselves of the privileges which are presently extended to Christian churches, a change in the ordinance was necessary. Given that fact, I totally support the proposed change to enable the Muslim community in the Northern Territory to avail itself of these privileges.

I have no quarrel with the bill in that regard. I appreciate the comments of the sponsor of the 3 bills when he said that he personally favoured a more generous legislation which did not require specific amendment from time to time. I support that concept. Indeed, there are several organisations in Darwin which could benefit and which are not covered by these particular amendments. A more suitable word than church, mosque or synagogue would probably be temple. If one takes the Oxford Dictionary again, "temple" is defined in the following terms: "Edifice dedicated to accommodation or service of especially ancient Egyptian,

Greek, Roman or modern Hindu, Buddhist etc gods or other object of religious reverence, any of the 3 successive religious buildings of the Jews in Jerusalem; place of Christian public worship, especially the Protestant Church in France; place in which God is regarded as residing". The definition of "temple" was the kind of definition to which the honourable member for Casuarina was referring.

However, taking in good faith the remarks of the honourable sponsor of these bills that, if he has anything to do with it, the whole concept will be reconsidered, I am prepared to vote for this bill in its present form in the second reading. However, I have amendments which would add the word "synagogue" to the schedule. In foreshadowing this amendment, may I reiterate that I would have preferred to see a more general term freely available such as "temple". If the Majority Party would consult their Oxford Dictionary, they may prefer the word "temple" to these various specific terms. Certainly, it would appear that it would cause no offence to anybody but then I do not feel that Christian, Muslim or Jew would be offended by having the 3 specific terms in the one series of ordinances.

Honourable members may be aware that I am in fairly close contact with various rabbis around Australia as a contact point for any Jewish people travelling through Darwin who may need assistance in locating relatives in the Northern Territory. I am also in contact with people in Sydney who have consular responsibilities and honourable members will be aware that many Australian Jews still have some affinity with Israel. I commend the legislation and the foreshadowed amendment and I draw attention to the remarks of the previous speaker who encapsulated my feelings very well.

Dr LETTS: I had not intended to speak on the second reading of this bill but some of the matters raised by the honourable member for Nightcliff do warrant some comment from me. We are all entering this debate with goodwill and the last thing I would want to see would be an argument in this Chamber on

matters pertaining to religion and religious tolerance. I approach the debate entirely in that spirit.

The honourable member for Nightcliff has put forward the thought that we might use the word "temple" in the definition section. I do see some difficulty with that suggestion even though I appreciate the motive behind it and I think the honourable member for Casuarina had something similar in mind. The word "temple" is not in common use among Christian churches in this country. Further, various non church organisations such as the Masonic Lodge use the word in connection with buildings and activities which they conduct. I think that it would require further consideration and research and I can see some difficulties on the face of it. It would cast a net considerably wider than "churches" and it is not a word in common use in a number of churches, even though they know its general meaning.

I would like to turn to the proposed amendment that the honourable member for Nightcliff mentioned for the inclusion of the word "synagogues". This Assembly looked at several pieces of what I might call "religious legislation" in the past 6 months or so. We dealt with the constitutional matters of the Church of England in a private member's bill. We dealt with the necessary background legislation to enable the Uniting Church in the Northern Territory to take its part in the federation of Uniting Churches elsewhere. Now, we are dealing with a piece of legislation which places beyond any doubt or ambiguity the right of people of the Islamic faith to have land under certain conditions and to practise that faith along with other church bodies in the Northern Territory. Each of those pieces of legislation which we have made in this Chamber have been the result of specific approaches by those churches. They have been dealt with separately and they have been undertaken in every case in response to an authorised spokesman of the particular church concerned. Undoubtedly, this is the proper way for us to legislate on religious matters of this type - in response to an approach from an official or authorised spokesman of the

church concerned.

At the Cabinet meetings when this legislation was considered, I personally raised the question of synagogues and the things that I mentioned were then discussed. It was not clear whether it would be presumptuous of us to take such an initiative in the absence of any request from an authorised member of the Jewish community. It was also unclear whether its inclusion in the same category as the word "church" would create some difficulties. These were the considerations which led us to respond only to this specific request which we have had.

The honourable member for Nightcliff has thrown some additional light on the matter today. I am not sure whether she went so far as to say that she was an authorised spokesman for the Jewish faith in the Northern Territory but we would need to have something pretty solid to back us before making any moves in this direction on their behalf. I am sorry that the member for Nightcliff did not come forward before today with her proposition. The sponsor could have discussed it with her and any interested persons and the proper amendments could have been drafted. However, it has not been done that way and it does seem to me that, once we enter the committee stage and come to this clause, the committee will probably have to report progress so that some of the matters referred to can be clarified with the honourable member outside this Chamber.

Mr PERRON: I thank honourable members for their remarks on this bill. As I indicated in my second-reading speech, the whole area of church land leases needs to be examined. However, the amendment before us is in response to a specific application by the Islamic Society for a site for a mosque. When discussions were held initially on this matter, it was felt that there was doubt whether the word "church" could reasonably be taken as including a mosque. In order not to delay the processing of a land application which had been received by the Lands Branch, it was decided to proceed with this amendment.

It is unfortunate that the honourable member for Nightcliff did not come to see me earlier with a proposal to amend the bill because we must be very careful that we do not offend anybody unintentionally. If she proposes that synagogues should also be included in the bill, I would have to satisfy myself that such an action was wise by conferring on the matter with the hierarchy of the Jewish religion to remove any doubt that what is planned is acceptable. Perhaps the honourable member in her capacity as a contact for the Jewish religion in the Northern Territory could assist me in this matter.

It is appreciated that other religious groups to which the terms "church" or "mosque" might not properly relate may at some time—in the future apply for a similar lease. It is proposed that, in such circumstances, a minor amendment such as this will be proposed so that the Assembly and thus the people of the Northern Territory would be able to express their views in each individual case. I see that as opening the way for any application before we overhaul the land legislation generally. We can process an application. The last thing that the Majority Party would want to do would be to unduly hinder that process.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Dr LETTS: I move that the committee report progress.

It is our desire to have this bill processed during the course of this sittings so that the Islamic Society is not held up in any way in meeting its building objectives. I wish to examine the matters raised by the honourable member for Nightcliff. However, I indicate that it is our firm intention to proceed with the bill. If these other matters can be resolved and incorporated, that will all be to the good. If that is not possible in the

time, the Assembly would not have any hesitation in admitting the proposals in the future once clarification has been obtained.

Progress reported.

#### CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 209)

Continued from 16 June 1977.

Mrs LAWRIE: I indicate my support for this bill and the third bill. May I seek an assurance in his reply that the remarks I have made to the previous bill can be attributed to the two other bills? If the matters to which I alluded cannot be satisfactorily resolved, I have no objection whatsoever to the bills going through in their present form although it would be desirable to have the foreshadowed amendments incorporated. I appreciate the necessity for these bills to go through at this sittings.

Mr PERRON: I would just like to indicate to the honourable member for Nightcliff that I will move to report progress on these bills.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Dr LETTS: I move that the committee report progress for the same reasons that were advanced in relation to the Church Land Leases Bill.

Progress reported.

#### SPECIAL PURPOSES LEASES BILL

(Serial 208)

Continued from 16 June 1977.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Dr LETTS: I move that the committee report progress.

Progress reported.

CROWN LANDS (VALIDATION OF LEASES) BILL

(Serial 212)

Continued from 15 June 1977.

Dr LETTS: I rise to support this bill. I do not want to speak at length on it or open the subject to any controversy. It would be indefensible for this Assembly not to deal with it promptly even though the flaw which gave rise to the need for this bill is one for which we can hold no responsibility. It is a matter that has come to the notice of the Commonwealth Government which still holds the responsibility for land in the Northern Territory although we hope that responsibility will pass to this Assembly in the not far distant future.

It would be morally improper not to validate the pastoral leases which have been in operation for so long and on which the lessees in good faith, believing they had a solid contract with the Government, invested a good deal of money, conducted their operations for the benefit of the Northern Territory and no doubt have future plans on which they have spent a good deal of time and thought to operate the properties concerned as pastoral leases. The Government itself believed it had a clear contract with these people and the only proper course of action is for that to be honoured and for any doubt on the matter to be removed once and for all.

That these sort of mistakes occur is an illustration of the state of the law generally in the Northern Territory, particularly the laws relating to land and ancillary matters. With the combination of South Australian statutes and Territory laws of various vintages, we will inevitably find minor problems such as this occurring. There is a great need for a revision of the old statutes to bring them up to date, to find any anomalies and remove them. It is a task which the honourable member

for Port Darwin at one stage was engaged on but I don't believe that anybody is doing it now and there is certainly a great need for it to be done.

I support this bill and look forward to the day when the administration of land and the legislation relating to land will be transferred to the Northern Territory Assembly.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time,

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

First Schedule:

Mr WITHNALL: Reading through this schedule, I find a number of references which are not identified and it may not even be possible to identify them. First, there is a reference to a pastoral application number 127/80, reference to permits nos. 81 and 141 and another reference to permit no. 141 and permit no. 82. It is obvious that the reservations which were made at the time so described the land but the schedule does not give the terms of the original reservation but only purports to describe the effect of the original reservation. Some attention might be given to the question as to whether the schedule now before us is sufficiently certain to be operative as a revocation of the original reservation.

Dr LETTS: I did have some discussions with the First Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory in charge of land and other affairs and also with the Director of Lands on this matter. The references contained in the First Schedule, which deals with the revocation of the former reserves, have been well researched and I understand that they are valid references for the purpose of revocation.

First Schedule agreed to.

Second Schedule agreed to.

Title agreed to,

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

(Serial 207)

Continued from 8 June 1977.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time,

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

(Serial 204)

Continued from 16 June 1977.

Mr STEELE: This bill will correct one of the injustices in the system by allowing RAAF people the right to vote in future local government elections. It applies also to army personnel. On an electorate note, you will recall a recent change in electorates which puts the RAAF Base into the Ludmilla electorate. Residents of the RAAF Base have been denied this important vote for far too long. They pay most of the passed-on charges, they pay the increased prices for commodities that are forced up from time to time because of council rate increases. These people are being taxed with little representation.

To have effective representation for the citizens of the RAAF Base, the councillors have to be identified in the wards that they intend to represent. At this time, the RAAF is unaware which local government councillor will be responsible for its area. It is about time that the corporation picked the point up and dealt with it. Decisions made outside the direct representation of the ward system are not always a reflection of the community's views. Decisions on capital works such as roads, either funded by the council or by the Federal Government, would be better made by representatives directly responsible to citizens in certain areas. It is essential for the RAAF Base residents to know what ward they are in so that RAAF people can take a bigger part in

community affairs.

Mr WITHNALL: When local government was introduced into Darwin back in the 1950s, the exclusion of the defence areas within the city of Darwin was done deliberately by the Federal Government and I can inform members that it was done on the insistence of both the Army Command and the Air Force Command. At that time, I thought it was a very wrong decision and I am very glad to see that more sensible action is now proposed.

There is one matter which I want to direct to the attention of the sponsor of the bill. The system observed by the Commonwealth of Australia in all states of Australia is that the Commonwealth being a superior parliament and a superior government, does not pay local council rates. However, the Commonwealth invariably inquires of the council what rates would be payable on the land which is occupied by the crown for defence purposes or for any other purpose and the amount which would have been payable is paid by the Commonwealth as and for rates. It thereby preserves its immunity from rating but acts quite responsibly and fairly towards all the municipal councils in which it owns land and in which it uses the services provided by the local council. I direct the honourable member's attention to that because, hopefully, the control of land in the Northern Territory will soon pass to the local Executive. When that becomes the case, the honourable member would do well to bear in mind that all defence areas within the city of Darwin or any other city where municipal government is introduced should come under the system which the Commonwealth uses in the states of Australia.

I am aware that the Commonwealth does subsidise the municipal councils in Darwin and Alice Springs but the considerations that I am putting now ought to be observed irrespective of any particular subsidy which the Commonwealth might give to the particular municipal council. If the honourable member wants confirmation of the system that I am speaking about, I am sure he will find it available from the Commonwealth Services Department. I

would suggest that he take this matter up with the Commonwealth of Australia at the earliest possible moment.

Mr TAMBLING: I am aware that this legislation has been called for for a considerable period of time, particularly in the Darwin municipality. Having lived in Darwin for most of my life, I am aware of the very important contribution that has been made to the civic life of this city by the various service personnel. If you go right through community life and activities, whether it be sporting, recreational or, to a certain extent, business activities, the contribution of the people in defence areas has always been very significant. The efforts now being taken to extend municipalities to embrace any defence areas that are within the general environment of a city recognise that fact.

As the honourable member for Ludmilla stated, the personnel of defence bases do contribute substantially to the financial upkeep of a city through the indirect fees and charges of a municipality and through the indirect charges that are made by various other commercial houses in the community. He made the point that ward representation is probably the most desirable system and that, at an early date, the corporation ought to look at this matter. I believe the Corporation of the City of Darwin will do this at a very early date. Some time ago, they divided the city roughly and recognised the former wards and they asked certain of their aldermen to take particular responsibility for those areas until the ward system is again reinstituted with the local government elections. Once this legislation is finalised, I hope the Darwin City Corporation will review its decision on its appropriate boundaries and designate certain of the aldermen to have responsibility for the areas that are currently termed defence areas.

I take note of the points raised by the honourable member for Port Darwin about the financial arrangements that must be recognised between Commonwealth, state and local governments. I am aware of the systems which apply in the states and, as we move towards a

more responsible Northern Territory government, it will be necessary to set principles consistent with those that are adopted elsewhere. From my discussions on constitutional development with ministers of the Commonwealth Government, I do not believe there will be any barriers or constraints in this regard. However, I will certainly pursue the points that the honourable member has raised and endeavour to ensure that local government is not in any way disadvantaged for the contribution that it receives in lieu of rates.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

#### BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL

(Serial 206)

Continued from 15 June 1977.

Mr EVERINGHAM: It gives me some pleasure to support this bill. Building societies play a very important part in modern day society. It is unfortunate that we have only one building society in the Northern Territory. It would make me much happier if there were 2 or even 3 vying with one another to better serve the community in terms of interest rates, services available to their members and finance available for the construction of homes in our Territory. They do not just offer finance for the building of homes; when they have funds available, they sometimes offer commercial finance. More importantly, they offer better interest rates to their depositors than do the banks which are regarded as the traditional lending source in Australian society.

It is a shame that the building society in the Northern Territory - and perhaps this is one of the reasons why more societies have not established themselves here - do not have the same access to investors' funds as do banks. In this regard, I could see useful amendments being made to the Public Trustee Ordinance to permit the Public Trustee to invest with the building

society funds held by him in connection with the many estates that he administers. It is a shame too that this is such an old piece of legislation. It should have been revised long ago along the lines of the experience gained by the building societies in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. This has not been possible because plans which were in hand for this shortly before the cyclone had to be set aside and more urgent tasks given priority. I do believe that there is something perhaps on the stocks and we might see it in the next Assembly.

Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia seem to be the three Australian states in which building societies have achieved the greatest popularity. For some reason, they do not seem to have caught on as well in the colder states of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. In the states that have had the experience, there has been sorrow for people who have lost some of their money when a society has failed. We had news about that in Queensland last year when the government had to step in and freeze 3 or 4 smaller building societies to appoint inspectors. I believe that all investors in those societies will have their funds returned to them in full but, knowing the ways of government inspectors, that might take 3 or 4 years. Thus, they will want the interest, certainly over that period. In the Northern Territory, we can gain by those sad experiences elsewhere and ensure that we have adequate audit provisions, adequate capitalisation provisions, adequate provisions for inspection and regular returns by societies. Since we are a much smaller community, the smell which emanates quite often from a building society going bad will be able to be sniffed at a much earlier stage. In a small way, we are going in that direction now.

The purpose of this amending bill is to increase the minimal capitalisation of a new building society. This will not permit the registrar to register a permanent society unless it has a share capital of not less than \$0.5m of which not less than \$0.25m is paid up on terms that do not permit repayment before the expiration of 2 years after

the day on which it is received by the society. In other words, the persons wanting to kick off the society have to be prepared to put up at least \$0.25m of their own money in addition to money that they hope to receive by way of deposit from the public and any other source.

Housing finance and housing itself has always been a great source of contention in the Territory - the cost of building, the availability of building materials and the availability of finance to build the houses. In the not too distant future, I hope we will be able to plug into the Commonwealth funding for building societies under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement. I believe that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government is working in that direction and, when these Commonwealth funds become available, persons interested in establishing building societies will find greater incentive and greater ease in establishing themselves in the Northern Territory.

Many years ago in Alice Springs, I knew of a group of people who were interested in setting up a permanent building society in that town. It was possible for them to borrow \$0.5m from the Bank of New South Wales with no great difficulty. However, the Bank of New South Wales made it a pre-condition of that loan that the Commonwealth match the amount and, of course, the Commonwealth had no avenue in which it could legally make the money available in those years. I do not suppose it was sorry but, if it had done so, we would have probably seen many more building societies established by people interested in generating the building industry, the construction industry, and generally making our community a more prosperous one for us to live in.

I hope that we see new legislation in this area in the near future and I ask the Cabinet Member to give that his very best consideration in the life of the new Assembly. I hope that he can make it a priority task after his re-election. I support the bill.

Mr TAMBLING: I am very pleased to support this legislation. The role that

building societies play in the Australian community is well known and well recognised. At this stage, we only have limited activities by building societies in the Northern Territory but I am hoping that, given the advances that will occur in the next few years in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, we will be able to encourage much more activity by building societies. The provision of housing is one of the major platforms of every Australian government, whether it be Commonwealth or state, and the Northern Territory must accept its full responsibility for housing. One of the ways to do this is to have more building societies established in our community.

This legislation corrects anomalies that currently exist and will guarantee that both the home owners' and the investors' interests are properly taken care of. We have seen in other states in recent years that, because of management and capitalisation limitations, there have been problems with building societies. We certainly do not want that sort of situation to arise in the Northern Territory and the action being taken by the Cabinet Member for Law in tightening up these areas of our legislation is therefore very timely.

The Majority Party in the Northern Territory has adopted very positive and strong policies with regard to home ownership. It is the party's objective to work for home ownership for all who desire it. We do accept that the major role in providing adequate and imaginative housing development must remain with a Territory rather than a Federal Government. To this end, the Majority Party has put forward a number of proposals which are aimed specifically at assisting a co-ordinated and economic construction of housing in the Northern Territory. We hope to do this largely through the private sector and, for appropriate sections of the public service, through the services of a single housing authority. However, that will not be enough by itself. In addition, it will be necessary for us to promote home ownership by supporting cooperative housing societies, the Home Finance Trustee and permanent building societies to ensure that we do get per-

manent residents in the Northern Territory. We accept that it is important that low interest loans be made available for housing to assist the low and the moderate income groups to obtain better housing.

As the Northern Territory develops, it will also be important for the Northern Territory government to foster decentralisation and this can only be done by using the financial agencies of bodies such as building societies. I believe that the policies that will be pursued by the Majority Party in the coming years will give confidence to this community with regard to its housing. This legislation is just one of the measures by which we seek to do that.

