

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Second Assembly

Parliamentary Record

Wednesday 21 September 1977

Thursday 22 September 1977

Friday 23 September 1977

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PART I

THE DEBATES

SECOND ASSEMBLY - FIRST SESSION

Wednesday 21 September 1977

ASSEMBLY CONVENED

The Second Assembly convened at 10 am on 21 September 1977 pursuant to notice by His Honour the Administrator.

The Acting Clerk read the notice summoning the Legislative Assembly into session.

AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER OATHS

The Acting Serjeant-at-Arms conducted His Honour Mr Justice Forster and his Associate into the Chamber.

His Honour Mr Justice FORSTER: Members of the Legislative Assembly, His Honour the Administrator, not thinking fit to be present in person at this time, has been pleased to authorise me to administer the oaths or affirmations of allegiance to the Queen and the oaths or affirmations of service to the Assembly required by the Northern Territory (Administration) Act to be taken by members of the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory.

His Honour the Administrator desires me to inform you that, after all members present have been sworn and an eligible member has been chosen to be your Speaker, he will be pleased to have the member whom you have chosen presented to him later this day at a place set aside for that purpose within the precincts.

RETURNS TO WRITS

The Acting Clerk laid on the table the returns to the writs for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly held on 13 August 1977. The following members named in the returns made and subscribed the oaths or affirmations required by law:

Electorate	Name
Alice Springs	Roderick Carson Oliver
Arnhem	Bob Collins
Barkly	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Casuarina	Nicholas Dondas

Elsey	John Leslie Stuart MacFarlane
Fannie Bay	Pamela Frances O'Neil
Gillen	James Murray Robertson
Jingili	Paul Anthony Edward Everingham
Ludmilla	Roger Michael Steele
MacDonnell	Neville George Perkins
Millner	Jonathan Martin Isaacs
Nhulunbuy	Milton James Ballantyne
Nightcliff	Alline Dawn Lawrie
Port Darwin	Tom Harris
Sanderson	June D'Rozario
Stuart	Roger William Stanley Vale
Stuart Park	Marshall Bruce Perron
Tiwi	Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich
Victoria River	John Kevin Raphael Doolan

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The ACTING CLERK: It is now the duty of the Assembly to choose a member to be Speaker.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Jingili): I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker, Mr J.L.S. MacFarlane, and move that the honourable member for Elsey do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr PERRON: I second the nomination.

Mr MacFARLANE: I accept nomination.

Mr ISAACS (Millner): I propose to the Assembly for its Speaker, Ms J. D'Rozario, and move that the honourable member for Sanderson do take the Chair as Speaker.

Mr PERKINS: I second the nomination.

Ms D'ROZARIO: I accept nomination.

The ACTING CLERK: Is there any further proposal? The time for proposals has expired.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Honourable members, in support of my nomination of the honourable member for Elsey as Speaker of this Chamber, I would draw to honourable members' attention the great deal of parliamentary experience gained by the honourable member for Elsey, first in his service for many years as a member of the Legislative Council and subsequently as a member and Speaker of

the first fully-elected Legislative Assembly. The honourable member fulfilled the office of Speaker of that Assembly creditably and I have no doubt will, if elected, continue to discharge the functions of the high office of Speaker with honour.

Mr ISAACS: In moving the nomination of Ms J. D'Rozario, I draw to your attention the fact that for the first time in the Legislative Assembly there is an Opposition and it is for this reason that we are proposing one of our members for the speakership.

Ballot taken.

The ACTING CLERK: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr MacFarlane 12, Ms D'Rozario 7. I declare Mr MacFarlane elected to the office of Speaker.

Mr MacFARLANE (Else): Honourable members, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the high honour you have conferred upon me.