Mr ROBERTSON: It gives me pleasure to support this legislation. I would like to take up a comment made by the honourable member for Jingili that it is high time that we saw complete legislation adapted to the needs of the Northern Territory rather than trying to revamp old South Australian statutes which we have inherited through the Acts and Ordinances Interpretation Ordinance. I note that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government supported the honourable member for Jingili in his contention that there should be more building societies in the Northern Territory. I would question that at this stage anyway. I think that the viability of an organisation like a building society is very largely dependent upon the amount of money it holds. A building society which has large securities is certainly in a position to lend more efficiently than a whole series of smaller ones holding the same total amount of securities.

As has been pointed out by previous speakers, the bill primarily intends to make building societies in the Northern Territory a more secure proposition for those who support them - the people in the street who use building societies for savings accounts. It is from that direction that the building society primarily gets its funds. It gets further funds from the repayment of mortgages plus interest but it should be borne in mind that the working margin of most building societies in

Australia, and certainly the Home Building Society is no exception, is in fact about 2.5%. The bill also seeks to validate any action taken by an officer of the public service in respect of the Home Building Society under the Companies Ordinance. I would hasten to point out that there has never been any question that any of those actions have been invalid. The amendment seeks to ensure that any such suggestion in the future cannot arise.

When we are looking at a piece of legislation such as this that brings in a statutory limit on the minimum amount of deposits to be held by a building society, the first question that comes to people's minds is why are we now doing it. From that question comes a hint of suspicion, however wrong, about the present building society operating in the Northern Territory. That, of course, is the Home Building Society which was founded in Perth and which opened a head office in the Northern Territory on 6 June. In order to waylay any such suspicions, it is necessary to have a look at the achievements and the structure of the Home Building Society in the Northern Territory. It has a very commendable and solid record.

In the 5 years the Home Building Society has been operating in the Northern Territory, it has lent home mortgage funds to 300 Territory families. The mortgage sums amount to about \$10m. In the year ending 1976, a total of \$6.4m in mortgage funds was lent to people in the Northern Territory. It is worth noting that all of the savings banks combined throughout the Northern Territory in that particular time lent \$4.8m. That is not meant to be taken as a criticism of the savings banks, it is rather to be taken as a compliment to the force and effect that the Home Building Society has had. It must also be remembered that the Home Building Society channels all of its available funds into home finance or construction finance in certain commercial areas whereas savings banks are doing a lot of other good work with their funds such as offering personal loans etc.

Where do the funds come from? They come principally from the public using

the home building societies as an avenue of ordinary home savings. It is interesting to look at the interest rates provided by the Home Building Society in the Northern Territory and I would assume similar interest rates would apply if further societies were to open up in the Northern Territory. If they were vying with each other, as has been pointed out by the honourable member for Jingili, perhaps we could see more favourable interest rates. I would tend to doubt it when you look at the fact that their working margin is only 2.5% overall. The Home Building Society borrows on a day-to-day basis at a rate of 9%. It is interesting to know that the average savings bank borrows at about 3.75% on that equivalent type of account. In accounts of 3 months or longer, it borrows at 9.5% and 10.5% for funds on a fixed deposit of over 12 months. It lends at a rate of 11.5% in respect of loans to the public of less than \$50,000. Of course, we are assuming that the money is available but, when it is, that is a reasonable ceiling. \$50,000 would get most people into homes even in Darwin where the costs are rather frightening; they are becoming high enough in my area. In respect of amounts in excess of \$50,000, the interest charged is 12.5%, and 13.5% is the rate where commercial lending is available.

As pointed out by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government, the whole development of the decentralisation philosophy in the Northern Territory depends on money being available for lending and that includes the commercial sector as well as the home builder. I would hope that we reach the stage very soon where we can see funds once again being made available to the public in that direction. In respect of the Home Building Society, there are indications that this could well come about very soon. It is worth drawing to the attention of the House that, in the month of June this year as opposed to the month of June last year, the Home Building Society had deposited with it about double the amount that it had in the previous year. You would be surprised to know that \$0.75m more was deposited in June this year than was deposited in the same month last year. So much for our economy going bust!

The thrust of the bill is to give weight to the confidence of the people and the figures that I quoted would do that without this particular piece of legislation. People can look to a building society as a safe place in which to invest their money and a place where they will get maximum possible interest terms. With this type of legislation which is now before us and hopefully the type of legislation that the Cabinet Member will be contemplating in the not too distant future, I think we can generate the type of confidence which will indeed see the fostering and blooming of this type of home finance in the Northern Territory. I support the bill.

Miss ANDREW: I rise briefly to thank honourable members for their comments. In reference to the remarks made by the honourable member for Jingili relating to the Public Trustee Ordinance, as late as a week ago principles for amendments to that ordinance were being discussed and I hope that they will be taken up by the new Assembly. Much work has already been done on the repeal and replacement of the building societies legislation in the Northern Territory and I would hope the new Assembly will see fit to introduce this at an early stage.

In my second-reading speech, I foreshadowed an amendment to clarify the meaning of the term "share capital" in the proposed new section 4(2). The amendment has now been circulated. I make it clear that, before the Registrar can register a new permanent building society, he must be satisfied that, from the time of registration, the society will have available to it at least \$500,000 of which one half will be issued on a two-year term. The bill as introduced does not make it clear whether the \$500,000 is merely a nominal share capital or otherwise.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time,

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Miss ANDREW: I move scheduled amendment 14.1. This is to clarify the confusion in the bill as to whether the \$500,000 is merely nominal share capital or otherwise.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed remaining stage without further debate.

#### PHARMACY BILL

(Serial 177)

Continued from 8 June 1977.

Mr POLLOCK: I rise to support the bill. As the sponsor remarked in his second-reading speech, these amendments originated from the Pharmacy Board itself and have the support of the profession as a whole. They are very worthy amendments because in isolated communities and smaller communities such as Katherine, Tennant Creek and perhaps Alice Springs most pharmacies are basically a one pharmacist operation and the provisions in this bill will prove very worth while for the pharmacists and the communities as a whole. At the moment, if there is an emergency or the pharmacist wants to go to the bank, technically he has to close up his shop and cease trading for the period he is absent from the premises. That is not a reasonable situation and it should not be allowed to continue. This bill provides that he will be able to have an area of his dispensary suitably secured so that, if he does wish to leave the premises for personal reasons, that particular part of the business can be shut up and the rest of the business can operate in a normal fashion.

Over the years, pharmacies have become more diverse in their activities and the services that they do provide for the public. In years gone by, the pharmacy only supplied pharmaceutical and medical goods but today you can find just about anything in some chemist shops. Pharmacists sell every-

thing down to jellybeans. At least, the non-dispensing side of the business should be allowed to continue because it is that part of his business which perhaps maintains his viability and allows him to remain open and provide the community as a whole with its medicinal needs, I support the bill and I feel that it will be a welcome measure to both the profession and the community at large.

Mrs LAWRIE: I had hoped to have already circulated proposed amendments to this bill. In fact, they are in the process of being circulated at the moment. I am happy to support the bill through the second reading. I understand the motivation of the sponsor and I believe the Majority Party may agree to certain procedures which will further protect the professional status of pharmacists and tidy up the provisions of the bill. I want to make it quite clear that I have no quarrel with the general principle which prompted the bill.

It does seem, however, that moves to allow the other part of the pharmacy to remain open whilst the pharmacist is absent and the dispensary is closed will mean that a pharmacist could go on extended leave and allow the business to continue without providing a locum pharmacist. This is not accepted practice in other parts of Australia. I have paid particular regard to the remarks of the Cabinet Member for Resources. I am appreciative of the problems facing pharmacists in isolated areas. From the inquiries which I have made, it does seem that the bill as presented would be unique in Australia. That, in itself, perhaps should not be a reason for rejection but in other isolated communities - north-west Western Australia and northern Queensland - there still exists a provision whereby a pharmacy cannot continue to trade while the pharmacist is absent. I fully accept the concept that, for particularly isolated areas, this is an unreasonable proposition. However, in amending the bill, I think that the House should pay due cognizance to the thoughts that have been expressed to me by certain pharmacists: whilst it may be necessary and desirable to close the dispensary for a certain period of

time, that should not be open-ended. I had hoped to be able to discuss the proposed amendments with the sponsor of the bill before this debate but that has not been possible. I hope that, following the second reading, the committee stages will be postponed.

Personally, I do not accept a concept which will enable a shop known as a pharmacy in any isolated community to continue trading for an unreasonable length of time with no resident pharmacist in attendance. I have reason to believe that, by and large, pharmacists would not regard this as desirable either. They would realise, however, that absence for a short period in certain circumstances may not only be desirable but in fact necessary. My amendments would tighten up the provisions to ensure that the Pharmacy Board is aware of the reasons for the closure of the dispensary and that the public will know when they are attending such a facility that a pharmacist is not in attendance. It will mean that the profession of pharmacy and the ethics pertaining thereto are fully acknowledged and protected and that, whilst we are making certain allowances for our particular isolation, we do not detract from the general ethics of the profession. I believe that, if the present amending bill went through in its present form, it could in fact allow any shop to be called a pharmacy without a pharmacist being there. I must say that I would regard that as inexcusable.

When buying certain goods from a pharmacy, people pay higher prices than they would pay in a local supermarket. This is because there is a professional status attached to a pharmacy and rightly so. The public rely on a degree of experience which is not available from the local Woolworths supermarket. As an example, there are analgesics which are freely available from a pharmacy or from a supermarket and the difference in price is quite substantial. There are other analgesics obtainable only from the pharmacy. There are commodities which can be obtained from a pharmacy and not through a supermarket but not necessarily on prescription. The public pays a little more for the professional advice tended

by a pharmacist. If I am correct, I support that concept. If we are to enable the dispensary side of a pharmacy to be closed in emergencies, we have to ensure that the public know that specialised advice is not available.

The Cabinet Member for Resources spoke of the peculiar situation where a pharmacist cannot go to a bank without having to close up the whole shop. He is quite right; that is the existing provision in the Northern Territory. It is fair to advise the House that my investigations have led me to conclude that this is in fact the provision right around Australia. That does seem to be unnecessarily restrictive and I would favour an amendment in the Northern Territory to ameliorate that situation. However, I think we should be advised that our particular amendment is unique. I will support a call for the passage of the bill through the House at the present time but I hope that, before the committee stages are taken, I will be given the opportunity to discuss my amendments with the sponsor of the bill, the Majority Leader or any other person whom the Majority Party cares to nominate. I am not against the philosophy only some of the practicalities of the implementation of that philosophy. I am quite happy to support the second reading.

Mr TUXWORTH: I would like to thank the honourable members who have supported the bill. In reply to the honourable member for Nightcliff, I would like to say that I believe she is being a little supersensitive to the intent of the bill. With her proposed amendments, she may be trying to help the public but I believe she will make the situation worse.

This bill will enable pharmacists in remote and isolated communities to allow their pharmacies to operate while they are absent. The moment we try to put restrictions on how long they shall be away and what must happen after they have been away for 7 days and what size signs shall be put up in the shop, I believe we will defeat the purpose of the bill. We are trying to legalise the situation which already exists when, for any reason, the pharmacist must be away from his premises. He must con-

tinue to allow his staff to sell goods if he wants to stay in business. I am not suggesting that any pharmacist should allow the prescribed drugs and prohibited drugs in his dispensary to be sold by his staff in his absence. This bill ensures the locking up of the drugs that must be sold by the pharmacist so that, in his absence, the business can carry on. I would agree that some persons in the community may go to a pharmacy for expertise but I believe that many people go to pharmacies because they carry a very comprehensive range of the goods which are not on the shelves of the supermarket. Supermarkets have moved into the merchandising world and have made it very difficult for the pharmacies and it certainly has not helped the pharmacies in the small centres. The supermarkets are not able to carry every line the pharmacist can and neither are they able to give satisfactory advice to persons seeking skin creams, sunburn lotions etc.

While I have not had an opportunity at this stage to consider the honourable member's amendments in detail, I would regard them as an over-kill. I hope that the bill proceeds at this stage.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later,

#### PAROLE OF PRISONERS BILL

(Serial 214)

Continued from 16 June 1977.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to support this bill. This gives me an opportunity to bring to the attention of honourable members some aspects of bail and parole and some figures which honourable members might find interesting. These matters are touched on in an article which I read recently in an edition of the Economist published on 25 June. Whilst I do not fully agree with everything in this article, I think that there is material in it which honourable members might find thought provoking. The article is headed "The Place for Criminals".

A spate of reports from the Home Office reveals that alternatives to putting people behind bars are being used more than ever before. There are even grounds for hope that the general public is becoming more aware of the shortcomings of locking people up. Yet none of the various alternatives is without serious problems and the police have particularly strong reservations about letting more remand prisoners out on bail.

The former chief of the metropolitan police, Sir Robert Mark, although retired, has been writing letters to the Home Office urging that judges around the country not interpret too leniently the new Bail Act. The act spells out an individual's right to be granted bail unless there are specific arguments against it. Sir Robert, in his final report to the metropolitan police, came down hard on the abuses of bail. Police research, he pointed out, shows that 928 absconded in his area in the last quarter of last year. Yet the report made no mention of the total numbers released on bail, which would put this figure in perspective. In fact, Home Office figures suggest that the rate of absconding in bail cases is even lower than that for prisoners who are given parole. In 1976, 80,000 people in the metropolitan area were remanded on bail; if the last quarter were typical, this would put the absconding rate at less than 5%.

In 1975, the total number of adults held in custody before conviction was 49,000; of these, 2,000 were eventually found not guilty, while another 19,800 were given non-custodial sentences. In other words, over half of those temporarily locked away were not ultimately thought to deserve imprisonment.

This is an area which we hope to be moving into shortly in the Territory: the type of non-custodial sentence where the prisoner is allowed out during the week to work and returns to serve his term of imprisonment over the weekend and at night times. The report continues:

The Parole Board, pursuing a new policy of delegating more parole decisions to local review committees, reported last week that the rate of parole of eligible prisoners rose from 49% in 1975 to 54% in 1976.

I might comment at this stage that that may well be under pressure from the English penal system and the vastly over-crowded jails in the United Kingdom at the moment.

The failure rate has remained encouragingly stable none the less, at just under 8%. Yet the Board has been much criticised for not interviewing in person prisoners whose cases it does handle, and also for refusing to give reasons to those for whom parole is denied. Next week in Canterbury an international conference on prisons will consider whether or not parole is intrinsically unfair (those who are likely to receive it - because they have jobs and families waiting or are not serious criminals - can be predicted in advance) and should be abolished.

I doubt that of course. I just cannot see the system of parole being abolished because, if it was, obviously the number of prisons or the amount of prison accommodation would have to be doubled overnight.

The advisory committee on the penal system last week recommended shorter sentences for all ordinary (that is, non-dangerous prisoners).

By non-dangerous, they do not simply mean those types of prisoners who were not engaged in crimes of violence but prisoners such as drug pushers who are dangerous not perhaps in the violent situation but dangerous to the community.

If reconviction rates are used as a measure of effectiveness of any length of sentence, the committee argued, there was no evidence that the longer the sentence the greater the deterrent. But there is much proof of the debilitating effect of a long stay in prison. The community (through lower welfare costs and

fewer broken homes) would benefit as well as the prisoner, it stated, if judges generally reduced what they handed down.

For the new kind of sentence called "community service", it might be just as well if reconviction rates were not used as a measure of success. For a study just released reveals that the rate in 6 experimental areas was 44%. Nearly half of those given constructive tasks like clearing brush, helping in mental hospitals or other forms of compulsory work for a specified number of hours were reconvicted for offences no less serious withing the following year.

Here, we would run into trouble with the unions. They would not let them work on Forestry plots.

The report could be a blow to the idealists. But it may also show that community service, like prison itself, is too blunt an instrument for the ill-assorted and inadequate individuals to whom it is applied.

Whilst all of that did not relate to parole, I think some of those figures might well be of interest to members here. I do not think many honourable members would be familiar with figures such as those. I hope that it provokes some thought and I hope that it may perhaps lead to some legislation in those areas being introduced into this Assembly later this year or next year.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr KENTISH: During the week just passed, I have been out in my electorate as far as Groote Eylandt. It is always a pleasure to go out to this neat little township at Alyangula with its beautiful shrubbery, lawns and magpies. We get into a different world out there. However, the whole island is not

quite as nicely provided for as the mining township itself which has every mod con. The people there seem to have only 1 or 2 major things that they would like to see improved. First, they are still tied to radio telephones and are still trying to get the tropic scatter disc telephone line system relayed from Gove. They think that the time is coming near when this may be possible. The other thing is that, every now and again, they become worried about their medical set-up. They have had great improvements but the population is also growing and they are looking for further improvements.

I tried to go to Umbakumba 40 miles by road across the island. I found that the road had been out of use during the wet. It was sometimes possible to get a four-wheel-drive vehicle through but it was totally closed to other vehicles. The people at Umbakumba are fairly worried about their situation. There are quite a few settlements and townships in Arnhem that do not have roads at all; they are on islands and may never have roads. The fact that these people have no roads during the wet season is not all that remarkable but there could be a telephone. The fact that they do not have a telephone connection with the main township at Groote Eylandt worries them.

They are also still without an airstrip. Apparently, the provision of an airstrip there would be a very difficult undertaking because of the nature of the country. I have no doubt there are plenty of capable people. Many places in Arnhem Land have installed their own airstrip with their own hands, axes and mattocks and often with very little machinery. At Umbakumba, they would have problems which could not be solved by hand labour. They have made it very clear to me that they would like an all-weather road, a telephone and some assistance in building an airstrip. They can be cut off for several months in the wet season and they have no communication except the radio and no way of getting sick people in or out of the settlement in an emergency if the road deteriorates.

I asked a question about the Umbakumba road several months back. I

found a letter 2 to 3 years old saying that the bituminising of the Umbakumba road would be on the estimates for that particular year - 1973. That is as far as it has got; nothing has happened beyond that. These people would even be pleased if some of the worst spots on their road could be sealed. They would be quite happy if some of the road could be sealed; the rest of it will stand up to wet season conditions quite well. I have promised them that I will keep trying to get the road improved and to see what can be done about their airstrip and their telephone. I know that these things take a long time but gradually we get there.

Passing to another subject, I notice that increasingly we are getting visitors from Vietnam, South Vietnam I presume. This makes me think of the old phrase about chickens coming home to roost; they are coming down here. It speaks a lot for the prestige of Australia and Australian people that these people are coming over many dangerous miles of ocean in all sorts of flimsy craft because they feel assured that in Australia there is hospitality and goodwill. It is just a pity. It reminds me that, after years of defending these people and helping them to achieve what looked to be a measure of independence, they are now escaping from something after the nature of slavery to get to a foreign country where they hope to have goodwill and freedom.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I would like to speak on one or two matters connected with the area which has been defined as the electorate of Jingili under the redistribution of boundaries of electorates for this Assembly. Previously, the electorate of Jingili extended in the northern suburbs only as far as Rothdale Road; it now includes the suburbs of Wagaman and Moil and extends as far as Lee Point Road and Vanderlin Drive and is bounded on the other sides by Trower Road and McMillans Road. Although I have driven through those areas over the past couple of years, only in the last few weeks have I actually walked around them and taken more than a passing notice of the conditions there. It is rather depressing to walk around substantial parts of Wagaman and Moil, particularly

at night, because they are cloaked in almost total gloom. There are very few street lights at all. Until last night, if the honourable Cabinet Member for Education and Planning is to be believed, there were not any street lights along Lee Point Road. As I was walking along Lee Point Road last night, there were not any street lights; I prefer to believe the evidence of my own eyes. I hope they are tonight because it will assist me considerably in my task.

What makes it particularly irritating and frustrating for the people who have come back to Darwin or stayed on in Darwin to rebuild in Moil and Wagaman is to see across Lee Point Road the new suburbs of Anula and Wulagi - which have been built since the cyclone at great expense from public money and I am not criticising that - lit up like Christmas trees. If anything, there is too much light in those areas across Lee Point Road. Many of these people have come back to rebuild their houses at their own expense or to battle on in what is left of their commission house until the commission can reconstruct it. Without any doubt, with the exception perhaps of Nakara, Moil and Wagaman are the worst off in Darwin as far as reconstruction is concerned. Perhaps this is because they are at the extremities. These people see what is being done for people who have moved into the new suburbs and they feel bitter about it. I appeal to the responsible authorities who will be allocating priorities for the complete reconstruction of the street lighting system, to give some priority to those persons out in the far reaches of the northern suburbs rather than starting as usual from the centre of town and working out. The further you get out into the northern suburbs, the less light there is till you come to Anula and Wulagi.

Another point which came to my attention was not so much the lack of street signs, which some other honourable member commented on this morning, but the lack of stop signs, give-way signs and the like. I understand from local residents that the intersection of Lee Point Road and Wagaman Terrace, in particular, is extremely dangerous.

A good number of accidents have occurred and a great number of near-accidents are occurring almost daily because of the lack of lights. Might I plead once again with the authorities responsible to do something immediately about the installation of lights near and over major intersections and also to provide those strips of white and black arrows which one often sees as one drives up the road towards a major intersection to indicate the other side of a major road. There are none of those in any of the streets that come to Lee Point Road. You would not know at night that you were approaching a major road unless you noticed the traffic going across it in front of you. Of course, you just might be unlucky enough to come sailing down and there is no traffic passing in front of you; you sail out into Lee Point Road and slam! a car comes along from your right or left and hits you. That happened at the intersection of Wagaman Terrace and Lee Point Road only a couple of nights ago.

I had a look at the parks in that area. While some of the parks are up to standard and the grounds of the schools appear to have been brought into a reasonable condition, there is a neglected park on lot 3601 Lee Point Road which is almost certainly the responsibility of the Darwin City Corporation. As I understood it, these parks were being restored by the corporation in cooperation with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. However, they appear to have overlooked this one in the orphan area of Wagaman and Moil. I would ask that, in its last dying gasps, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission attempt to do something about that.

Finally, since I am now interested in both sides of Rothdale Road, I would like to see people able to cross from one side to the other in some degree of safety. Previously, I did not wish the residents of Jingili to be contaminated by connection with people in Moil and Wagaman, but now I would like to see a pedestrian crossing placed somewhere along Rothdale Road because its entire length of at least a mile has not one pedestrian crossing, not even one near Jingili Terrace where the Jingili

Shopping Centre is located and where numerous people have to cross over from the Moil side to do their shopping. The honourable Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry said this morning, in answer to a question, that he would see that the pedestrian crossing on Trower Road was fixed up in double quick time and show them that he could achieve straight away what it took Everingham 3 years to achieve. I would ask him to have the men with the white paint trot out to Rothdale Road whilst he is about it.

Mr ROBERTSON: I would say at the outset that I am not normally minded to respond to what the members of the Australian Labor Party say but I think that, in light of an article that appeared in the *Centralian Advocate* of 7 July, I am left with little choice but to take the time of the House in dealing with at least the first 3 paragraphs of that article. I will state again that I am not in the business of conducting smear campaigns or using smear campaigns or personal attacks on any member of the Australian Labor Party. I do not use that method as a substitute for a complete absence of policy direction. However, such is the nature of the article that I had given serious thought to raising it as a matter of personal explanation but, rather than interrupt the proceedings of the House, I decided to leave it until this adjournment. I think it is worth recording in the Hansard what has been printed as a result of a press statement by a Mr John Thomas who is the ALP candidate for the electorate of Gillen of which I am currently the sitting member. It is headed "MLA attacked over pamphlet contents".

*A Labor Party candidate has accused the sitting member for Gillen, Mr Jim Robertson, of having made fascist and racist remarks. Mr John Thomas, who is contesting the seat for Gillen, said Mr Robertson had repeatedly displayed a fascist attitude in the Legislative Assembly. He had cast aspersions on senior Department of Aboriginal Affairs officers and that this was now under investigation by government officials.*

Firstly, let us look at what a fascist is. "Fascism" is defined in the honourable member for Nightcliff's Concise Oxford Dictionary as "principles and organisations of Italian nationalist and anti-communist dictatorship from 1922 to 1943; similar national or authoritarian movements; figuratively, a system of extreme right wing or authoritarian views". Why would anyone accuse me of being a fascist and why would he say I had continually displayed such an attitude in this House? Mr Speaker, I would ask you to draw your own conclusions as to my conduct throughout the 2½ years I have been here and I would ask honourable members to do likewise. I would ask people who have read all of my press statements and who have been familiar with my activities as a member of this legislature to find anywhere at all where I have indicated the slightest hint of a fascist attitude, much less continually conducted myself in that manner. I will let it rest at that and I will let the people make their own judgment.

The part that concerns me more is the statement that I have cast aspersions on senior Department of Aboriginal Affairs officers and this is now under investigation by government officials. What is under investigation by government officials and who told Mr Thomas that it was under investigation by government officials? Has someone indicated to that particular private citizen who is not yet even a candidate officially to this place that an elected representative of the people is under investigation by government officials or are the allegations I am alleged to have made under investigation? Again, who told him? I think it is an appalling situation. If there is any vestige of truth in this, which I doubt, it is an appalling situation that a person in the street effectively or an employee of the Commonwealth Public Service has been told apparently by officials of the Government that I or what I have said as a member of this legislature is under investigation by the Government. Again, I think people may draw their own conclusions from that type of vindictive, spiteful attack which is utterly and completely baseless. I have checked with some of my colleagues and they cannot recall

anything I have done to deserve this sort of thing; it then becomes a total matter of nasty fiction.

Over the last couple of years, I have regularly written an article in a newspaper in Alice Springs. I have repeatedly pointed out to people that this type of tactic has never before been seen in this Northern Territory of Australia. I think we are coming a long way down the drain when political candidates have to rely on this sort of personal nastiness, this smear campaign, by which to hopefully win a few votes. Anyone who indulges in that type of practice insults the people that he is asking to vote for him. He insults the very basis upon which this democracy is built because the only person surely who will take any notice of this sort of tactic is a person of similar calibre to the type of person who is putting this rubbish into the press.

Mr VALE: There are two points that I would like to speak on this afternoon. The first one relates to a front page newspaper report in the Australian on Friday 8 July. The caption is "Viner warns of social chaos", and it goes on to explain that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Viner, in addressing a press conference referred to the fact that uranium mining in the Northern Territory would disrupt Aboriginal people in particular. He went on: "It has never been indicated to me by Aboriginals that they have been interested in making millions of dollars out of mining, he said. I think their feeling is that they would honestly prefer not to have holes dug in the ground which are half a mile wide and 300 feet deep".

The first comment I would make is that, before he makes statements such as that, Mr Viner should do his homework. In the Stuart electorate, there is the Yuendumu Mining Company which is wholly owned by Aboriginal people. That company has shares in a known but yet unproven uranium field. Those shareholders and their manager have expressed to me on a number of occasions their desire to evaluate that field and, given successful evaluation, to mine, mill and market the uranium. In one instance, you have Mr Viner saying

the Aborigines do not want to do it and, in the second instance, you have the Aboriginal people themselves saying, "We have got it and, if it is successful, we will dig it up".

I would pay my compliments to the Yuendumu Mining Company and their shareholders, in particular to a chap called Frank Baarda, a geologist and company manager whose political opinions are probably at opposite angles to mine. For a number of years, he has devoted his energies entirely to the wellbeing of the shareholders and staff of that Yuendumu Mining Company. I think he has probably existed on a below average salary and his attitude and devotion to the mining company and employees could best be described as service above and beyond the call of duty.

My second point pertains to roads. In using the word "roads", I refer to highways and main access roads within the entire Northern Territory although my comments might basically be restricted to those within the Stuart electorate. I think that the proposal which I am about to put could be implemented for the entire Northern Territory. There are 2 factors pertaining to the suggestion; the first is safety and the second is environment and tourist potential. Far too often along these roads, the bush roads or the highways, we see wrecked cars, overflowing rubbish cans at various traffic parking bays and dead cattle. All these things detract from the natural beauty of Central Australia in particular and probably the Northern Territory in general.

My suggestion is that the Northern Territory could well afford to position trucks on all sections of these roads, say every 300 miles on the Stuart Highway, and have 2 men on board who carry oxyacetylene equipment, materials to temporarily mend potholes and warning signs to indicate to the public that there are particular dangers in certain potholes or recently washed out sections. When they come across these wrecked vehicles, they could cut them up into small enough pieces to cart them away on those trucks. They could also empty more frequently than is now being done - and I believe it is probably only happening once every 6 to 12 months - these 44 gallon rubbish drums which are positioned along the highway at these various stopping-off points.

The cattle could be burnt and the remains buried. You would solve a health problem by removing those cattle carcasses; you would improve the tourist potential here and, having someone readily available on these sections of the road day to day would increase our tourist potential. When I discussed this with some friends of mine, they raised the question of how much it would cost. In the long term, with the cleaning up of these roads right across the Northern Territory, it would not be a question of how much it would cost but rather a question of how many tourist dollars it would earn for the Northern Territory.

Motion agreed; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 13 July 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery, in the company of His Honour the Administrator, of the Right Honourable Sir Charles Adermann, a former Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry, a Privy Councillor and a member of the House of Representatives for 29 years. Honourable members would also know that Sir Charles is the father of the current minister for the Northern Territory. On your behalf, I extend to our distinguished visitors a very cordial welcome.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO  
LOTTERY AND GAMING ORDINANCE

Continued from 12 July 1977,

Dr LETTS (by leave): The Report of the Inquiry into the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance was tabled yesterday. The recommendations which it contains will be of widespread interest to the whole community and of particular interest to those associated with the racing industry, punters, bookmakers, race clubs and other clubs, those who administer the laws in these fields, the social workers and legislators. The recommendations are bound to provoke further public discussion and controversy. Unfortunately, with the limited duplicating facilities available to the Chief Secretary's Department, it was only possible to produce 50 copies in time for this Assembly meeting. It is expected that the demand will considerably exceed that number, but the production of additional copies through the printer will take approximately 2 more weeks. The Majority Party believes that the report is socially very important and it is clear that some of the matters covered are financially complex. Time is needed for a thorough examination of it and for consultation to gauge the reactions of the people of the Northern Territory to the recommendations. It was desirable to

have the report tabled as soon as it was available because it was commissioned during the life of the present Assembly and also to commence the process of measuring the community reaction. The report raises a number of questions on which further information will be needed and that information will be sought. In view of the very limited time which has been available for consideration and analysis, it is not considered that it would do justice to the report or to the public to undertake a substantial debate on the matter today. Indeed, it would be premature to attempt to formulate a properly considered policy. We therefore propose to keep our options open till the report has been distributed and widely read. During this period, I am sure that all members of the Assembly would welcome the views of members of the public.

At this stage, on behalf of the Majority Party and no doubt all members of the Assembly, I would like to offer our thanks to Mr Neilson who spent considerable time and energy on his investigations and made a special effort to have the report available in time for tabling at the final meeting of the Assembly.

I referred earlier to gauging the reactions of the people of the Northern Territory to the recommendations and I understand that some reactions are already coming forward, in particular, some comments from the Association of Licensed Clubs in respect of poker machines. It has been reported to me that the Association of Licensed Clubs has said that it will be exhorting its membership to support in the forthcoming elections only those candidates who come out in favour of poker machines. On the question of poker machines and the other recommendations in this report, we will be keeping our options open for the time being and attempt to gauge further public reaction in response to the report. In view of the strong case that has been put forward in the report that anybody would be unwise to commit himself to the introduction of poker machines without getting a more widespread public reaction through some form of referendum or means of testing that re-

action beyond that which the association of clubs can represent, I see a need for a future legislature here to consider ways and means of carrying out referenda within the boundaries of our Territory so that issues such as this may be more fully canvassed.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

(Serial 215)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Dr LETTS: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill deals with the position of chief executive officers who are, in effect, branch heads in the Northern Territory Public Service. These are key officers who will be given the financial and administrative delegations necessary for the service to perform efficiently. Another important function of chief executive officers is that of selection, promotion or appointment of persons to the public service. Part of the ordinance provides for appointments and outlines the powers of the chief executive officers. As the ordinance stands at present, if there is no chief executive officer, no means exists for the selection, promotion or appointment from among applicants for appointment to the service. This does not apply in the case of officers transferred from the Commonwealth Public Service. In that case, the power of appointment is vested in the Public Service Commissioner under section 39(4). The bill proposes therefore to revise the provisions of section 19 of the principal ordinance dealing with appointment of chief executive officers and replace them with provisions which will meet all needs.

The bill will repeal subsections (2), (3) and (4) of the ordinance and replace them with new subsections (2) to (4)(b). These provide essentially that appointments as departmental heads shall be made by the Administrator in Council and the council also has the power to fill temporary vacancies in departmental head positions. If there is no position of departmental head, the Administrator in Council may direct an employee to be chief executive

officer of the unit of administration. The council also has the power to appoint acting chief executive officers. The important new provision is that the Executive Member responsible for the operation of the department or the unit of administration will have power to make short term appointments as chief executive officer for periods not in excess of 3 months or until a permanent appointment is made by the Administrator in Council. This power will enable the Executive Member to ensure that the administration of his department may continue at all times and also ensure that a chief executive officer will be available to select, promote or appoint persons to the concerned unit of administration. The power will be temporary; permanent appointment will remain the prerogative of the Administrator in Council.

As consequential amendments, the definitions of "chief executive officer" and "unit of administration" will be amended to show that the Administrator in Council's power will relate to all of section 19 and not merely section 19(2) as in the present ordinance. Also, a definition of "Executive Member" is inserted to show that its use in a particular case is restricted to the department for which the Executive Member is responsible.

Section 19 is central to the operation of the public service. The amendments clarify the intention of the section and ensure that the offices required for its effective operation are always filled. I propose to seek the passage of this bill at this sittings and, at some stage today, I will be moving for the suspension of standing orders in order that the bill may be permitted to pass all stages. The bill was made available to members as soon as it was printed and they have had some time to look at it.

Debate adjourned.

PETROLEUM (PROSPECTING  
AND MINING) BILL

(Serial 216)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr POLLOCK: I move that the bill be now read a second time. This bill and the second-reading speech were prepared by the Government and I introduce the bill on its behalf. This is quite a short bill with only 2 substantive clauses. Clause 4 is an amendment to section 23(2) of the principal ordinance which at present reads: "The Administrator may, after obtaining a report from the oil advisory committee - (a) suspend either wholly or in part, and either absolutely or conditionally, the obligations of a permittee; and (b) order that the period of suspension shall not be taken into account in calculating the total term of the permit". It was clearly the intention of this section that an order issued by the Administrator under paragraph (b) should have the effect of extending the life of the permit by a period equal to the period of suspension so as to allow the permittee to carry out the obligations which are carried forward from the period of suspension. However, some doubt has been expressed as to whether the present wording of this section adequately gives effect to this intention and the new wording is proposed to put this beyond question.

Clause 5 is an amendment to section 44(1)(a) of the principal ordinance which at present reads: "The Administrator shall not grant a lease - (a) unless he is satisfied the applicant (i) is the holder of a permit which applies to land which includes the land in respect of which his application is made;". This provision could create problems in that a number of new requirements, which were not envisaged when the ordinance was originally drafted, now have to be met before a lease can be granted. An example of such a requirement would be the negotiation of an agreement with the appropriate land council if the application includes Aboriginal land. It is thus possible that a lease application could be lodged while the applicant is the holder of a permit over the area concerned, but the permit could expire before the lease can be granted. The amendment therefore provides that the lease application retains its validity under these circumstances so that the lease can subsequently be granted when all other requirements have been met.

Clause 6 is supplementary to clause 4 and specifically provides that the amended provisions of section 23 apply to certain existing permits in respect of which the Administrator has approved suspensions of obligations for various periods. Permits 175 and 178 are held by Magellan Petroleum NT Pty Ltd and United Canso Oil and Gas Co NT Pty Ltd respectively and cover a significant portion of the Amadeus Basin region, including the Mereenie oil and gas field and the Palm Valley gas field. Honourable members will be aware that these companies have already spent several million dollars in exploration within these permit areas during the past 15 years, including the drilling of some 20 exploratory wells, and that the establishment of a small refinery at Alice Springs with further heavy investment is under consideration. Under the circumstances, it is essential that there should be no doubt about the status and conditions attaching to these permits.

Permit 177 is held by Beach Petroleum no liability in the Simpson Desert area and, while the prospects for early development of this area appear rather less than those in the Amadeus Basin, it is again desirable to remove any possible doubt as to the application of section 23 of the ordinance to this permit.

The reference to a variation in clause 6(1)(c) and (d) arises from the fact that the companies holding permits 175 and 178 have previously held permits over the same areas, permits 43 and 56 respectively, and under the then existing legislation had converted parts of these to oil licences 1 and 2 respectively in the Mereenie area. Under subsequent amendments to the ordinance, the provision for licences was deleted although a savings clause permitted existing licences to continue in force and in October 1973, the companies applied for leases while these licences were still in force. However, there were again doubts about the adequacy of the relevant procedures and, on 13 December 1976, the Administrator accordingly varied the area of the permits as provided for in section 70 of the ordinance so as to again include the areas of these licences and

so that the permit holders could re-apply for leases under the provisions of the amended ordinance.

As previously mentioned, the companies holding these permits are now at a crucial stage for development of the petroleum resources which they have discovered and it is therefore essential that their right to obtain valid leases should be beyond question. For this reason, the bill is presented as a matter of urgency to enable it to pass all stages at this sittings of the Assembly. I will be moving for a suspension of standing orders to enable the bill to be dealt with during the current sittings.

Debate adjourned.

#### CHURCH LANDS LEASES BILL

(Serial 205)

Continued from 12 July 1977.

In Committee:

Clause 3:

Mrs LAWRIE: I move an amendment 15.1 as circulated.

This omits the words "church or mosque" and substitutes "church, mosque or synagogue". This was foreshadowed in my second-reading speech. In his address in reply the sponsor of the bill said: "If she proposes that synagogues should also be included in the bill, I would have to satisfy myself that such an action was wise by conferring on the matter with the hierarchy of the Jewish religion to remove any doubt that what is planned is acceptable. Perhaps the honourable member in her capacity as a contact to the Jewish religion in the Northern Territory could assist me in this matter". I must advise the House that I believe I have assisted the honourable Cabinet Member in this matter to his satisfaction and I hope to the Majority Party's satisfaction.

Mr PERRON: I undertook some investigation in this matter yesterday with the assistance of the honourable member for Nightcliff. I have had talks with a

senior rabbi of the Jewish faith. This particular gentleman was a senior member of the Jewish faith in Melbourne and he is also a member of the executive of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies. He was also a councillor of the Executive Council of the Australian Jewry. We discussed the issue and he has satisfied me. We have discussed this matter within the Majority Party and there seems to be no valid objection to including synagogue in this bill. It was originally felt that the association of the word "church" with the Jewish faith could have created some discontent. I am now satisfied that this is not so.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mrs LAWRIE: I move amendment 15.2.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Bill passed remaining stage without debate.

#### CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 209)

Continued from 12 July 1977.

In Committee:

Clause 3:

Mrs LAWRIE: I move amendment 17.1.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Bill passed remaining stage without debate.

SPECIAL PURPOSES LEASES BILL

(Serial 206)

Continued from 12 July 1977.

In Committee:

Clause 3:

Mrs LAWRIE: I move amendment 16.1. May I just thank the honourable sponsor of the bill for his cooperation and courtesy in this matter of including synagogues.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Bill passed remaining stage without debate.

SMALL CLAIMS BILL

(Serial 202)

Continued from 16 June 1977.

Mr EVERINGHAM: It gives me some pleasure to support this amending bill to the Small Claims Ordinance which came into effect last year. Despite some doubts that I had in relation to its efficacy, it seems to have worked quite well and the burden on the court system does not seem to have been such that any great number of additional staff have been required. A great deal of minor debt work and small claims between trades people and their customers has been put through directly, saving them all money in this time of high costs.

It has been said recently that the Majority Party in the Legislative Assembly has done nothing for the consumer. In the course of this sittings alone, we have seen the passage of the amendment to the Building Societies Act which I think could be described as consumerism because it will protect the depositor in the building society. This particular bill is in fact a consumer protection bill because it makes pro-

vision for the advertising in the local papers or the Gazette of details of small claims provisions which are handed down by the court. This has been going on in some other areas, Queensland in particular, for some time. The people read the details in the paper and they see the names of particular trades people turning up several times and those trades people notice a drop in their trading. Obviously, this is the type of consumerism that is much more effective than having bills loaded with penalties and fines because you have to take action and issue a summons to get anywhere. That is not the sort of thing that consumers want; they want something simple. They want something that will guide them and, at the same time, warn off the unscrupulous businessman. This type of legislation will do just that. I throw the charge back in the teeth of the people who have made the allegation that this party has done nothing for the consumer in the 3 years that we have been here. In fact, most of what we have done has been directed towards the betterment of the life of the ordinary person in the Northern Territory. It gives me great pleasure to support this bill.

Mr WITHNALL: While I accept the principle of the bill and while I think that the publication of the names of the claimant and defendant and other particulars is probably a good idea, I wonder why a distinction is to be made between the Small Claims Court, the Local Court and the Supreme Court. There is no provision requiring publication of claims in the Local or Supreme Courts; there is nothing to prevent it, but it is not provided for in the law.

The Small Claims Court will be used a great deal in the future and I am quite satisfied that there will be some thousands of cases each year. The publication of thousands of names and all the other details in the Gazette will be quite a large task and, if they are to be published in other publications as well, it will cost quite a lot of money. Trade journals do publish particulars of judgments and particulars in relation to bankruptcies and the probability is that these publications would automatically publish re-

sults of proceedings in the Small Claims Court as well. My only doubt is whether the considerable expense which will probably be involved is really necessary.

Miss ANDREW: I thank honourable members for the comments on this bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

See Minutes for amendment to clause 3 agreed to without debate.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO  
PUBLIC ELECTRICITY SUPPLY  
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Continued from 12 July 1977,

Mr PERRON: Honourable members will recall that the Majority Party called a special sittings of this Assembly last December to amend the legislation to specifically reject the transfer of the Department of Northern Territory function of supplying electricity to Territory consumers to the Northern Territory Public Service. The reasons were twofold: first, we did not have a proper agreement on the financial implications of the transfer and, secondly, at that time the transfer did not provide control of the operational aspects of electricity generation and distribution in the Territory. The report we now have before us is a testimony to the correctness of that action.

The straw that broke the camel's back and led to the commissioning of this inquiry was an explosion in the number 4 feed heater on 15 January this year. After inspecting the damage on that Sunday with the Majority Leader, I called upon the Minister for Construction to institute an independent inquiry into the operations at Stokes Hill powerhouse. This was later expanded to include operations throughout the Northern Territory and, with pressure from other groups in support, the inquiry was finally agreed upon. The report does not blame anyone in particular for the mess our electricity supplies are in; it blames the system,

This is the basis of all our problems; we cannot blame anyone because no one identifiable person or group of persons is responsible. That is why we have such a mess on our hands.

The Department of the Northern Territory engages the Department of Construction as a consultant on design, planning and construction of facilities and it also engages the Department of Construction as an agent to run the Electrical Supply Undertaking itself. The principal in this situation is the Department of Northern Territory which controls the funding and therefore is in a position to impose constraints on the operation through the financial allocation system, and it often does. The report points out that there is little expertise or appreciation of the factors involved in electricity supply and generation in the Department of Northern Territory, yet they are controlling the purse strings of the whole operation. It is a bit like saying to a mechanic, "You fix my car and make it reliable but I will tell you how much it will cost and what tools to use". The report highlights this aspect and goes on to say that officers outside the Electrical Supply Division of the Department of Construction - that is no doubt officers within the Department of Northern Territory - do not seem to recognise their responsibility to ensure that the division is adequately staffed and equipped to carry out its function. I believe that in that phrase lies the crux of the whole problem,

After reading the report, one wonders how we can get any electricity at all. Now that the Government has announced the formation of an electricity authority to overcome organisational difficulties with the system, the next most urgent area needing attention is staffing. The report sums up most of the staffing problems on page 32: "Practically all of these problems stem from the application of public service methods or the nation-wide policies of the Department of Construction or the Public Service Board". The report goes on to recommend that the new authority be independent of both the Commonwealth and Territory Public Services as it is felt that public service procedures are not responsible enough to operate a 24

hour essential service.

There is no doubt that existing staffing policies and recruitment procedures are hopelessly inadequate and inflexible, but this does not have to be the case at all. Instead of having some public servant in the Department of Construction office in Melbourne granting or withholding approvals to replace operational personnel in the Territory powerhouse, the authority to recruit within established ceilings should be vested in the head of the Electrical Supply Division of the Department of Construction in Darwin. That is the solution to staffing problems in the short term and should have been instituted quickly after the inquiry handed down its interim report on 4 March this year. Four months after that interim report was handed to the Federal Government, we are still stuck with an inflexible system of controls on replacing vital staff.

The recommendation in the report that a new commission should be independent of the Northern Territory Public Service will have to be looked at fairly closely. We can create a statutory authority in the Northern Territory, under the Northern Territory Public Service, with sufficient delegated powers to respond quickly to the needs of the electricity supply industry. There are considerable benefits in the prospect of keeping Northern Territory Public Servants within one organisation in general, but having widespread autonomy within statutory authorities so that they can respond very quickly to day-to-day operational matters. It is vital that such an electricity authority should have this very broad autonomy. Had the Federal Government acted when the interim report was received, we might have been part of the way out of the woods by now. However, recommendations in the interim report were kept so secret that no one had the opportunity to submit proposals to correct the defects and deficiencies. I call upon the Federal Government now to take immediate administrative action to overcome the staff shortages which are outlined in the sections of the report dealing with adequacy of staffing.

The day labour force needed to main-

tain reliable electricity supplies in the Northern Territory is over 400 and this was agreed by the inquiry, in fact, they said that it could do with a few more. In May of this year, the total day labour force was 293, 25% down on the numbers required in the 24 hour-a-day, 7 day-a-week operation. It is just not on. One wonders, how we get any electricity at all out of this system. Waiting for the formation of an authority in 1978 will not help us in regard to the shortage of staff at the present time. Those responsible in the hierarchy of the Department of Construction in Melbourne must allow the immediate recruitment of personnel up to establishment level and give a local authority to senior management in the ESD to replace essential personnel as their positions become vacant, and to maintain full strength at all times.

The report states that the general standard of operation and maintenance at Stokes Hill Power Station is below what should be expected. I do not think that is any surprise to anyone in the Territory who has been watching the scene closely. The reasons given are shortages of staff in certain categories, a very high rate of staff turn-over, inadequate operating procedures and manuals because there are no resources to produce them, the lack of reference drawings to facilitate emergency trouble shooting, completely inadequate stores facilities which are vital to such an undertaking, small overcrowded workshops and inadequate staff accommodation. All of these matters must be attended to early. Despite the fact that we will form a commission in 6 months' or 12 months' time, we cannot sit back and wait for them to make these decisions. It is obvious that these decisions must be made now. From my inquiries, I cannot find very much action behind the scenes at this stage at all. Perhaps the new budget will have some heartening news for us.

A point which was raised during the inquiry was the wisdom of installing the type of equipment at Stokes Hill which has been installed over the past several years. The report advises that the type and sizes of generator units installed represents sound planning and

that the inability to meet demand resulting from mechanical failure was the result of an unusually high failure rate, rather than poor equipment. That statement alone should bury a few skeletons. I believe that is good news for us, because it is much easier and far more practical to repair such equipment than to replace it.

The transmission system also has its problems and we do not need to tell that to people in Darwin. I have spoken several times previously in the House about the precarious state of Darwin's transmission system and called for urgent attention to be directed towards upgrading this distribution system. Not only do we need millions of dollars to spend in the area, but also the shortage of key personnel, high staff turn-over, inexperienced staff and lack of training and supervision must be rectified before we can expect a reliable service. It is not simply a matter of funds to reconstruct the system in Darwin but also a matter of procedures and staff to operate the system once it is there. A new radio network, which was recommended some years ago, telephones for call-out staff, proper stores facilities and facilities at line depots have all to be attended to before we can expect a continuous, reliable electricity supply in the Northern Territory. The report refers to each area individually and points out what is needed. It is certainly a very good report and the men have done a thorough job.

A second powerhouse for Darwin is mentioned. In the Majority Party's submission, we asked them to report on the future power needs for the Northern Territory, particularly in the northern area. The report calls for attention to be directed to the construction of a second powerhouse immediately. Although the inquiry was given a population forecast from an absurd 50,000 to an almost equally absurd 400,000 for Darwin by the year 2000, members of the inquiry chose a conservative growth of 3 % up until 1981, 4% till 1986 and 3% thereon to the year 2000 as a basis of projection, giving a population of around 100,000 by the end of the century. I do believe, and I guess we are all "crystal balling" in this area,

that that figure is slightly conservative. Even taking this figure, we will need additional generating capacity between 1981 and 1984. Work on a new powerhouse has to be commenced immediately if we are to avoid resorting to gas turbines which are uneconomic and inefficient for base load generation.

These are words that I have echoed in this Assembly several times in the past when I have spoken of the need for commencing design stages for a second powerhouse for Darwin because it will take somewhere in the vicinity of 5 to 7 years to build the powerhouse that we are talking about. It is time that Federal Government departments stopped shuffling around and hoping the problem will go away. The decision to go ahead should be made now. This report, prepared by experts who are eminent in their field, states that the work is urgent. How many more times does it have to be said? It has already been said a dozen or more times in various internal reports within the public service itself. The same people who have sat on a recommendation to install an urgently needed radio system in Darwin for several years are sitting on a recommendation to build a second powerhouse but the results will be far more serious.

Another area of inaction brought to our attention in the report is the suggestion made by the Attorney General's Department to the Department of the Northern Territory about 12 months ago that changes to the Supply of Services Ordinance were warranted but no such proposals have been presented to me. That is another area where there has been suggested action which could have been undertaken without costing the taxpayer any more than the normal procedures yet it has not been taken at all.

Tribute is paid by those who conducted the inquiry to the dedicated few who seemingly have held the place together over the past few years despite the obstacles. As a citizen and a consumer in Darwin, I too express my appreciation to those people. Those people have stuck it out for so long against an inflexible bureaucratic

jungle. The report pays tribute to them for sticking at it and those people are responsible for our having any power at all. I give them credit.

The report is a good one in general but it does not contain any surprises to persons in Darwin who are reasonably familiar with the problems that we have been working under. These problems have been boiling just under the surface for several years now but are all out in the open now. It is time to stop reflecting on the past and gear up for the task of surmounting the obstacles which have been outlined by eminent people. An electricity commission is only part of the answer but probably the most essential part. We must start on those areas which can be improved immediately. To this end, I have written to the Minister suggesting that he institute certain actions on those areas which can be rectified between now and when a statutory authority is created. Those areas are staffing levels and procedures, stores buildings and work shops, installation of phones for call-out staff - this is obviously a very small item but it has just been ignored - upgrading of telemetric and remote control facilities and a decision has to be taken on the undergrounding or rehabilitation of an overhead distribution system and the commencement of design for a second powerhouse in Darwin.

In conclusion, I express my appreciation to the members of the inquiry who undertook the vexed task of preparing this report and weeded their way through the mess of paperwork that they were presented with. I believe they did an excellent job. I commend the report.

Dr LETTS: I rise to support and add something to the remarks of the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning. First, I should remind the Assembly how the inquiry came about. We did not set up this particular inquiry through the Inquiries Ordinance because we have had difficulty in trying to get inquiries mounted through that ordinance in the last 2 or 3 years. Because of delays in approval of finance and questions asked by the Senate Estimates Committee and other factors, it would have taken too long to do it that way. This inquiry

came about directly through representations made by this Assembly to the Minister for the Northern Territory and the Minister for Construction. Our representations started as far back as last September when the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government and myself spoke to the Minister for the Northern Territory in Mount Isa about the state of the electricity supply services in the Northern Territory. We had been charged with the responsibility of examining a review of the charges for electricity in the Territory and, after some weeks of attempting to find out what the state of the organisation was, we had very little success because the information that we received was quite conflicting and confused. When the Commonwealth Government's decision was made in September to transfer certain functions to the Territory Assembly, and public utilities were included in that transfer list, we brought the matter to a head by saying that we wished the transfer of that particular function to be deferred pending a proper inquiry. The matter was finally brought to the boil by the explosion in the boiler at the powerhouse.

Our insistence on the inquiry and our reluctance to take over the electricity supply, warts and all, has been fully justified by what we now see in this report. Mind you, our move to have the transfer deferred until an inquiry has been made has been heavily criticised in some quarters, particularly by our political opposition. The ALP has seen fit to use publicly on a number of occasions phrases like "a gutless Assembly", "a gutless CLP" and to indicate to the public that they would immediately set up an authority if they ever had the opportunity to do so. I would certainly like to see the shape and character of their magic wand. What a heap of buldust that really is! It is now quite clear from the report that we took a most responsible stand,

Let us look at the organisational or organic problems which are built into the system and which the inquiry clearly recognises. We were offered back in December last year only part of the wheels, nuts and bolts responsible for the electricity supply. In paragraph

104, the report says in relation to the transfer to the Legislative Assembly: "From our inquiries, it appears that those functions of electricity supply proposed for transfer to the Legislative Assembly were restricted to the commercial aspects directly handled by the Department of the Northern Territory. The planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance apparently were to continue as the responsibility of the Department of Construction. We do not see that these proposals would result in any significant improvement in the total situation". In other words, we would have had to take the blame but we would have only had the bridle and no horse to ride.

On the financial aspects of the present and past organisation, the board of inquiry had this to say in paragraph 39 and they are quoting from a submission from the Department of the Northern Territory: "The financial state of the electricity service is far from clear at the present time except to say that it is running at a substantial loss due mainly to steep increases in fuel and wage costs". Elsewhere in the report, the extent and degree of both those financial losses are enumerated, and they are pretty staggering. It goes on: "It is sufficient to say that the true financial status is not known. However, since the return of the branch to Darwin recently, work on accounts has recommenced but it will be many months before acceptable trading statements are produced and the asset registers are updated". What responsible person, whether in government or business, would have blithely taken over a lame duck such as this knowing the organisational and financial situation outlined in the report? For anybody else to say that he would set up a statutory authority and make it work immediately, and that he would have done so earlier, is a piece of arrant nonsense. Nobody in this Assembly or in this emerging Northern Territory administration can take anything other than what he is given by big brother, the Commonwealth, and those of us who have been in this game for a few years know that only too well. We cannot take anything legislatively or organisation-

ally unless the Commonwealth agrees to its being taken,

Those who have spoken about the immediate creation of a new authority and its operation within the Northern Territory have said nothing about what they will do about the financial aspects. What are they going to do about negotiating with the Commonwealth to wipe off deficits? What are they going to do about acquiring the assets and on what basis will this transfer occur? What arrangements will be made for the proper, independent and flexible funding and staffing of the operation, bearing in mind that the funds will still come ultimately from the Commonwealth Government? To talk of doing these things unilaterally is to deceive the public about the reality of the situation.

In reading the report, I found the comments in respect of past organisational aspects and their bearing upon the troubles which have arisen of particular interest because, not only in regard to this debacle but in regard to many other things, those comments go to the very heart of the way in which the Commonwealth has administered the Territory over the years. This came about not through malice nor through any deliberate desire to hold this place back or do it harm but simply through a failure to recognise that their system is completely incapable of handling needs in a community such as this. It is simply not designed for the job and would never be capable of doing it. The particular paragraph on page 8 which I found so interesting once again quotes the words of the Department of the Northern Territory:

*At the management level, in all areas, frustration is evident in the process of attempting to ascertain the latest policy decisions or attitude of the different authorities towards vital matters. This is not a criticism of the officers of any of the organisations who have displayed a remarkable degree of tolerance and cooperation in carrying out their duties. The difficulty is inherent in the system where all factors are not known simultaneously by all parties.*

Previously, the report enumerated 4 or 5 different organisations that all had some hand in the decision-making process and none of them knew clearly at any time what the others were doing. Surely, that same criticism, that same complaint, that same definition of the problem would come out in any independent inquiry into most of the state-type functions run by the Commonwealth, with 2 or 3 different bodies involved throughout the Northern Territory.

I believe that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government will deal with financial arrangements but I wish to draw attention to page 9 of the report on which there was a statement of the Majority Party approach in the past and for the future on the question of financing the electricity supply. In paragraph 30, the board said: "We understand that the Majority Party still desires to acquire the total responsibility for public electricity supply in the Northern Territory, provided that adequate provision is made to continue the present funding arrangements without increasing the burden on the consumers". In other places in the report, you will find that our policy hinges on the fact that people in the Northern Territory may well be expected to pay for electricity services an amount which bears relevance to the charge for these services paid by consumers in other parts of Australia. We do not believe that it should be a heavily subsidised service nor do we believe that there is any future in the Northern Territory if charges of this sort have to be escalated far beyond the range of charges made in other parts of Australia. Accepting that, there must be a gap between what we can raise by such charges and what it will cost to operate this service for some years to come.

The board appeared to infer in one or two places that our attitude may be somewhat unrealistic. I do not believe that the board had access to all the background material about the relationship between the Territory Executive and Commonwealth financing that we have. I do not know to what extent it examined the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report on the Northern Terri-

tory and any of the principles of financial arrangements contained therein, but it certainly did not have any access to the discussions which we have had with the Commonwealth Government on this matter. It is quite clear, and this goes back to the principles of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report, that, provided that a responsible government in the Northern Territory makes efforts to meet certain responsibilities for revenue raising up to or about the levels in other communities in other parts of Australia, the Commonwealth Government will recognise the special disabilities of geography of the Northern Territory in attempting to run services such as this. Provided we make the effort, a "reasonable effort" is the term that they use, they will recognise special areas of disability and make arrangements to provide financial support in those areas.

Finally, turning to the first recommendation, I see no problem in the electricity commission being established with responsibility to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly for all public electricity supply in the Northern Territory. We hoped for that recommendation and we accept it wholeheartedly.