Mr ROBERTSON (Gillen): Mr Speaker, it is probably for us to thank you for accepting the nomination rather than you thanking us for placing you once again in that difficult position of Speaker of this Assembly. Mr Speaker, this is the second occasion on which I have had the privilege of welcoming you to that position and congratulating you on your election. As stated by the Majority Leader when speaking to your nomination, you have demonstrated to us on this side of the House and to the honourable member for Nightcliff over a fair period of the First Assembly your ability to conduct this House in a fair and impartial manner. I would suggest to you that you are not going to find it quite so easy this time. I would anticipate a little more lively Assembly but I am sure that you will conduct yourself and this place in the impartial and fair manner that we have come to know. Mr Speaker, my congratulations.

Mr ISAACS (Millner): On behalf of the Opposition, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the Second Legislative Assembly. You were elected as Speaker during the course of

the First Legislative Assembly on 12 August 1975, succeeding the then Mr Speaker Kilgariff. On that occasion, the then Majority Leader acknowledged the loss of your contribution from the floor but welcomed the gain which your impartiality and independence of mind would bring to the speakership. We too welcome your impartiality and independence of mind. I am sure that, even though you have never before had to deal with an Opposition, you will prove the truth of the adage that one is never too old to learn.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): I wish to add my congratulations to those that have already been offered. I am sure you will continue to discharge the duties of your office fairly and with distinction as you have done in the past. Further, Mr Speaker, you may now consider yourself as the father of the House because you are now the longest serving member in this Chamber.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, may I offer you my sincere congratulations. Being one of the only two members to be suspended from this House, the other being the present Majority Leader, the member for Jingili, may I say that I have always appreciated your wise and firm rulings in the past and I look forward to the continuance of your impartiality in the coming three years. You have other duties to perform besides presiding in this Chamber. It is to you that the Assembly staff are ultimately responsible, I think it is fitting that I thank you for the courtesy and the attention they show to members at very difficult times. Members are not always the easiest people to deal with but, through you, Sir, may I express my thanks to your staff for the kind way in which they assist us to discharge our duties.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am informed that it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend in the lounge of the Assembly and I propose to present myself to him there as the choice of the Assembly for its Speaker. I will be pleased if members

will accompany me.

(Sitting resumed).

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATHS

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have presented myself to His Honour the Administrator who was pleased to congratulate me and hand me his commission to administer to members of the Assembly the oaths and affirmations required by statute. I table the commission.

ATTENDANCE OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr EVERINGHAM (Jingili): Mr. Speaker, I have to inform the Assembly that His Honour the Administrator intends to attend the Assembly immediately to declare the causes of his calling the Assembly together.

Mr SPEAKER: The Acting Serjeant-at-Arms will inform His Honour that the Assembly is ready to receive him.

His Honour the ADMINISTRATOR: Honourable members, the opening of this, the first session of the second fully-elected Assembly is yet another important milestone in the moves towards responsible government in the Northern Territory. Since I last addressed this House, the Assembly executive has dealt with the administrative problems associated with the transfer of the first group of functions to local control. Negotiations have continued with the federal government for further transfers which culminated in the decision by the federal government in late July for a timetable which will result in most of the state-type functions being transferred to the control of the Assembly executive by July 1979. Further, the federal government has agreed that a Northern Territory government with its own treasury and office of auditor-general should be established by July 1978. The Assembly executive is generally in agreement with the timetable of transfers approved by the federal government but there are some functions, town planning and elements of land and education administration in particular, which the Assembly executive would like to see

transferred earlier than proposed. To this end, further negotiations are proceeding with the federal government.

The results of the recent election have established the first official Opposition in the Assembly. The presence of an official Opposition in this House is welcome as the Westminster system of government can only be fully effective under the scrutiny of and by constructive argument from a viable Opposition.

During my address to this House in March this year I referred to budgetary arrangements for the transferred functions becoming the prerogative of this Assembly and stated that supply and appropriation bills would be presented, enabling the Assembly to determine financial priorities for those functions transferred to the Assembly. Supply bills were introduced during the last Assembly and appropriation bills will be introduced at this sittings, making the first occasion when a Territory budget has been presented and debated in this Assembly. Legislation to establish a Northern Territory treasury and to provide an audit system will be introduced early next year with a view to establishing total Northern Territory treasury arrangements by 1 July 1979.

Late last month the Prime Minister announced the decision to go ahead with the mining and export of uranium after his government's consideration of the report of the second Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry. The Assembly executive welcomes the decision to mine and export uranium from the East Alligator region as it believes economic and social benefits will flow as a result, not only to the Northern Territory but to the whole of Australia.

There will obviously need to be most careful attention devoted to the protection of the environment and to the needs and welfare of the Aboriginal people in the area. To this end the Assembly executive has already commenced discussions with the federal government on the role of the Northern Territory government in these areas. It is the intention of the Majority

Party during the course of this session of the Assembly to provide the opportunity for a full debate on the federal government's decision to mine uranium.

The report of the Joint Select Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory was tabled late last month in the federal parliament. The conclusions and recommendations of that committee will be considered, together with material which has been provided by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, as a basis for complementary Northern Territory legislation under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act.

Because of the impact all forms of betting and gambling can have on the economic and social well-being of all Territory citizens, the Majority Party in the last Assembly established a committee of inquiry, the report of which was tabled too late in the life of the last Assembly to permit a debate to be mounted. Dealing as it does with such important matters as the system of off-course betting and whether or not a casino should be established, it is important that a wide range of views should be sought before new legislation on these matters is introduced into this Assembly.

Whilst during the last Assembly opportunity was afforded for a full-scale debate on the dangerous drugs and associated bills, no final resolution on these matters was achieved. While the findings and recommendations of the two royal commissions presently being held in New South Wales and South Australia on this subject will be useful in determining long-term policies, it is proposed to introduce legislation at this sittings dealing with the provision of more realistic penalties, particularly those relating to drug trafficking. This legislation will also contain provisions relating to the International Convention on Psychotropic Substances and its passage by this Assembly will make it possible for Australia to subscribe to the convention.

Legislation to enable the creation of an office of ombudsman will be intro-

duced during these sittings of the Assembly. With the transfer of a substantial number of officers to the Northern Territory Public Service, it is important that there be an early creation of such an office. The federal government is prepared to amend the Ombudsman Act to exclude the Northern Territory Public Service from its operation.

Daylight saving was first debated in the Northern Territory Legislative Council in August 1971 when it was decided that the Northern Territory would not be involved. In view of the passage of time and the varying views of communities in the Northern Territory, it is proposed that this subject be brought forward for debate early in the life of this Assembly. So far as the Majority Party is concerned such debate would be on non-party lines.

A major review has now been completed of the licensing laws and administration in the Northern Territory and detailed proposals for covering legislation are presently being developed. It is proposed that the present licensing system will be replaced by the creation of a licensing commission to administer all aspects of licensing in the Northern Territory. This legislation will be based on legislative programs and practices in the states and in the light of present-day requirements for the Northern Territory. It is expected that the legislation will be introduced into the Assembly during next year.

Rural industries have always made a fundamental and major contribution to the economy of the Northern Territory. It is the Assembly executive's policy to give high priority to the maintenance and development of rural industries and communities, with full recognition of the need for conservation of rural resources, and appropriate legislation will be introduced as considered necessary.

Because of the special character of the Northern Territory community and the wide range of ethnic minorities within the community other than Aborigines, the Assembly executive proposes to establish an office of ethnic

affairs which will bring the Territory into line with similar moves which have now been made in all the states.

In this sittings of the Assembly, it is proposed to introduce both town planning and building bills to provide for the situation following the demise of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission on 31 December this year. Comprehensive town planning and development legislation will be introduced early in the life of the Assembly to replace the present Town Planning Ordinance and to take account of planning of towns and developing communities.

The present weights and measures legislation which is out of date and is being completely rewritten will also be related to the metric system to be adopted on an Australia-wide basis on 1 January 1978.

Local government legislation will be introduced to provide for authorities to be established in developing areas by enabling powers to be progressively passed to such bodies when they are capable of handling them, as initial steps to full local self-government.