Recommendations 1 to 3 have not yet been considered by the Majority Party collectively. They have only just finished their consideration of the report; they have not yet met to define final attitudes on these recommendations. In the case of recommendations 2 and 3, there may be some variations in the details of those. The Cabinet has not looked at it yet.

We have tried to tie statutory authorities in some way, even though it may be a fairly tenuous way, within the overall umbrella of the Northern Territory Public Service. I had very strong representations from various public service associations that they wanted to preserve the opportunity for career service within the broader framework and they were given every consideration when our Public Service Ordinance and organisation was designed. It has been working reasonably well. The statutory authorities formerly existed more or

less independently and some of the public service units such as the police and other units were not very enthusiastic. In fact, in some of them, there was a degree of opposition to this proposition. It has worked reasonably well but it is under constant examination and review. If we find that the Public Service Ordinance does not meet the needs for independent action of any of our statutory authorities, if there is evidence that they cannot operate as we as a responsible government would like to see them operate, this matter can be reviewed and a new arrangement can be set up more along the lines that the report talks about with reference to TAA, Qantas and bodies such as that. Whether the electricity commission would be entirely independent or whether it would have some link with the public service is a matter for further examination by us. We would hope to talk to the Public Service Commissioner, the public service associations, the Government itself and the electricity commission which is proposed to be set up. I hope that we will come to a decision on this in the near future. In any case, it would not be a decision which would be irreversible. If it was decided that there would be a tie-in with the public service, it would have to be clearly on the basis that it could work in the way that this board of inquiry has seen that it needs to work if it is to overcome the present difficulties. I find it an excellent report.

Mr TUXWORTH: In speaking to the report, I would like to speak as a consumer in the bottom half of the Territory which has not been plagued over the years with the problems of the electricity supply evident in the northern end, particularly in Katherine and Darwin. However, I am aware of some of the problems that must be over-running the authority and, for this reason, I would like to speak on them briefly. I concur wholeheartedly with the concept of the electricity supply being run as an efficient economic operation and that supply being taken over by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly at the earliest possible time.

There is no doubt electricity oper-

ations, like many other operations, will consume money at any rate the operators wish them to consume money irrespective of profitability or efficiency and there is no doubt that, if we are to assume a position in the Northern Territory as responsible administrators and managers of government, we must look to running these enterprises as effectively as the management of TAA and Qantas look to their own operations. There is no doubt that, when a situation exists whereby clerks in one department advise clerks in another department who in turn advise professionals in the operation of an organisation such as electricity supply, there must be a problem because the understanding that is required of the management of such things is not normally held by clerks. Indeed, it has been outlined in the inquiry that a little more expertise and direct management on the spot would have been to the great benefit of the undertaking in general.

Until recently, the supply of power in my home town was conducted by a private company which not only ran 8 generators for its own consumption but also ran 4 for the consumption of the townspeople. They went about providing power for the town in the same manner they went about providing power for their own operations; cost overruns, breakdowns and inefficiency were not tolerated and they managed the operation in such a way that the community derived great benefit from their efficiency. In fact, since the Government has moved into the generation business itself in the town, the costs have risen slightly because the government system is not as efficient as the private enterprise system. I would like to pay tribute to Peko Mines for being magnanimous in providing what was a governmental responsibility and for running it as well as they did. The new supply system is a relatively small one in terms of Darwin or Alice Springs. It has 16 or 18 employees; it is an automatic station. It is being run by people who have their heart in the job and who will get a great deal of satisfaction from knowing that their problems will be dealt with by responsible people in the Assembly and Territorians rather than being dictated to or advised from Canberra,

There are a couple of aspects of the reticulation of power that will come from the formation of an electricity authority in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt that, in other parts of Australia, generating authorities have found that it is a much more viable exercise to reticulate power along the wire rather than to build generators every 60 or 100 miles throughout their state because the cost of operating small generating units in various communities is becoming prohibitive. In the Northern Territory, we have many small communities that fit into the same category and perhaps an electricity authority which had the job of providing power for every community could take a much more business-like approach. I am referring to the provision of power to such places as Pine Creek, Larrimah, Mataranka, Elliott and Warrabri. The original powerhouses built at Warrabri and Elliott many years ago have recently been replaced and will possibly need to be replaced again in the next 5 years to cater for growth. The cost of the original powerhouses and new powerhouses, in the long term, will be twice the cost of having to run a reticulation line from a central powerhouse at Tennant Creek in the first instance. It is also interesting to note that private enterprise in the area does not hesitate to run a power reticulation line 50 or 60 miles because the economics of running small individual units is just not on any more. I believe that the overall consideration of these projects will get a much more favourable response from an authority that knows what it is doing.

One other beneficial aspect which will stem from a Northern Territory commission is that there will be much more accountability both within the community and within the commission for the operation records and efficiency. Within the last 3 months, we have had a situation develop in our own community where the electricity accounts that are now coming out for the period ending in March are 3 times the normal consumption. I am not talking about cost; we accept that there has been a cost increase in the provision of electricity. The amount of consumption being debited to householders is as much as

300% above the norm for the respective households and businesses. This is fine providing the people have used it but there is no method at all of tracking down and accounting for whether the premises involved have used the power. There is no way that we can get a suitable check from the meters that are in existence on the amount of power supplied to the town and in fact whether that amount of power has been transferred to the accounts of individuals and that there is a balance on both sides of the ledger. It is patently obvious to me that, in the recent unsatisfactory situation that has arisen, there are no records to be checked. We are operating on a guesswork system and any operation that has a turnover of \$2m per year and runs its business on guesswork can only finish up in one place and that is in the bankruptcy arena. For this reason, local accountability both in the legislature and the respective towns for what is going on in the reticulation and generation scene would be a most desirable thing. I believe the report is a credit to the people who wrote it and one that we should adopt.

Mr VALE: There are a few points that I would like to raise in support of the report and most of my remarks pertain to the Alice Springs area. Of all the major Territory towns, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek would be the most fortunate. In the last few years, we have had a new powerhouse that operates very efficiently and the staff working on the generation and distribution of electricity are to be complimented. They have one problem which is faced by the whole of the Northern Territory: its staff level figures are set arbitrarily by the Federal Government. Staff level figures are one thing but figures which are applied that endanger huge amounts of capital investments and involve disservice to the public are another. The new Alice Springs powerhouse is faced with the problem of low staff numbers and the inability, with those staff numbers, to service properly the generating equipment and to maintain the reticulation system within the town area. This is one thing that would come out with an independent commission. Obviously, such a commission is needed quickly within the Northern Territory

from the South Australian border right up to Port Darwin. I do not think there is any question of that.

Some people have said that, instead of being referred to as an "electricity commission", it should be referred to as an "energy commission". That is probably only a play on words by people trying to get their names into the press. It does not matter whether the powerhouse consumes coal, natural gas or automotive distillate, the end product is still electricity. I would support the proposal that the independent commission should retain the term "electricity".

One thing that disturbs me in the report is the reference made to Aboriginal settlements in remote areas. They recommend that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs should be placed in charge of power generation out there and they should finance the provision of certain equipment. I would oppose that totally. The academics in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and I use the word "academics" as opposed to their field staff, have a notorious record for forward planning. Several months ago, in this House, I raised the problem of evacuation of Yuendumu, one of the largest settlements in the Northern Territory. The Aboriginal Affairs Department had made plans that, if the water supply failed there last summer, they would use \$40,000 to move the entire population off and then another \$40,000 to move them back. This came about because they started out with a small settlement and it grew fairly quickly but no one within the department planned for the extension of various services such as water and electricity. If we set up an independent electricity commission employing highly trained staff, they should have the power to supply and service the electricity for the entire Northern Territory needs.

Mention is made in the report, on page 22, of a new powerhouse for Darwin and the need to get this study underway in the near future so that coal contracts can be signed. I am a little bit disappointed to see the word "coal" in there. First, it will have to be imported from some other state and,

secondly, the Northern Territory is sitting on vast natural energy resources of uranium - and I am not referring to that for electricity generation in the Territory - and natural gas. Natural gas, in recent years, has been regarded as the caviar of energy sources. To talk about importing something into the Territory to replace something that we have deserves closer study. That is probably one of the first issues that an independent electricity commission could take up.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to speak on this report. I have read it fully and I am very impressed with its contents. I give full marks to the 3 engineers, McKay, Chapman and Broderick, who are experts in this field. I live in an area which has the best power station in the Territory. It is a free enterprise system and it operates very efficiently. We do not have any natural gas over there but we operate off overseas fuel. The report does indicate strongly that the management side has caused most of the trouble. We have demarcation lines between the Department of Northern Territory and the Department of Construction, and the Department of Construction carries out 2 functions. We have an interchange of experts; people are infringing on each other and causing disruptions to morale and to the whole operation generally.

The report talks about operation and maintenance of the power generation system. We know that, to operate a power station, you must have staff. You must have a low turnover in the expert field, you need properly trained staff, you need adequate procedures, you need adequate references to schematic drawings and you also need good stores facilities. When I read this report, it said just the opposite was the case in Darwin. It said that there was a shortage of staff, there was a high rate of staff turnover, there were inadequate operation procedures and manuals. I cannot understand the latter because every manufacturer puts out his own manual and his own procedures for preventative maintenance. Every organisation which has a turbine of any nature or any electrical generating set has a manual to go with it. Where

those manuals are, I do not know. Where the drawings are, I do not know. Every organisation in the world that builds such machines has manuals and, if you have not got them, you can obtain them very promptly. The report also refers to the inadequacy of stores facilities and the small overcrowded workshop. How can you run a power station of this nature without proper facilities? They have no office accommodation. I do not know how the people have even continued working there.

For the operation and maintenance of the transmission side, you must have key personnel such as engineers, technical officers, linesmen, cable joiners, inspectors etc. Again, the report says that there is an exceptionally high turnover of staff, inexperienced staff and inadequately trained technical people. Nevertheless, when you try to get a job through the public service, you have to go through all the nonsense in the world. I am qualified in the technical field but I think that I would not stand a chance of getting a job when I look at the advertisements. The people who have been working down there have said to me that the wrong type of people are being employed. I do not know. Some of those people would be very qualified but I do not think they get the chance to use their expertise because there are too many bureaucrats and experts in other departments who have not got the knowledge but are telling them what to do.

I turn now to the financial side of the system. The Majority Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government spoke last year about the amount of money that was owing to this department. It was something in the order of \$1.2m. Look at the income and expenditure figures dating back to 1968! We had a loss in 1968-69 of \$351,000 and, in 1969-70, we had a loss of \$108,000. We are starting to come down a little bit in 1971 and then, in 1971-72, we had a profit of \$271,000. In 1972-73, we had another loss and from that time it has been chaos right until 1974 when the loss was \$1.8m. During that period, we had problems when the price of oil went up. I would like to see some sort of feasibility study done on the possibility of using

our natural gas as the honourable member for Stuart suggested because the cost of fuel to run these power stations is very high.

In paragraph 46, the report states that debts amounted to \$1.5m at 30 June 1976 and the loss of revenue due to non-billing in the 1975-76 year was estimated to be a further \$2.8m. This latter amount, however, included an unknown amount of electricity consumed by the intact street lights which have operated 24 hours a day since Cyclone Tracy. Losses were recorded at a similar rate for the 1976-77 financial year. I do not know whether these are arbitrary figures but they do not seem to have any proper records. I would say that the losses are much higher because nobody seems to have any proper accounts of the whole operation. I often wonder how some of the other commissions operate down south,

The report also refers to population and I have spoken on population before. It is very hard to project figures or make arbitrary judgments on population growth. If we get going with our mining, we will have to start building power stations now because the report says that we must build another power station on the East Arm within 7 years. There have been 3 reports on the East Arm project. If we are to develop our mining resources in this Territory, within a certain radius of Darwin, we will have to start that power station now. If we do develop places like Jabiru and Nabarlek, we will have a town of perhaps 5,000 or 6,000 people. That could come up in the next 10 years.

There have been recent statistics of Darwin's projected population growth but they have not come up with any definite answers yet. The report stresses that something must be done in the next 7 years otherwise we will have more problems with the power station than we have ever had. It has been proved that the problems arising from one of the generators was not so much due to bad maintenance but a fault in that equipment. The actual makers have said that and there have been similar problems in Victoria. The report refers to the recent mechanical failures. The

specialist engineer and the senior metallurgist of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria carried out an investigation and came up with similar conclusions from their investigation of the failure of turbines in Victoria,

People talk about the reserve capacity of the powerhouse. There has been criticism of the units they have bought but the engineers who wrote this report have said that it was a wise decision. If we had to change to a higher capacity now, I am sure it would cost a lot more money today than it did at that time. Although it may have caused some problems, it has helped us in an economic sense.

The report also refers to industrial relations, training and staffing, and underground cabling versus overhead cabling. We have already had a discussion on that and I think the report says much the same as we did. I do not think I will waste any time on that but I would like to commend the writers of this report. I enjoyed reading it and I am sure that, if we do not act upon it, we will be in the same position in another 12 months' or 2 years' time. Once the service is taken over by the Assembly and the electricity authority is settled, I am sure we will not have the same chaos that has occurred over the last few years.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to support the report and to commend the 3 gentlemen who inquired into our interrupted electricity supply. I indicate to the House that I gave evidence to the 3 commissioners stressing my desire for the earliest possible establishment of an independent electricity commission. That is something that I have wanted to see established in the Northern Territory for the 17 years that I have been here. Probably, I have a closer affiliation with independent electricity commissions than any other member of this Assembly because my father happened to be the senior accountant for the SEC in Victoria. As a young girl, I travelled to Morwell and Kiewa with him. I remember vividly the planning that went into each installation, the pride of the members of the commission as each new station was commissioned and the pride they took in

the forward planning to ensure that there would be sufficient power to enable new industries to be established with the decentralisation of the state of Victoria. Given that background, I welcome the first recommendation for such an authority to be established to serve the Northern Territory.

Before moving on to the report, I would like to say that the Northern Territory has lost the services of someone who could have been an expert adviser and perhaps an interim commissioner. I refer to Ben Hammond who was the manager of the powerhouse through the difficult days. He was acknowledged as an expert in his field and was well known to the chairman of the commission, Mr McKay. I think the Majority Leader would remember Ben Hammond as well as I do. Ben was unfortunately killed in the plane crash which was responsible for the delay in the presentation of this report. I would like to record my personal grief at his untimely death and my disappointment that his expertise will not be available to the people of the Northern Territory.

Turning to the report, I notice with particular interest the comments of the commissioners regarding staffing of the powerhouse and for any future instrumentality. It is a pity that we could not have this entire report included in Hansard because it should be required reading for anybody who cares not only about the distribution of power but also its cost. On page 27, the report states: "The staffing of the Electricity Supply Division of the Department of Construction in both permanent staff and day labour is inadequate in almost all areas and turnover is high by normal standards". They go on to talk about the hidden costs of recruitment and what it is costing us as a community. They apply similar conclusions to day labour workers and there has been unrest among the day labour force. The commissioners draw attention to that fact in paragraph 97 where they say: "Low salaries in some categories, low wages, housing shortage and lack of adequate amenities at work have been advanced as the main causes of staff shortages and high turnover. There is sufficient evidence to substantiate

these claims". I believe the Cabinet Member responsible has been paying regard to the housing needs of these people in the day labour force, some of whom have worked for up to 15 years trying to ensure an adequate supply of power to Darwin. Until recently, they have not been eligible for government accommodation.

The commissioners also draw attention to the fact that, with the exception of a few classifications, the establishment number set for the permanent staff is considered to be reasonable and adequate. Where the relevant department has been able to make a case for a reasonable staff establishment, they are being prevented by current Federal Government policy in maintaining these staff levels. Quite obviously, this will be of particular concern to the incoming Assembly. With the establishment of a commission, we will not only ensure the setting of reasonable staff ceilings but also the filling of such positions.

Paragraph 122 states: "Another area of training that should be expanded is that of apprentice training. There is a serious shortage of competent tradesmen in the Electricity Supply Division but there does not appear to be any concerted effort to foster a worthwhile apprentice training scheme". Like other elected members, I have had young people in my office who are desperate to take up apprenticeships but unable for various reasons to enter into an apprenticeship in their chosen field. I hope that, with the transfer of responsibility which is being mooted, this particular problem will be met and overcome by those who are responsible.

On page 10 of the report, they make certain statements regarding funding: "It seems to us that the electricity supply in the Northern Territory is regarded less as a public utility and more as a public service in much the same way as health and education. In consequence, the electricity consumers in the Northern Territory are currently only meeting about half the cost of operating and maintaining the electricity undertaking. We are not aware whether the policy of the Government is to provide the substantial subsidy or

not". The Majority Leader said that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government would be making a statement regarding the Majority Party's feelings on this matter and I am waiting to hear it with some interest.

There is continuing public concern and disquiet over the cost and standard of the power being supplied in Darwin at the moment; that is no news item to anybody. To read in a well-researched and documented report that we are only meeting half the cost of operating and maintaining the electricity undertaking sends shivers down my spine. One of the reasons for the cost may well be the failure to negotiate a reasonable price for the cost of fuel. Again, this gets back to division of responsibility: one section of the public service is handling these matters whilst another is billing the consumer. I hope that, with the narrowing of responsibility and the establishment of an independent commission, these anomalies will be overcome and due regard will be paid to the cost of fuel which is imported to run the Darwin power station.

Further on in the report, the commission refers to losses incurred in the operation of the power station. In paragraph 45, they say: "The situation for 1976-77 will be worse, even with the increased tariffs applicable from July 1976, for the loss will probably be about \$11.6m for a total expenditure of about \$22m". Again, we hope for a definitive statement, before the authority is set up, as to what write-offs will be allowed by the Federal Government. The Honourable Majority Leader said that it would have been totally unacceptable and irresponsible to have taken over that part of the undertaking offered earlier this year without firm undertakings as to what area of cost will be written off. The people of the Northern Territory are looking now for a definitive statement on the intentions of the Federal Government and the present Majority Party in this regard. I have paid regard to the present Majority Leader's statement that we cannot set too high a tariff which would force people to leave the Territory through an inability to meet the cost. We are going to have to meet what is considered a

reasonable part of the cost.

Other speakers have alluded to the comments regarding the servicing of plant. The commissioners say that, had the plant been serviced to the same extent as is normally expected elsewhere, we may not have encountered the problems which have been so much part of our lives for the past few years. The commissioners also consider that the operation and maintenance of the transmission and distribution system is unsatisfactory.

We have seen contracts let for the undergrounding of power supply in the northern suburbs. It is my understanding, and I could be wrong, that this is to be progressively implemented in the inner suburbs if the contract rates continue to be reasonable and that it may prove cheaper in the long run to underground the present overhead reticulation system. If so, I will look for facts and figures to be supplied to this House before each contract is let. The contract which was let for undergrounding in some areas of the northern suburbs is already providing some unforeseen difficulties. I alluded to some of these this morning in question time - disturbance of people's property and disturbance of their environment by the undergrounding substations. These substations are being placed in properties - usually in the front yard - and they are unsightly. Unfortunately, they seem to be larger than those placed in other places such as Brisbane. The tenants of the properties are objecting and, as small as these difficulties seem, if you are one of the affected persons, they loom large. I would hope that in future contracts in these areas will have more attention paid to them and the difficulties presently being experienced will disappear.

We see criticism in the report of the Department of the Northern Territory buying into technical issues. Again, that is no news item. In paragraph 38, they say quite trenchantly: "But the matter remains unsolved because some of the Department of the Northern Territory's officers held a different view on these highly technical issues". They are referring, of course, to the radio

communication system. Again, with the establishment of an independent commission, one would see instead of conflict a community interest in the people working within that commission to provide technical, clerical and financial assistance to the one admirable end: the best distribution of power we can afford.

There has been reference by the Executive Member who presented the report to the wide variations in estimates of population. Again, I harp back to question time this morning when I asked him about the proposed Darwin East development because that could have a substantial effect on the amount of power needed to be generated over the next few years. In the report, we see quite clearly that, given the power these commissioners had and given the wide cross-section of people appearing before them, they have been unable to come forward with an estimate which is not only guesswork. The Assembly will need to have a little more to go on than that if it can reasonably plan more than 15 years ahead, I do not envy any Executive Member who catches this in his portfolio. It seems to be a can of worms; each expert from the Department of the Northern Territory or any other department has a different idea on the estimated population.

This theme is carried on in the report when they talk about the difficulties of planning adequately. They say in paragraph 71: "We expect the existing generating capacity in Darwin will be inadequate to meet the demand for electricity some time between 1981 and 1984". That is not very far away. I support other speakers in their call for work to commence urgently to enable the establishment of the second power station for Darwin. When evidence was given to the Parliamentary Works Committee, I gave evidence before them. Assurances were given by the relevant departments that the planning was well in hand and that there would be no problem. We have seen a lack of action since that time and planning is no longer well in hand. It is well behind time.

I see no reason to further take up the time of the Assembly other than to

state, as a non member of the Majority Party, that I support the recommendations contained in this report and I realise there will be a tremendous amount of negotiation between any Cabinet of this Assembly and the Federal Government before final steps can be taken to establish an independent commission. I support totally the concept of an independent commission.

Mr MANUELL: It gives me pleasure to rise to support the motion. When I first visited Darwin, I was told by a resident of this fair city that one reason why the reticulation of power was so irregular was the fact that the wet weather in the Top End plagued heavily the ability of the Eveready batteries in the torches used by the plant operators and maintenance people in the powerhouse. I sometimes find it very difficult to appreciate the problem but I have come in contact with people in commerce and industry and residents of the town who tell me how difficult it is to put up with the interruptions of the power. Probably, Darwin experiences far greater difficulty in that area than any other town in this Territory. However, there are other areas besides Darwin which experience interruptions of power. In the industrial areas of Alice Springs, even though the problems are small compared to Darwin, there are problems experienced because of irregular supply of electrical power reticulation.

I believe that the report has been covered fairly adequately by previous speakers. However, I would like to offer my congratulations to the committee that undertook this inquiry. This is one of the most concise and clear reports that I have come across in my time in this Assembly. Its simplicity has assisted our understanding of it in the short time that we have had it in front of us. There are a few comments I would like to make on the report and I will briefly run through it.

It does appear that the report has clearly indicated the inability of the bureaucracy to cater for this type of service because of the way it is currently established within the Northern Territory. The Department of the

Northern Territory admitted to the inquiry that it had the overall responsibility for the management of the electrical service yet the Department of Construction had the responsibility for the transmission. It submitted that it had to rely to an extent on costs incurred by another department in the operation of the service without having control over how the moneys were employed. To my mind, that would represent a fundamental error in terms of management opportunity and one that clearly must be overcome before any degree of single-minded planning can be undertaken.

On page 8 of the report, the Department of Northern Territory is quoted as saying: "While testing, probing and seeking alternative options is not necessarily a bad thing, it does lead to problems in management, planning and co-ordination due to the extended lines of communication between the departments and the commission". I do not think that there is a state in Australia that has experienced any different problems to our own but I am not aware that any state in Australia reticulates electrical power except through a single authority.

I also note the recognition by the committee of inquiry of the good services rendered by respective officers of the present electrical service unit. The question of communication breakdown is clearly outlined on page 13, where the report says: "We were told that attempts had been made on numerous occasions to effect improvements but without success". The honourable member for Nightcliff referred to this particular paragraph in relation to radio communication systems. I can quite clearly see that the problem is far greater than radio communication alone. To my way of thinking, the electrical service should be regarded as a commercial venture. It is selling a service of sorts and fundamentally, it is a facility that is required by the private consumer, the industrial consumer, commercial enterprise and by government. The supply of electricity is fundamental to our survival and, for that reason, I think it demands the greatest degree of respect in terms of planning and management.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy referred to the financial chaos. It does rather amuse me that the services are rendered by one unit of government and the collections are made by another. I am also amused by the fact that the income and expenditure given in the report only go up to 1973-74, although there is some further analysis of trading positions on page 15 but not in the same detail. I believe that the existing losses that have occurred since Cyclone Tracy should be borne by the Federal Government as an operational cost. It is quite clear that, since Cyclone Tracy, there has been considerable mismanagement. This has not resulted from a lack of endeavour on the part of the Department of the Northern Territory but is simply a question of lost opportunity. The report does suggest that there are some losses that are unlikely to be recouped. For that reason, I do not believe that either the consumers in the Northern Territory or the Territory as a government should bear those losses in toto. If the losses are identified, they should be clearly seen as attributable to the cyclone and written off as such.

Turning to page 15, paragraphs 44 to 47, I estimate that the accumulated losses to date are likely to amount to \$24.2m. The report suggests that there are debts amounting to \$1.5m for the 1975-76 year. It is also possible that there was a similar loss in 1976-77. They do estimate, however, that possibly 50% of the debts are recoverable. On that basis, I see it as an additional \$1.5m loss and I estimate that the deficit to date is likely to approach \$25.7m. Under these circumstances, I believe this should be borne by the Australian Government alone. I do not believe that the Northern Territory consumers should be expected to recoup that loss by increased charges. I strongly suggest that, unless the recommendations as laid out in this report are implemented quickly, the likelihood of the loss growing is very strong. Unless there is a clear indication given by the Federal Government as to its stance on those losses, it will leave the new Assembly with something to deal with in the future.

Paragraph 50 refers to the role played by the Legislative Assembly in the financial affairs of the electricity undertaking. It says: "The Legislative Assembly determines the charges to be made for electricity even though it has no responsibility for the funding of the undertaking or of the losses incurred". If there is an autonomous body created with the sole responsibility for electrical power under the auspices of the Legislative Assembly, the Assembly will then have the ability not only to determine the charges but also to undertake the responsibility for management. It is very desirable that the Legislative Assembly should undertake such a responsibility. The report continues: "Under such a system, there is no incentive for the type of financial review which takes place regularly throughout the year in other electricity supply authorities, and none appears to be done. There is no correlation between revenue from sales and expenditure". A single authority would have the ability to cope with this situation.

As the honourable member for Stuart mentioned, we are considering the establishment of an electricity authority. The way in which the power is generated is really beside the point. However, since we are an emerging state, we must consider the cheapest way in which we can generate our power. Obviously, it is in our interest to look at all sources of energy available to generate our electricity reticulation. This Legislative Assembly will have the ability to influence such an authority in choosing the best form of power.

The honourable member for Nightcliff mentioned tradesmen. The promotion of trade education within the Northern Territory has long been an interest of mine. Although this applies not only to the electrical trade, it appears to me that the average applicant for indentured apprenticeship within Australia today generally lacks the educational standard necessary to take on that indentured apprenticeship. I would like to see sufficient numbers coming out of our schools and applying

for apprenticeships with the ESU or any private enterprise trades. Our country is struggling to find qualified tradesmen at the moment.

In closing, I refer quickly to the recommendations in the appendix. I sincerely hope that this Assembly will implement the recommendations as quickly as possible because the question of efficient electrical supply in the Northern Territory is of great importance and should not be under-emphasised.

Mr TAMBLING: I appreciate the work done by the commissioners in putting together this report and also the contribution made by those who gave evidence. I notice from the lists that, of the 90 submissions received by the commissioners, some 60 were from public servants. Those 60 submissions were in addition to the official departmental submissions. The fact that 60 public servants were prepared to come forward shows that there was a very basic problem which needed urgent attention. The report also highlights the dedication of a number of key personnel who have ensured that our services have been maintained at all times.

I would hope that, as a result of this inquiry, action will be taken not only on the corrective and policy side but also as a result of the very learned management advice that was tendered by the commissioners to various departments. I have always taken a pretty critical stance with regard to the activities of the Department of the Northern Territory and this report backs up that stance. In paragraph 26, we find the key to the problems that have arisen in the Department of Northern Territory. By its own admission, it is responsible for the forward planning of electricity services in the Northern Territory and it must therefore be held accountable for the major problems that have arisen. Paragraph 38 refers to the fact that some Department of Northern Territory officers held a different view on those highly technical issues. This problem arises time and time again. Essentially, the Department of the Northern Territory is a service department but it gets out of bounds. The

sooner we see the Department of the Northern Territory disappear, the better it will be. In paragraph 49, the report refers to the fact that little, if any, regular review of the financial status of the undertaking seems to have been carried out. I think that bears out my point.

I would like to comment on several aspects of the report, largely those centering around Darwin reconstruction and finance. If we look at the role of Darwin reconstruction, we know that this has highlighted the problem. Why has the problem been compounded in the life of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission? Essentially, the reason is that the people who made the initial contribution to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission had their priorities wrong. We had people from the Cities Commission, from DURD and from the Canberra bureaucracy imposed on the top of this community. When we look at how they set those first priorities and their heavy concentration on stupid planning and town planning issues rather than getting down to the nitty gritty issues of how the people were being affected by the reconstruction, we will learn useful lessons for the handling of any future natural disaster in Australia.

The first 6 months of 1975 were crucial to the reconstruction program of Darwin because that was when the entire financial program for the financial year 1975-76 was set. Because no decent policies were really put forward in those first 6 months, it was 18 months before the issues were recognised and reasonable amounts of funds could be injected. Probably, it will only be in this coming budget year that we will see an increased pace in the improvements to the electricity requirements. As a commissioner of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, I am very grateful for the advice which has been tendered in this report. The Reconstruction Commission sought advice on some specific issues and the recommendations in this report have already influenced our thinking with regard to the coming financial year's program.

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission

will be sponsoring a considerable program in the coming financial year. I want to take the time of the Assembly to read it because I believe these issues are very important to the rectification of the problem. The projects for the coming financial year will include the Stokes Hill Power Station line protection, the Stokes Hill Power Station stores and workshop building and continued work at a very high level on the permanent rehabilitation of the electricity distribution system. There will also be work on the 66KV line from Snell Street to Casuarina via Hudson Creek 66KV line. You will recall that the report referred to the standard that ought to be incorporated. The commission was looking at a very high standard but the inquiry has recommended a more suitable one. That has already been acted on and adopted. There will also be minor augmentation of electricity supply. This will affect new substations and lines in many suburbs throughout Darwin, particularly Winnellie. There is also the purchase of transformers, zoned substation augmentation, the undergrounding of the electricity supply to the subdivisions of Malak as well as to Tiwi and Wanguri, the East Arm power station investigations, mobile radio facilities, spare turbine rotors and the upgrading of the gas turbine. In addition, there is the construction of an 11 KV mains underground between the Darwin city zone substation and the Casuarina substation; this work is already being undertaken and will be re-voted into the coming financial year's program. This is most important to the northern suburbs for the reliability of their electricity supply. Much of that work should have happened in the previous financial year but it has taken time because of the early errors that were made.

The report discusses a number of issues relating to the finances of the electricity undertaking, particularly the impact on tariffs. The Majority Party does not accept the suggestion put forward in paragraph 136 on the need for much higher tariffs and that there is no necessity to link tariffs with those charged in the states. As the Majority Leader mentioned earlier, this arises largely because the comm-

issioners were not privy to a number of the political developments that have been taking place in the Northern Territory. If we go back to the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report which has been endorsed by both the Majority Party and the Fraser Government as the underlying principles for constitutional development, in paragraph 85A that report states that "the Australian Government would provide revenue grants of an amount that would enable a Territory executive to provide services related to its function at a standard broadly similar to the states, provided that the executive makes a broadly similar effort to the states in raising revenue and controlling expenditure". In all of the discussions that I have had with Ministers of the Commonwealth Government on the financial aspects of our progress in constitutional development, I have stood firm on that particular line and I know that the Majority Party stands firm on that particular point.

When we talk about tariffs, we must take into account the standard of the system that we will inherit and the system that we intend to create in the Northern Territory. The criteria that the Commonwealth and states adopt for the financial arrangements between them are relative standards that are determined from time to time between the Commonwealth and the states. That will not be hard to achieve if we are able to use formulae similar to what the Grants Commission use. It will give us the opportunity to look very carefully at the operation at this particular unit.

The report alludes to a number of hidden costs that have been caused because of the system. The recruitment of employees, the facilities and conditions that are available to them, training, the deficiencies in maintenance, all of these contribute to the actual running costs. If we are able to improve the administration and maintenance of the operation, this will then have a direct bearing on the tariffs. There will be a political accountability back to the consumers. We will also have the opportunity to look carefully at reviewing the asset valuations that are determined,

The Commonwealth Government has always accepted its financial liability to make good all of the losses related to Cyclone Tracy. There will not be any haggling over those issues. That is an undertaking that the Commonwealth Government has recognised quite strongly. With regard to the overall financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory government, due regard will be had to the particular circumstances of the Northern Territory and this will include our financial disabilities. There will be special recognition of the impact on the Territory's economy of our isolation and our peculiar situation. Some of our political opponents seem to be all the time rattling a can saying, "It is going to cost. It is going to cost". It will be a reasonable charge. The Northern Territory government will pursue with the Commonwealth, in the same way that the states do, a basis for reasonable financial arrangements. I would hope that, in the announcement that will be made in the next week or so on our constitutional development, we will see even further commitments given which will show quite clearly that the principles enunciated in the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report will be implemented. If that is the case, the tariffs will be those for a comparable standard of service in the states.

Another issue that I would like to raise relates to the urgent need for the appointment of an interim commissioner. I hope that we will see a permanent commission appointed about the middle of next year or perhaps on 1 July 1978. In the meantime, there is an urgent need for a interim commissioner to be appointed who would be charged with the responsibility of looking at the policies, standards, financial arrangements and assessments that will have to be made. There is a lot of work that can be done. We should take the opportunity to talk with the employees of the various units that will be merged into this commission. There are many well qualified, competent people within the Northern Territory electricity service who should be consulted. I hope that an interim commissioner would do this and we can create a new commission which has a very high morale

right from the start.

I see the need for an interim commissioner to work very closely with the Northern Territory Cabinet because there are major issues with regard to electricity that are connected with the commercial and mineral development of the Northern Territory and possibly the defence needs of the Northern Territory. All of these issues will have to be faced in the very near future. I hope that we can start talking about policies with such a person because the development of good services in the Northern Territory is fundamental to the continued growth and development of the Northern Territory. The policies that we determine in the next 6 to 12 months will be very important to ensure that the Northern Territory is able to develop confidently. The report has highlighted most of the problem areas and has given us the guidelines in which to work and some very firm recommendations. I believe that many of the technical areas and many of the reconstruction areas are already being attended to but I hope we can now get down quickly to many more policy and administrative issues that need resolution.

Mr PERRON: I thank honourable members for their comments on the report. It seems that most of us agree that it is a good one. The point I wish to touch on was raised by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government: the need for the early appointment of an interim commissioner. This is very important. It does not necessarily have to be a full commission. The government has announced that they will have a 3 man commission - a full-time chairman and 2 part-time commissioners - and the report recommends a 5 man commission. I do not think that is a matter to quibble about at this stage. It is most important that a full-time chairman be appointed at an early stage to oversee the formation of the whole structure of the authority to be established. The last thing we want to do is to hamstring the new commission by handing it a preplanned organisation which it may have to restructure as its first task. This can be avoided by the appointment of a full-time commissioner at an early date.

There will be a great deal to be done by the new Executive in the Assembly. One of the priority tasks of a new Cabinet will be to undertake crucial negotiations on the financial aspects of an electricity authority, the drawing up of the legislation to establish that authority and the establishment of rational staffing and salary structures. Work on this has to start immediately even if the actual formation of a commission is possibly nearly 12 months away.

The success or otherwise of the electricity authority will be a very real test for the transfer of powers. It is a slightly separate entity which can be looked at as distinct from the rest of a state government structure. It is the type of thing that can be judged by the public and politicians will be judged by its success. The electricity supply commission will be a real test of whether the Territory's move towards self government will be an improvement on the past. I certainly believe that it will be; it will be such a tremendous move that people will wonder why it was not started many years earlier.

Motion agreed to.

#### PHARMACY BILL

(Serial 177)

Continued from 12 July 1977.

See Minutes for negatived amendment to clause 3.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

#### EIGHT AND NINTH REPORTS OF SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION AND TABLED PAPERS COMMITTEE

Mr WITHNALL: I table 2 reports from the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee and I move that they be noted.

The first report merely states that the committee found no fault in the tabled papers. The second report deals with mining regulations no. 10 of 1977. The committee found that there was a

grave doubt as to whether these regulations were authorised by the ordinance itself. The Mining Ordinance is a very complex piece of legislation and it is administered in a way which makes it much more complex than it really should be. Very few mining leases are ever issued or executed in the Northern Territory and I would think that 95% of mining in the Northern Territory is carried on upon the basis that the Administrator has approved of the lease but it has never actually been issued. The result is that the regulations dealing with covenants and leases must be approached with very considerable care. I suggest to honourable members that these regulations have not been approached with the degree of care necessary to enable them to fit into the administration of the ordinance.

New regulation 192A proposes that a number of covenants are to be contained in every mining lease. Those covenants deal with environmental protection and soil erosion and probably should be legislated for under some other ordinance. Leaving that aside, they range so widely that the committee thinks that it is very doubtful that they are within the regulation-making power of the ordinance. Consequently, the committee, while not being at this stage prepared to recommend the disallowance of the regulations, has drawn attention to the difficulties and it feels quite sure that this will result in some amendment.

Mr ROBERTSON: I would just like to make the observation that, while the committee may not have made a final decision on the validity of these regulations, the departments must bear in mind that regulations must be subordinate to the legislation not only within the legal context but also within the spirit of the legislation. I mean subordinate in that they are authorised by the legislation itself. I think that regulations should be subordinate in spirit. Where departments find that substantive alterations are necessary to legislation, they should draw it to the attention of the Cabinet Member responsible. It should be the prerogative of this place to make substantive law for the people of the Northern Territory; it should not

be done by regulation.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

(Serial 215)

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

PETROLEUM (PROSPECTING AND MINING) BILL

(Serial 216)

Mr WITHNALL: This is the second validation ordinance that we have had before this Assembly during the 2 days of this sittings. It is perfectly true that mistakes in administration must from time to time be corrected and, unfortunately, validation legislation is a feature, if not a very frequent feature, of administrative life. It seems that validation of legislation in the Northern Territory has reached heights which have not been reached in any state of Australia and certainly not in the Commonwealth of Australia.

The honourable member provided me with a copy of the bill yesterday and, while I must protest very vigorously at the lateness of the proposal, I cannot help but understand the motives which are behind its introduction. It has been one of my complaints as a member of the Legislative Council that the Commonwealth Government habitually ignored the need for members of the Legislative Council to read and understand the terms of legislation before it is passed urgently. I am afraid that today the Commonwealth Government apparently has shown that it understands that need even less than it used to. In former years, the Legislative Council was able to bring the need home to the Commonwealth Government effectively. Perhaps, in view of the assurance that the Executive of the Northern Territory has given the Commonwealth so far as the passage of its legislation is concerned, the Commonwealth now feels that it is able to treat the Legislative Assembly with

some disrespect. I would ask the sponsor of the bill and the Majority Leader to convey at least my complete dismay that legislation of this sort should be introduced so very late in the life of the Legislative Assembly. The first time that I saw a copy was yesterday afternoon.