Some preliminary work has been done on a review and updating of legislation concerning apprentices. New legislation is required in line with best practices in the states and to meet changing conditions in the Northern Territory.

Land administration in the Northern Territory is in need of thorough review. The Assembly executive sees this as a major and lengthy task. In the meantime, a more generous freehold system initially involving residential leases will be considered for early legislative action.

The Mining Ordinance in its many amended forms has served the Territory well in the past. It does not, however, meet the needs of a modern mining industry with its emphasis on complex technological processes. The Department of the Northern Territory has been reviewing this legislation with the object of its complete replacement and the executive will take up these proposals.

The Assembly executive has recognised the problems associated with environmental control and conservation, and will be developing appropriate legislation to ensure that the Northern Territory does not, in its developing stages, experience the same difficulties which have faced the states.

Preliminary work has already been done on the nature of the organisation and the legislative framework for the establishment of an authority to administer electricity supply services in the Northern Territory, so that an appropriate authority may be provided when these services are transferred to the control of the Assembly in July 1978.

Whilst a Consumers Protection Council has operated in the Northern Territory since 1969, it has not had the necessary legislative support to enable it to deal effectively with modern consumer requirements. This situation will be remedied by the introduction of appropriate legislation to support the council's findings and recommendations.

As the Territory moves towards fully responsible government, consideration must be given to the development of an electoral ordinance dealing with the requirements for Assembly elections. Some preliminary work has been done on an examination of the principles which might determine the form of such legislation and this is expected to be introduced late in the life of this Assembly.

The legislation I have referred to represents the major thrust of the Assembly executive's legislative program. It is not an exhaustive list but it does indicate a formidable program for an Assembly executive which is working with limited resources. The changes and developments of which I have spoken represent the broad lines of the Assembly executive's policies to bring the Northern Territory to responsible government and to provide the economic, social and political climate for the advancement and well-being of the people of the Northern Territory. In the process, new demands will be made on the Assembly executive for ser-

vices to meet the challenges of new communities and industries. Taken in conjunction with the progressive transfer of additional powers to the Assembly in January and July 1978 and July 1979 which will result in responsible government in most of the functions exercised by the states, it will be seen that the Territory by that time will have reached the point where the reins of government will be in the hands of the people of the Northern Territory and they will then have taken up the challenge of self-government.

I wish you well in your deliberations and leave you to the discharge of your important duties.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

Mr EVERINGHAM (Jingili): Mr Speaker, following the declaration of the polls, I was able to inform His Honour the Administrator that my party commanded a majority in this Assembly. Acting on my advice and in consultation with the Minister of State for the Northern Territory, His Honour was pleased to designate the following as executive members and members of his Executive Council.

Firstly, the offices that I bear are those of Majority Leader, Chief Secretary and Executive Member for Law. My responsibilities include constitutional development, Aboriginal affairs, police, public service, legislation, servicing the cabinet and the Executive Council, ombudsman legislation, industrial relations, ethnic affairs, the Legislative Assembly Department, co-ordination of government administration, administrative services and law.

I was pleased to advise His Honour that the honourable member for Stuart Park should be designated as the Executive Member for Finance and Planning. His responsibilities include finance and audit, town planning, building, public utilities, water resources, lands and housing.

The honourable member for Barkly is designated as Executive Member for Resources and Health. His responsibilities are resources including

mining and forestry, health, parks and wildlife, environment and conservation, tourism, lotteries and gaming, liquor and licensing.

The honourable member for Gillen is to be the Executive Member for Community and Social Development and his responsibilities include social welfare, sport and recreation, local government, correctional services including parole, education, emergency services, civil defence, consumer protection, museums and art galleries, libraries, community grants and weights and measures. In addition, Mr Speaker, although it is not a parliamentary office, I notify that the honourable member for Gillen will be the manager of business in this House for the Majority Party.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Ludmilla is designated as the Executive Member for Transport and Industry. His responsibilities comprise transport and communications, primary industry, secondary industry, fire services, bush fires control, ports, fisheries, motor vehicles, rent and price control, apprentices and commercial affairs.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy will act as my parliamentary secretary and may handle on my behalf the committee stages of various legislation in my charge in this Assembly.

OPPOSITION OFFICE HOLDERS

Mr ISAACS (Millner): The Opposition has elected the following members as office holders: the Opposition Leader is myself, the deputy leader is the honourable member for MacDonnell and the Opposition whip is the honourable member for Fannie Bay.

ALICE SPRINGS ADMINISTRATION REPEAL BILL

(Serial 12)

Bill presented and read a first time,

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the second reading be made an order of the day for a later day.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received a copy of His Honour the Administrator's speech,

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): I present an address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech in the following terms: May it please Your Honour, we, the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory, in Assembly assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Honour for the speech which you have been pleased to address to the Assembly.

I move that the address be agreed to.

Mr ISAACS: I second the motion.

Debate adjourned.

ATTENDANCE OF MINISTER

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the honourable Evan Adermann, minister for the Northern Territory. With the concurrence of honourable members, I ask the minister to take a seat on the floor of the Chamber.

ADDRESS BY MINISTER FOR THE
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr SPEAKER: Mr Minister, on behalf of all members, I extend to you a warm welcome to this Chamber and invite you to address the Assembly.

Mr ADERMANN: Mr Speaker, may I express my appreciation for this, another opportunity to address on a very important occasion the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory. To you, Mr Speaker, I extend my congratulations and my very best wishes on your re-appointment to your high and important office. The Chief Secretary and Majority Leader, his deputy leader and executive are offered my congratulations. They assume office at an historic moment and for an historic term of office, and I know they have

the capacity and energy to lead the Territory in its move to full self-government. To members of this Assembly, both those re-elected and those newly elected, I express my congratulations and best wishes as you undertake your duties in your term of office. Now with an official Opposition, the first official Opposition since the Assembly for the Northern Territory became fully elected, I congratulate the leader and the executive of the Opposition for I recognise and appreciate the role and place of the official Opposition in our democratic Westminster system. Indeed I look forward to meeting later today the Leader of the Opposition.

While I occupy the office of Minister of State for the Northern Territory, I will be conscious and aware of the expressions and views which emanate from this Assembly. I have also the privilege of conveying to this Assembly the best wishes and greetings of the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth government as you begin your term of office.

Every one of us in this Chamber, because of our involvement in politics, knows the realities of political life. Every election brings its casualties as well as its victors. It is not in any partisan political spirit or intent that I pay tribute and express appreciation for the efforts and cooperation of some who are not now with us in this Chamber, I do not believe anyone would disagree with me when I express appreciation for the dedication for so very many years of Dr Letts in this Assembly and in other areas of service in the interests of the Northern Territory. It is difficult to remember a time when he was not in the forefront of endeavours to obtain recognition and a measure of self-determination for the Territory.

It is not my intention to dwell at any length on issues outlined by His Honour the Administrator setting out the program of the Assembly Majority. The program and details for self-government in the Territory have been outlined, announced and agreed upon. I am encouraged by the meetings with the Chief Secretary, his deputy,

the officers of the Northern Territory Public Service and officers of my own department. It is axiomatic that in the period ahead there will be great need for liaison, cooperation and consultation not only at the political level but also at departmental level. That will be my own attitude and it will be the attitude I will insist is adopted by officers of my department, but it must be reciprocal. I have every indication and confidence that these very essential circumstances will prevail.

In this session you will conduct your own budget debate, and will set priorities and allocate expenditure. That itself is an historic event. There will be debates; there will be legislation, and the foundations will be laid for the operation of the Northern Territory as a self-governing entity within the Commonwealth.

There will of course be debate as effect is given to other decisions, notably in relation to the mining of uranium and the establishment of the Kakadu National Park which will have a very major impact on the long-term future and economic viability of the Territory.