Fairly clearly, there has been an administrative bungle and it is also fairly clear that it has to be attended to. There are other bumbles which happen in the interrelation of a legislative body and an executive. Sometimes governments tend to anticipate legislation with policy and use expressions such as "freezing". I am now speaking generally on the principle of whether or not validation ordinances should be accepted as an ordinary piece of work in the legislature. If we are to accept this bill, and I think there are reasons why we should accept it, then I suggest that honourable members opposite might very well look at other situations relating to mining titles which also need this sort of validation.

In November 1972, there was an order made by the Government, and not by law, that there should be a freeze on mining titles. That freeze apparently operated for about 12 months prior to the decision being taken. I have authenticated evidence of applications for mining exploration licences and applications for leases after mining exploration licences were granted which show that there was at least 12 months' delay in processing those applications before the freeze was announced in 1972. I know of an instance in which somebody has been unable to obtain any further title to operate on an exploration area since 1971 because, although the honourable member introduced some mining bills the other day, he did not bother to think about the very situation that he is trying to correct now. He is correcting it in the Petroleum (Prospecting and Mining) Ordinance but the member did not think about correcting it in the Mining Ordinance itself. People have had authorities to prospect which have lapsed simply because of a government policy decision.

Mr SPEAKER: Is the honourable member speaking to the bill?

Mr WITHNALL: Mr Speaker, I am speaking to the principle of the bill which is validation of errors made either in the administration of an ordinance or in the conflict between the terms of an ordinance and the policy of the administration.

If we are to be fair about it, if we are providing validation in terms of this ordinance, I would urge the honourable member to consider the validation of situations which have been created either by administrative incompetence or conflict between the law and policy. I would ask the honourable member to consider very closely instances, which I will document for him, of other validations in this field which really need attention. It is always unfortunate that one has to validate legislation in these circumstances but, unfortunately, it is always necessary. With the coming of Executive control over mining legislation, I hope that administrative problems that we find we have to correct by bills such as this will no longer exist. I hope that, if the honourable member proposing the bill is able to control the administration of a mining department, he will see that this sort of situation does not arise again.

I support the bill because of the difficulties and the very severe losses that will be incurred if it does not go through. I hope that the honourable member will look at other cases in which up to \$1.8m has been spent and apparently wasted because of administrative incompetence or because of the conflict between the policy of the Government and the legislation in existence at the time. If there is a law in force and one complies with that law and applies for a title, one expects reasonably that that title will be processed in a reasonable time. I have already mentioned a case in which an application for a licence made in 1971 has not yet been processed. I hope the new administrators of the Mining Ordinance will not allow this sort of thing to happen.

Mr POLLOCK: I thank the honourable member for his remarks. I have noted them and will treat them with appropriate concern. My concern has also

been aroused in recent times, not just by the slow processing of matters relating to mining but also in relation to a number of matters within the Department of the Northern Territory's control. If there are situations where persons have been placed in unfair or unreasonable positions even though they have done everything according to law but, because of some freeze or some administrative failure to act according to law in a reasonable time, then those matters must be considered and appropriate action taken.

Mr Withnall: I'll hold you to that.

Mr POLLOCK: Let us hope that I will be here so that you can hold me to it.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

In doing so, I am conscious of the fact that there are several items of important business still remaining on the notice paper. These will not be completed in the life of the present Assembly given all the circumstance which will arise as from 6.00 tomorrow night. They are all complex and sensitive pieces of legislation on which there is a wide diversity of public opinion. However, the work and research which has been done on them in the life of this Assembly will not be wasted and I am confident that a future Assembly will pick up that legislation and see it through to fruition in whatever form the government of the day decides,

It is a long while since I gave the parish pump any sort of a jerk but I will give a very small tug tonight. It is some 4 or 5 years since I embarked on a project to try to have the township of Batchelor declared a town. I discovered that it was in fact a piece of vacant crown land with a number of houses on it and that nothing could progress in the place until this township was declared. I have been informed

within the last couple of days that this matter is very close to achievement. I understand that a recommendation and a surveyed plan of the area are with the Minister and we are very hopeful that, within the next week or so, Batchelor will finally take its place among the honoured towns of the Northern Territory and the way will then be open for more progress to occur in that centre.

Next, I would like to refer to the retirement from the service of the Assembly of one of our well-known staff members, Mr Les Brooking, the Editor of Debates. Mr Brooking joined the staff of the Legislative Council in June 1969 and he had completed 8 years of service with us when he retired last Friday. Before that, he had been a teacher at the Darwin High School and, in all, gave some 14½ years' service in the Northern Territory. Les Brooking carried out his duties in a most conscientious manner and played a significant part in bringing our Hansard service up to its present efficient state. I think all members will remember the post-cyclone experiences when we had water on the floor of this House and coming through the roof, and officers of the Assembly had to move about with recorders in their hands. The Hansard people had to do their best along with the rest of us to get any sort of a record at all. That is just one example of the unusual things that Hansard have had to do in the Northern Territory. I am sure that I speak for all members when I wish Mr Brooking and his wife a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Members: Hear, hear!

Dr LETTS: Finally, I would like to extend my best wishes to the rest of the staff of the Assembly, the Clerk, the other officers of the Assembly, all the Hansard people, all those who have been associated with our deliberations here and thank them for what they have done for all members during the course of their duties and sometimes beyond the normal course of their duties during the past 3 years. It has been appreciated and I am sure we all look forward to continuing our association with them and with you, Sir, for a

further 3 years.

Members: Hear, hear!

Miss ANDREW: Unfortunately, my task is not quite as pleasant as that of the previous speaker. I would like to draw the attention of the House to an article published in the Bulletin of 25 June 1977 entitled "The Law in Black and White" By Mr Malcolm Turnbull under the heading of "Justice". Mr Turnbull has taken great pains to discredit the Northern Territory Police Force to the greatest extent possible. He has made very damaging allegations against the police which may or may not be defamatory. In any event, it would only be actionable at the suit of the individual or individuals who may have been defamed. I want to make a general rebuttal of the slurs cast by him on members of the Northern Territory Police Force because I can't allow such allegations to pass without comment.

He referred, in the first instance, to a rape case in 1975 in connection with which 7 Aborigines were arrested and said: "When a barmaid was raped in 1975, 7 Aborigines were arrested. Before the woman had made a full statement, all 7 confessed to acts of sexual intercourse with her. It was later discovered that there had been no actual intercourse and only one black had interfered with her sexually". This is not in accordance with the facts. The woman made a full statement and alleged that 7 men had sexual intercourse with her and the reason why the rape charge was not persisted in by the prosecution was because the prosecution considered that there was not sufficient corroboration to prove the accused guilty beyond reasonable doubt, and lesser charges were laid. The offenders pleaded guilty to assault with intent to rape and to attempted rape. It is one thing to know that the offence has been committed, it is another thing to prove it beyond reasonable doubt.

On another occasion, Mr Turnbull said: "One local man told me" - and that means someone in Alice Springs because that is the only town that Mr Turnbull seems to have visited on his tour of the Territory. "They get a black in and he asks to see the legal

service. If they think he has not been around much, one of the CIB blokes will come in with a briefcase, say he's from the legal service and tell the black to confess. The police think that's very funny". There is not a shred of evidence to support this allegation and such statements are extremely damaging to the police and, in particular, to the CIB.

Turnbull goes on to say that bashing is still common, but that Aborigines do not complain like Europeans. They accept the bashing as a standard treatment - often they will only mention it in passing, almost as a throw-away line. This is completely false. Aboriginal Legal Aid has made 7 complaints of assault against police in "E" district, which is the Alice Springs area, since 11 February 1975. The results were as follows: 2 reports were false; 3 reports could not be determined because of conflicting evidence; one report could not be investigated fully as legal aid would not make the complainant available; and one report resulted in a member being charged in the Court of Summary Jurisdiction - the charge was dismissed.

On another occasion, Turnbull said: "The ill-treatment of blacks by the police has been a constant problem. One policeman who has worked in the Northern Territory admitted bashings were widespread. He said: 'One policeman fancies himself with a baton and uses that on the Aborigines with great effect. Another one practises karate. They don't care about hurting them; they just regard them as rock apes'". These are unsubstantial generalities from anonymous sources. How could anyone possibly believe such a ridiculous article - an article aimed at smearing the name of the Northern Territory Police Force?

The police force has a difficult task to perform in the Northern Territory and the publication of allegations which are not factually based do not help in coping with law enforcement. I might add that this works on both sides of the fence. Certain members of the police force, and one member in particular, delight in ill-advised and untrue representations to the press,

veiled again in glorious anonymity. The Northern Territory Police Force consists of 400-odd officers and they do a magnificent job when one considers the problems that they have, the geographical vastness of Territory and the fact that they operate under 2 often conflicting pieces of legislation - the Public Service Ordinance and the Police and Police Offences Ordinance. For someone to write-off such a body of men in the way Turnbull has done is of destructive value only and is an example of irresponsible reporting.

Mr MacFARLANE: I cannot speak too highly of the police in the Northern Territory and I second the remarks of the Cabinet Member for Law. What we would do without the police, I don't know but what some people would like to do with the police is a different matter.

I went to a Presiding Officers Conference in Western Samoa not long ago. One of the subjects for debate was the grievance debate and the various Presiding Officers and Speakers were surprised that I had to occasionally leave the Chair and come down on the floor of the House to air grievances of my electorate. I am principally a cattleman and I am distressed, and have been for many years, about the way the money is being spent on Darwin, which produces nothing, and not on the area between Darwin and Kulgera which produces everything! It is like that in New South Wales now; they say the initials NSW stand for Newcastle, Sydney and Woolongong and the rest means nothing. We must make sure that the productive areas are fostered.

I would like to mention some of the things I have been fighting for lately and on which the Department of the Northern Territory and the Minister and his staff have let me down. These things are of prime importance and they are not expensive. The Katherine Rural College was blown up out of all proportion by a bunch of academics from the south and, instead of being an institution for practical education, it became a monolith for the further education of Katherine town itself. This, in itself, is not a bad thing but it defeats the purpose of the exercise.

The Old Timers Home has been a favourite charity of mine for a long time and I help them whenever I can. There was a co-ordinating committee set up in Katherine and all the service clubs and the Red Cross people sought 3 or 4 demountable buildings that were surplus to the DRC requirements. These cost about \$8000 new and probably now have a secondhand value of about \$1,600. Buntines Transport agreed to cart them for nothing and a crane was also available at no cost. The service clubs were to provide the installations, the sewerage, electricity and so on and it was all set up in January this year. At this stage, we still have nothing. Do you know what the trouble is? The Department of the Northern Territory, the Minister for the Northern Territory and Treasury in Canberra can't decide who will pay this lousy amount of money. Without parish pumping too much, I would say that, if you are going to spend \$600,000 in Alice Springs on old timers' accommodation and about the same in Darwin, you ought to be able to spend \$10,000 in Katherine without turning a hair. This is one of the great reasons why we must have more involvement in our own affairs, not necessarily statehood or self-government, but a greater degree of involvement and a greater degree of accountability. I could then blame the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government instead of trying to blame someone in the Holy City 2,000 miles away. This is what it's all about. The Executive of this place are quite happy to take the blame if they deserve it. However, they are sick and tired of taking the blame for somebody else's mistakes.

Another thing is the detoxification centre. As you know, we have had a drunks' refuge in Katherine for 18 months and it has functioned very well. The railway rest room for train crews has been vacant since the North Australia Railways was closed down in January last year. This would be an ideal place - right opposite the pub. You could roll them out one end and in the other. That building is lying there vacant and we are still battling a reluctant government for this kind of facility. The Government admits this facility is needed but they won't do a

thing about it.

There is a great need for practical education for youths of both sexes and of any colour. This is what it is all about. They are trying to attract apprentices in some places yet we are refusing to cater for the needs of deprived people. Practical education is much more important to me than academic education because with the dropouts as we call them the people who refuse to accept academic education - the remedy is practical education. Here again, you strike the reluctant Government.

I would like to refer now to accommodation for outback kids. Things are pretty bad in the outback, cattle prices are pretty crook and people who had been sending their children south to school just do not have the money yet the Government will not do anything about this equality of education which it skites about in Canberra. There is accommodation available in Katherine, not at the Commonwealth Hostel, but I understand there are unoccupied accommodation units at the Katherine Hospital. I would have thought that, when the Education Department answered the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning's queries on my behalf, they would have investigated what accommodation was available, not just that there is no accommodation available at the Commonwealth Hostel.

All these things should have been considered as essential by the Government in Canberra. We must have more involvement in our own affairs. We must have more accountability. I don't know what we can do about it. We find this report on the electricity supply failure in Darwin, but I did not hear a word about Katherine; I suppose it is in the report. Are we going to be tied to this raddled hag of Darwin for the rest of our lives? Are we going to finance her escapades or are we going to find out how to help the area between Berrimah and Kulgera?

Mr DONDAS: I rise in today's adjournment to speak about dogs that roam the streets in packs at the moment. It might be a significant time to talk about dogs in the various electorates because most of us are starting a

vigorous doorknocking campaign and we are sure to come across lots of little terriers. People in the Nakara area are complaining that packs of dogs are roaming the streets, causing considerable damage and attacking other domestic animals. The people out there are beginning to fear for the safety of their children. I have 2 large Dobermanns but I think it is the responsibility of the dog owners and dog lovers to look after their dogs. If they do not have a fence, they will have to chain them up and exercise them when they get an opportunity.

At the same time, we have the Corporation of the City of Darwin operating a collection service. They have men driving around picking up stray dogs and they take them out to the SPCA pound. Unfortunately, the staff available for this task from the Corporation are not nearly sufficient considering the number of dogs that are roaming throughout Darwin. It is getting to a stage where, if the council cannot increase the surveillance and upgrade the patrols in that area, members of the community will form little vigilante groups to pick up these dogs and take them out to the pound. Until such time as the council adopts a far more serious attitude, this serious problem will remain with us.

I intended to ask the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government a question this morning asking him to raise the matter with the City Council but thought the adjournment debate would be a better time. I ask him to pay particular attention to my request for the council to upgrade its surveillance, especially in the Nakara area. Apparently, early this morning a friendly little dog wandered out from its residence and a group of dogs attacked it and killed it. The owner was very distraught. Some bystanders who happened to see this particular dogfight were quite fearful and distraught; they had never seen anything like it in their lives.

I have had 2 complaints today and it is not the first time. In most cases, there is very little we can do. There is the Dogs Ordinance but, unfortunately, there is not much anybody can

do until such time as a stray dog enters upon his property and then the owner may be able to take some retaliatory measures with an air rifle, a slingshot or a good brick.

The honourable member for Nightcliff yesterday morning asked a question about the stench from the Leanyer sewage plant.

Mr Withnall: What about the sewage outlet in Doctor's Gully?

Mr DONDAS: We have more people living in the northern suburbs than there are living in Doctor's Gully.

Nobody seems to know whether this particular problem will be solved or not, I will be eagerly waiting for a reply to that question so that I can go back to the people in my electorate and tell them the cause of it.

We also have a burning-of problem. They burn off the dump and that is another very smelly problem. There is not only the smell but you have ash constantly covering Anula, Wulagi, the older parts of Wanguri and the newer parts of Tiwi. I don't think there is any solution to that problem because they will have to burn off if they are to develop Leanyer.

There is some good news. According to the honourable member for Fannie Bay, we should have street signs out in those areas by the end of this year. That is not bad considering that we have been out there for 2½ years without any street signs and people have to stumble around in the dark. They have to knock on doors to ask what street they are in if they do not have a street directory. There are no lights out there to help you find your way but we have been promised street signs by the end of the year.

During the course of last year, I vigorously campaigned with the Cabinet Member responsible to have some lighting placed in the Tiwi area. I must admit that the honourable member for Stuart Park was quite helpful in having some lights installed around the Tiwi shopping centre. It took a man's death to have some street lights put on

Trower Road from the Casuarina shopping centre to Ellengowan Drive. They are not installed all the way but, only after this poor man was killed, did we get some street lights.

We know now that contracts have been let for the upgrading and the undergrounding of power in the Tiwi and Wanguri areas. I believe that those contracts are supposed to be starting this year and hopefully they will be finished within 6 to 12 months. What about the other areas out there? There is no mention of Nakara, Alawa, Moil, Wagaman, Jingili, Stuart Park or Fannie Bay. The Cabinet Member did say that it was one of the recommendations of the report that priority be given to the reinstatement of lighting and the general repair of the electricity supply. I am anxious to know when we will get most of our street lights back in working order. Somebody said today that we have had street lights burning day and night since the cyclone. I would like to know where those lights are. They can't be in the northern suburbs. If they are, they must be in only one very small pocket.

I certainly hope that, within the life of the next Assembly, all these problems will be solved.

Mr Withnall: You're joking.

Mr DONDAS: I hope I am not because, in another year's time, I would certainly hope that we will be standing on our own two feet in that area. If the honourable member for Port Darwin is here for another term, I am sure he will be striving to get his particular electorate back into real working condition. I certainly will be if I am here. I have been working on this one for a year or 18 months because, for the first 6 to 12 months after the cyclone, a person had to be reasonably tolerant. There were other things that had to be done but all that is water under the bridge now and we can look forward to campaigning vigorously within this Assembly to get these kinds of things done in our electorates no matter what the cost is.

Mr WITHNALL: This is the last occasion on which I shall have any

chance to speak in this Assembly and I ought not to pass up that opportunity. One matter that I would like to raise, and I commend it to the attention of honourable members opposite, is that I hope that, when the mantle of authority descends upon their heads, they will not be guilty of the curious fault which must lie at the foot of the Department of the Northern Territory at the present time. They have a Secretary who is housed in a house which has cost \$100,000 and he resides there alone without a wife and family. Without anyone to keep him company in such a large house, we may very well have to send a search party one day to find him. As far as I am concerned, the need for housing should be fitted to the needs of the person and not to his status or situation. The Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory has been allocated, or perhaps has allocated to himself, a house which is far beyond his needs as he does not entertain visitors to the Northern Territory. It is far beyond the requirements which one would ordinarily think should be applicable in such a situation.

This being the last occasion upon which I shall have an opportunity to speak here, I must say that I shall miss the scowling and the smiling faces that I find on the members opposite. If the electorate so decides that each of us perhaps is no longer suitable to be endorsed as a member of this Assembly, I shall miss - if I can misquote Shakespeare - the quips and scorns of the honourable member for Jingili; I shall miss the bombastic insolence of the honourable Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry; I shall miss the pretended but eloquent anger of the honourable member for Gillen; I shall miss the singular silence of the honourable member for Tiwi; I shall miss the hoarse harrumphs from the honourable member for MacDonnell and the squeaky approval of the Country Party policy which comes from behind me here from the honourable member for Stuart. As for the member for Casuarina, I was going to spare him but, in view of the speech he made this afternoon, I shall miss his interminable utterances. Mr Speaker, as to yourself, I have no comment to make because I have no desire at this stage

in the Assembly to be named. I do indeed, gentlemen, wish you well and I trust that we shall all meet again.

Mr RYAN: Before I do get on to the main subject of my adjournment speech, I think some mention should also be made of cantankerous meanderings of the member for Port Darwin.