You will be aware of the government's decision to proceed with the mining and export of uranium. This decision relates to the rich uranium deposits in the Territory which are of considerable importance to you. Not only will you be aware of the clear economic benefit to the Northern Territory but other aspects of that decision are of importance. The government's decision takes cognizance of the needs of energy-starved nations and our responsibilities to meet those needs. It incorporates the contention that, if we are to have a voice and a role in ensuring that nuclear energy is used only for peaceful purposes, we can only obtain that voice and regulatory role as an exporting nation. The government's decision very closely follows the recommendations of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry which was detailed, exhaustive, and collated every available piece of evidence. In the decision are spelt out the very stringent controls - in some aspects

even more stringent than those recommended - which will apply to guard against the use of nuclear energy for other than peaceful purposes. It also details the very rigid controls to ensure the protection of the environment of the Alligator Rivers region and to provide for the needs and welfare of the Aboriginal people in the region.

Apart from uranium, there is expectation of other major mineral development within the Territory. But of course the development of the Territory is also dependent on the pastoral industry, the fishing industry, the tourist industry and the establishment of secondary and manufacturing industries to serve them.

The cut and thrust of debate between government and opposition in a parliamentary institution is an essential ingredient of our democratic system. Indeed you will be very conscious that the success of parliamentary institutions relies to a substantial degree on the acceptance of and adherence to the conventions associated with parliament by all members and parties participating in the process.

It is traditional for a monarch, a governor-general or an administrator at the end of his address to use words such as "I now leave you to your high and important duties". Those are not idle words for, by the vote of the people, you have been charged with responsibilities both high and important. As I work with you as your minister responsible for Territory administration, you can be assured that I recognise that. I will not be unmindful of your deliberations and assessments, nor will I assume any remote, indifferent, or unsympathetic posture. I am confident that your deliberations and endeavours will be directed towards the benefit of the people of the Northern Territory and to the interests of the Commonwealth as a whole. I wish you well.

Mr SPEAKER: Mr Minister, in the name of this Assembly, I thank you for your speech.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: It is necessary for the Assembly to elect a member to be its Chairman of Committees.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees, the member for Casuarina, Mr Dondas, and move that he be so appointed.

Mr PERRON: I second the motion.

Mr DONDAS: I accept nomination.

Mr ISAACS: (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I propose to the Assembly for its Chairman of Committees, the member for Victoria River, Mr Doolan, and move that he be so appointed.

Mr PERKINS: I second the motion.

Mr DOOLAN: I accept nomination.

Mr SPEAKER: Are there any further nominations? There being two nominations, I direct that a ballot be taken.

Ballot taken.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the result of the ballot is Mr Dondas 12, Mr Doolan 7. I declare Mr Dondas elected to the position of Chairman of Committees and I offer him my congratulations.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): Mr Speaker, I would like to be the first to congratulate the honourable member for Casuarina on his election as your deputy and Chairman of Committees. It is an honour that I previously had and it is also a position which should hold no real terror for the honourable member for Casuarina because he has acted as your deputy in the past and also as Deputy Chairman of Committees.

I might make a couple of observations on the office for the honourable member's benefit. If you, in your capacity as Speaker of this House, must tread as though you were treading in a bed of tulips, I can assure him that, with an Opposition over there, he will

have to tread as if he were treading in a minefield. It is a very difficult task. I would say the honourable member will no doubt carry out his functions without favour but I would suggest to him that he had better not carry them out without fear.

Mr ISAACS: (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I would also like to offer our congratulations to the honourable member for Casuarina. No doubt his experience in footballing matters will place him in a very sound position for umpiring.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members for their kind words.

APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that, pursuant to standing order 15, Mr Speaker, Mr Dondas, Ms D'Rozario, Mr Everingham and Mr Perkins be appointed as the Standing Orders Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that, pursuant to standing order 16, Mr Ballantyne, Mr Doolan, Ms D'Rozario, Mr Harris and Mr Tuxworth be appointed as the Committee of Privileges.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that, pursuant to standing order 17, Mr Collins, Mr Dondas, Mrs O'Neil and Mr Vale be appointed as the House Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that, pursuant to standing order 18, Mr Collins, Mr Doolan, Mrs Padgham-Purich, Mr Steele and Mr Vale be appointed as the Publications Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Mr ROBERTSON: I move that, pursuant to standing order 19, Mr Ballantyne, Mr Harris, Mrs Lawrie, Mr Oliver and Mr Perkins be appointed as the Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers.