Mr Withnall: Why don't you make them?

Mr RYAN: This evening I intend to talk on the problems and possibilities that may be associated with the mining of uranium in the Northern Territory. I am approaching it from the stance that I have always taken: we must develop the resources of the Northern Territory otherwise our industries can no longer survive.

The other day, I was thinking about the ALP policy of not mining uranium and the effects this could have on the development of the Northern Territory. When I first came to Darwin in 1969, there were many developments taking place which impressed everybody that the Territory, even without the assistance of the Federal Government, was going somewhere. We had the mining operation over at Gove; we had extensions to the Groote Eylandt mining operation; we had the small but important operation at Frances Creek and the smaller operation at Mount Bundy; we had a development taking place at Tipperary into which a lot of money was being poured; we had the North Australian Development Corporation outside Katherine which looked as though it would give some heart to the rural industry; and we had a quite extensive oil search taking place out in the Bonaparte Gulf. As well, over in West Irian, Freeport Indonesia, through their contractors Bechtel Pacific, were setting up a huge copper mining operation. At that time, the cattle industry was booming. All of these industries were served from towns in the Northern Territory and, in particular, Darwin was getting the bulk of the benefit from this development.

What do we have today? Gove is producing but very little development is going over there; Groote Eylandt still has some development but basically is

just producing and we are certainly very glad of that. Frances Creek, for various reasons, has ceased to exist; Mount Bundy has ceased to exist; Tipperary has been wound down - there is still an attempt being made to make some sort of viable operation out of it but on nowhere near the scale that it was operating; the North Australian Development Corporation has gone bust; oil search has ceased although there is some hope that it may start up again; Freeport Indonesia is operating as a mining company towards the end of their development stage but they pulled out of Darwin because of union trouble with shipping; and I do not think I have to tell you about the situation of the cattle industry. Things look pretty grim in the Northern Territory.

I have very high hopes that the Federal Government will give us the go-ahead for mining uranium. I feel certain that that decision will be made very soon. Of course, we have the ALP to consider and they have accepted as their policy that no uranium should be mined. If ever the ALP has made a decision detrimental to the development of Australia, that must be one of the greatest. It is absolutely unbelievable. It is significant that it once again shows that the Labor Party is no longer a viable political party; it is now controlled by the extreme left wing who - I do not have to give proof because we all know - are there to try to destroy the type of system that we work under. The Northern Territory has no development at the moment and relies completely on government spending. That is the way that these people like to see things because, if they get control of the government - and I can assure you that, if the Labor Party get back into power, it will be the left wing that starts pulling the strings - the Northern Territory will be set up beautifully because we will not have any private development upon which we can rely.

The fact that the ALP have said that they will not mine uranium will be damaging to our image and will create problems with people wishing to negotiate contracts. I think we can overcome this by our present Federal Government taking a hard line. I sup-

port their proposal to take a hard line with extremism in the unions so that development can take place. Certainly, with regard to the local element of extremism in the unions, if I am in a position to do so in the next Assembly, I intend to support the Federal Government in taking any hard stands against the attitude that will set back the development of the Northern Territory and Australia. Hopefully, this problem can be overcome. Once the development starts taking place the Federal Government, like any big business operation which has a branch in an area that is not productive but has spent a lot of money there for years in a hope that eventually something will come out of that particular area, will see a result for the investment that they have put into the Northern Territory. When their investment starts to be realised, they will be prepared to invest more money in the future of the Northern Territory. Stemming from the development of uranium - and I am not talking about the issue of why we should or should not mine uranium; I am talking purely about the development of a resource - the money coming from that will keep the Territory stable and cause it to grow. I hope that, with the coming of the uranium development, the Northern Territory can prosper. Our ALP apponents in the forthcoming election have stated that the Northern Territory branch supports the stand taken at the general conference. If they support that stand, which was a victory for the left wing, it confirms what I have always said: the ALP in the Northern Territory belongs to the left wing of that organisation. If the people in the Northern Territory, by some misconception, return a majority of those people to this House, I am afraid that we will be in for a very sorry time.

Mr VALE: There are a couple of points that I wanted to raise this afternoon. The first one pertains to the sewerage farms in Alice Springs which are in the honourable member for MacDonnell's electorate. It probably shows what the residents of Alice Springs think of MacDonnell. The honourable member for Casuarina has already passed some comment on the smell which comes from the sewerage ponds out in his area and we have exactly the same problem in

Alice Springs. Also with the rapid growth rate in Central Australia in recent years, they continue to build sewerage ponds across what is known generally as the commonage down there, an area which is reserved for later development of recreational areas. The more they spend on these sewerage ponds, the longer it will be, if ever, before this area is developed for recreational purposes.

I would suggest that, instead of spending upwards of \$85,000 to \$100,000 every other year on additional ponds, they could convert from primary to secondary treatment of sewage and thus eliminate the smell. From then on, instead of spending \$100,000 on building additional ponds, they could pump that money into the provision of small parks, roads, footpaths and access to this area and continue to do that over a period of years. Central Australian people are extremely patient. We do not want a recreational area created tomorrow but we would be willing to wait while it is done progressively. Instead of continually building these ponds, that valuable water could be used in getting these areas ready and in irrigating them.

My second point relates to housing in remote areas. I am talking about government homes. Residents on mission settlements and outlying police stations are at a distinct disadvantage compared to residents of major towns. Public servants in major towns are allowed to purchase their homes after a certain number of years' residency. We need competent, qualified people out in the bush. Those people who are continually paying rent out in the bush should be getting some benefit after a long period of service. To encourage them, I would suggest that a portion of their rent should be credited against the possible purchase of a home in Alice, Tennant, Katherine, Nhulunbuy or Darwin so that, when and if they decide to live in town with their families, they will not be so seriously disadvantaged as they presently are.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I thought I would say a few words since it is the last day of our term of office in this Assembly. I must say that it has given me much

pleasure to have been a member of such a great team. The thing that I would like to talk about is apprenticeship. I see a need in the Territory for a streamlining of the apprenticeship system, particularly in the light of people's lack of interest in taking up apprenticeships in the past few years. This has caused many problems in industry. At the same time, tremendous apprenticeship schemes have been promoted and conditions for apprentices on the job have been greatly improved. In my time, apprentices had to do all the dirty jobs and did not become tradesmen until they had completed 5 years. In some ways, it was a disciplinary thing but it did not give to the younger person the satisfaction of being able to do the same job as the man working alongside him.

I can see merit in streamlining the ordinance and looking at the educational system through the Darwin Community College. For example, they could set up a training school for apprentices at places like Gove and invite interested lads from various areas to take on major trades. The report on the power station shows that there will be opportunities for apprentices and other industries will come such as uranium and perhaps work will be offered in the MacArthur River area. We hope that this will increase opportunities for young people in the Territory because they have not much to hang on to at the moment. Many of them will move away from the Territory or take on menial jobs that do not have much satisfaction. That is why many people become disenchanted with things these days. The young people whom we call "drop-outs" do not really have anything to hang on to. They have no trade and they have no interest. When they become of age, all they can say is that they will do any damn thing. If a man has any character at all, he will want to do something for the future. The Commonwealth has a craft system which will help apprentices as well as employers. We only hope that the next Assembly will streamline the ordinance and examine the whole apprenticeship system in the Territory.

I would also like to talk about domestic flights connecting with inter-

national flights. We have a ludicrous situation whereby people have to come in from Cairns to Gove to Darwin or perhaps from Kununurra and other places to link up with an international flight. On one particular day the international flight takes off about half an hour before the domestic flight gets in. On these occasions, people with families have to stop overnight before flying to Singapore or other countries, perhaps on to England. I believe there is an inquiry at present into domestic flights but how long has it taken us to wake up?

You cannot go back from Darwin to Gove on a Friday morning on Ansett because you will upset the two airline system. If I wanted to fly back there, I would have to fly to Cairns because I could not get off at Gove. This is a ludicrous situation. You have the same flight the night before coming from Cairns via Gove to Darwin. You cannot fly from Gove to Darwin but you have 2 planes coming in on parallel flights on the one day, TAA and Ansett. I know competition is a good thing but I think they should rationalise those services and look at cutting down on the flight costs from one area to another. In the Territory, we pay more per flag fall as they call it than any other place. I bring that to the attention of the Assembly because it is important that we should have a reasonable system. Qantas does not take any consideration of domestic flight times at all.

There is nothing more that I would like to say, Mr Speaker, but I wish everyone all the best in the forthcoming elections.

Mr MANUELL: Earlier on this afternoon, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry made some remarks about the mining of uranium. I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the general philosophy that seems to have emanated from Central Australia in recent weeks on the mining of uranium and the establishment of a petroleum refinery. The honourable member for Gillen made some reference earlier in the sittings to the planned petroleum refinery in Alice Springs. I would like to express my concern about the overall philosophy behind some of the things

that have been said and express concern about the effects they have.

Representatives of the Australian Labor Party in Alice Springs expressed doubts about the value of any contribution from the mining of uranium towards the economy of the Northern Territory. At a later date, they also expressed some doubt as to the value for the Northern Territory of the establishment of a refinery in Alice Springs. I seriously question the integrity of the people who make these statements. In last weekend's Australian, W.D. Scott published an assessment of their findings on the value of the contribution to Australia from the mining of uranium in the foreseeable future. I apologise for not being able to produce the facts given in that article because I cannot trace the copy of the Australian in the members' lounge. However, it did indicate that there were substantial incomes to be earned from the exporting of uranium overseas. I do not think any of us have any doubts about the ability of uranium to generate export income. If the Australian Labor Party feels so secure in its ability to survive in today's world without sharing Australia's resources with the rest of the world in exchange for cash, I seriously doubt its overall integrity.

The same situation applies to its assessment of the importance and significance of the establishment of a small petroleum refinery in Central Australia. Mr John Thomas, the deputy leader of the ALP team contesting the Assembly elections, suggested that the contribution to the Territory by the establishment of a refinery would be negligible because all of the funds, equipment and expertise for the establishment of that refinery would come from outside the area. He suggested that all of the profits generated would go outside the area and therefore there would be little contribution to the Northern Territory as a whole or Central Australia in particular. I seriously question the integrity of a person who makes such statements. What a lot of baloney! The companies involved in the exploration of the hydrocarbons in that area have based themselves locally with regional offices

and officers. The expert officers have come in from outside and they have based themselves in Alice Springs and become residents. They have purchased goods and services in the area and they have gone to see the local doctors in the area. The companies have purchased motor vehicles locally; they have employed local labour; and they have used local trucking companies to carry their equipment from Alice Springs to the site of their exploration. To say that there is no value to the local economy is ridiculous stupidity.

What fundamental basis have people like this for any claim that they will offer the people of the Northern Territory any opportunities if they are elected to power? I would suggest that this type of thinking does not reflect true Territorian attitudes; it does not reflect pioneering spirit. If this Northern Territory has any survival potential, it will be from within its own resources and from its own people. That does not mean a centralist government or central funding.

Mr Speaker, Mr Thomas also suggested that one reason why Alice Springs is not enjoying good times at the moment is because of the drop-off in capital expenditure by the Federal Government. In reply to a series of questions from the honourable member for Gillen this morning, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Development indicated quite clearly that money was being spent in the Alice Springs region. I understand that contracts have been let which are not even included in the honourable Cabinet Member's answer. To claim that the ultimate success and survival of the Alice Springs region or any other centre in the Northern Territory is dependent on government expenditure is absolute rot. That gets away from our basic concept of government and our basic concept of progress.

What is seriously needed by this Northern Territory is further private enterprise and the Federal Government and the Assembly should be looking towards the support of private enterprise and making certain that any opportunity that arises in mining exploration, cattle production or any form of commercial enterprise is given support.

If the Northern Territory has any future at all, it has to be let go; it cannot be held back. There are plenty of people in the Northern Territory who have lived here a long time. These people know the Territory, they know its pitfalls and they know how hard it can be in terms of weather and changing opportunities. Overall, the Northern Territory has an immense potential and immense opportunity. It is up to us as legislators to convince our Federal colleagues that the Northern Territory people and enterprises must be given every possible opportunity to go on towards further development.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, when Speaker Kilgariff handed over to me in 1975, he remarked that he had had wonderful support from the staff and also from members. I can verify this. The staff were so trained that, when Clerk Walker became ill and Acting Clerk Thompson suffered an injury, the Assembly functioned efficiently with these advisers absent. Incidentally, Clerk Walker is on sick leave until October, but Acting Clerk Thompson has performed flawlessly since.

I thank all members of the staff for their loyalty and record with regret various illnesses and the retirement of

Mr Les Brooking, Editor of Debates, and the resignation of Mrs Vivienne Paspaley and Mrs Kerry Ward. These people helped to make the Speaker's lot a happy one.

I must record my appreciation of the task achieved by the Majority Leader. He took charge of a bunch of raw recruits and moulded them into an efficient Cabinet and an efficient party. This was a virtual miracle when you consider that we had a cyclone and the place was blown down. I think that the Executive Members have performed very well. The Independents have also performed exceptionally well.

I therefore thank all people associated with the Assembly - the draftsmen, the staff, advisers and honourable members - for their courtesy and cooperation. I wish elected members well in their campaigns and reiterate that, without exception, they have done a first-class job. May your next Speaker have such a fine team.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned sine die.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Airlines, flight connections 504  
 Alice Springs, sewage ponds 503  
 Apprenticeship schemes 504  
 Baarda, Frank 470  
 Batchelor 496  
 Brooking Les, retirement 497  
 Bulletin, articles by Malcolm Turnbull 497  
 Burning-off, northern suburbs 500  
 Dog packs 499  
 Groote Eylandt, conditions 466  
 Housing for outback officers 503  
 Jingili electorate, lighting, parks and street signs 467  
 Katherine -  
     accommodation for outback children 499  
     detoxification centre 499  
     Old Timers Home 499  
     Practical education 499  
     Rural College 498  
 Leanyer, sewage stench 500  
 Oil Refinery 505  
 Roads, beautification 470  
 Rothdale Road, pedestrian crossing 468  
 Secretary of Department of NT, housing 501  
 Street signs and lighting 500  
 Thomas John -  
     allegations in Centralian Advocate 468  
     government expenditure 505  
     remarks on oil refinery 505  
 Umbakumba Road 466  
 Uranium mining 469, 502, 504  
 Valedictory remarks 497, 501, 503, 506  
 Vietnam, refugees 467  
 Yuendumu Mining Company 469

Crown Lands (Serial 209) 455, 474  
 Crown Lands (Validation of Leases) (Serial 212) 456  
 Local Government (Serial 204) 457  
 Parole of Prisoners (Serial 214) 464  
 Petroleum (Prospecting and Mining) (Serial 216) 472, 495  
 Pharmacy (Serial 177) 462, 494  
 Public Service (Serial 207) 457  
 Public Service (Serial 215) 472, 495  
 Small Claims (Serial 202) 475  
 Special Purposes Leases (Serial 208) 455, 474

## DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Adermann 471  
 Mr J.A. England 471

## LETTER FROM ADMINISTRATOR

Lottery and Gaming Ordinance Inquiry 451

## MOTIONS

Eighth and Ninth Reports of Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee 494  
 Report of Inquiry into Public Electricity Supply N.T. 451, 476

## PETITIONS

Drugs Bills 451  
 Qantas services, Darwin to Athens 451

## STATEMENT

Lottery and Gaming Ordinance Inquiry 471

## BILLS

Building Societies (Serial 206) 458  
 Church Lands Leases (Serial 205) 451, 474

## INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES

---

MacFARLANE J.L.S.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Katherine -  
accommodation for outback  
children 499  
detoxification centre 499  
Old Timers Home 499  
Practical education 499  
Rural College 498  
Valedictory remarks 506

### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Adermann  
471  
Mr J.A. England 471

### LETTER FROM ADMINISTRATOR

Lottery and Gaming Ordinance  
Inquiry 451

MANUELL G.E.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Oil refinery 505  
Thomas John -  
government expenditure 505  
remarks on oil refinery 505  
Uranium mining 504

### MOTIONS

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 489

PERRON M.B.

### BILLS

Church Lands Leases (Serial  
205) 454, 474

### MOTIONS

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 451, 476

POLLOCK D.L.

### BILLS

Petroleum (Prospecting and  
Mining) (Serial 216) 472, 495  
Pharmacy (Serial 177) 462

ROBERTSON J.M.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Thomas John -  
allegations in Centralian  
Advocate 468

### BILLS

Building Societies (Serial 206)  
460

### MOTIONS

Eighth and Ninth Reports of  
Subordinate Legislation and  
Tabled Papers Committee 494

RYAN R.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Uranium mining 502

STEELE R.M.

### BILLS

Local Government (Serial 204)  
457

TAMBLING G.E.

### BILLS

Building Societies (Serial 206)  
459  
Local Government (Serial 204)  
458

### MOTIONS

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 491

TUXWORTH I.L.

### BILLS

Church Lands Leases (Serial  
205) 452  
Pharmacy (Serial 177) 464

### MOTIONS

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 482

12 - 13 July 1977

ANDREW E.J.

Small Claims (Serial 202) 475

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

KENTISH R.J.

Bulletin, articles by Malcolm  
Turnbull 497

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

BILLS

Groote Eylandt, conditions 466  
Umbakumba Road 466  
Vietnam, refugees 467

Building Societies (Serial 206)  
462

LAWRIE A.D.

BALLANTYNE M.J.

BILLS

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Church Lands Leases (Serial 205)  
453, 474  
Crown Lands (Serial 209) 455  
Pharmacy (Serial 177) 463

Airlines, flight connections  
504  
Apprenticeship schemes 504  
Valedictory remarks 503

MOTIONS

MOTIONS

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 486

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 484

LETTS G.A.

DONDAS N.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Batchelor 496  
Brooking Les, retirement 497  
Valedictory remarks 497

Burning-off, northern suburbs  
500  
Dog packs 499  
Leanyer, sewage stench 500  
Street signs and lighting 500

BILLS

BILLS

Church Lands Leases (Serial  
205) 452

Church Lands Leases (Serial  
205) 453  
Crown Lands (Validation of  
Leases) (Serial 212) 456  
Public Service (Serial 215)  
472

PETITIONS

MOTIONS

Qantas services, Darwin to  
Athens 451

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 479

EVERINGHAM P.A.E.

STATEMENT

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Lottery and Gaming Ordinance  
Inquiry 471

Jingili electorate, lighting,  
parks and street signs 467  
Rothdale Road, pedestrian  
crossing 468

BILLS

Building Societies (Serial 206)  
458  
Parole of Prisoners (Serial  
214) 464

## INDEX TO MEMBERS' SPEECHES

---

### PETITIONS

Drugs Bills 451

VALE R.W.S.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Alice Springs, sewage ponds 503

Baarda, Frank 470

Housing for outback officers  
503

Roads, beautification 470

Uranium mining 469

Yuendumu Mining Company 469

WITHNALL R.J.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

Secretary of Department of NT,  
housing 501

Valedictory remarks 501

### BILLS

Crown Lands (Validation of  
Leases) (Serial 212) 456

Local Government (Serial 204)  
457

Petroleum (Prospecting and  
Mining) (Serial 216) 495

Small Claims (Serial 202) 475

### MOTIONS

### MOTIONS

Report of Inquiry into Public  
Electricity Supply N.T. 483

Eighth and Ninth Reports of  
Subordinate Legislation and  
Tabled Papers Committee 494