Motion agreed to.

DELEGATES TO
AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): I move that the delegates of this Assembly to the Australian Constitutional Convention be Mr Everingham and Mr Isaacs and that in the event that either delegate is unable to attend the convention, Mr Robertson act as substitute delegate.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: I have a message from the Administrator, recommending to the Assembly the appropriation bills. The message reads:

I, JOHN ARMSTRONG ENGLAND, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, pursuant to section 45 of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910, recommend to the Legislative Assembly bills entitled the Allocation of Funds (Appropriation) Bill (No. 1) 1977-78 and the Allocation of Funds (Appropriation) Bill (No. 2) 1977-78 to make provision with respect to the expenditure of moneys appropriated by the Parliament for operating and capital expenditure for the year ending June 30 1978 in respect of matters specified under section 42E of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent two bills being presented together and the two bills being read a first time together and one motion being put in regard to respectively the second readings, the committee's report stages and the third readings of the bills together; and the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS
(APPROPRIATION) BILL NO. 1

(Serial 4)

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS
(APPROPRIATION) BILL NO. 2

(Serial 5)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): I move that the bills be now read a second time.

During the life of this newly elected Assembly, major advances will be made towards constitutional development and the appropriation bills now before the House represent the first historic step for the Territory in a chain of events which will lead to establishment of a local treasury and the right to determine how all moneys raised in and appropriated to the Territory are to be spent. The Majority Party will continue to work towards the progressive transfer of powers until such times that the objectives and priorities of all state-type expenditure in the Territory are decided by the elected representatives of the people. For too long the Territory has not had a say in the determination of local priorities and, although consulted on a limited basis, it has had to accept the decisions of the federal government and its bureaucracy. These bills are therefore of major significance to this Assembly and to the Northern Territory as they represent allocation of public monies to the priorities determined by the elected representatives of the Northern Territory. The monies allocated by these bills are solely in respect to the functions transferred by the Commonwealth government to the Northern Territory executive on 1 January 1977. For this purpose, a total of \$50m will be appropriated by the federal parliament for operating and capital expenditure for the year ending 30 June 1978 in respect of matters specified in the determination made under section 42E of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910.

In presenting the allocations in the form of two bills, I have followed as a matter of convenience the practice observed in the Commonwealth. The first bill provides for the ordinary annual services of the Territory and the second bill provides for the capital works and services. In other words, the first bill provides for day-to-day operations and the second bill covers capital and non-operational expenditures. I would stress at this stage that these bills do not fully reflect the economic and social objectives of the Majority Party but have been framed around the \$50m single-line appropriation negotiated with the Commonwealth government. They do, however, provide a means whereby this Assembly has the opportunity to determine how the monies appropriated by the Commonwealth are applied in the Territory. I am hopeful that in the not too distant future the budget of the Assembly will be financed with funds appropriated by federal parliament in accord with a special financial agreement which has yet to be drawn up and approved by the Majority Leader and the Prime Minister, together with revenues derived from within the Territory which currently are received by the federal government. Preliminary work has commenced on this most important financial agreement which will lay the foundations for financing government expenditure in the Territory for many years to come. I stress to honourable members that no agreement will be entered into which is not to our advantage, for the good government and development of the Territory.

The \$50m allocated to us is a small but significant part of the overall figure to be spent in the Territory during the current financial year. However the amount excludes the cost of those civil works, repairs and maintenance programs etc for the transferred functions. The funds for these items will remain for the time being with the Department of Construction or other agencies of the Commonwealth until such times as their operations come under the umbrella of this Assembly.

I would now draw honourable members' attention to clauses 4 and 5 which may require some word of explanation.

Clause 4 in the provides the mechanism whereby expenditure of units of administration under the supply ordinances can be identified and recorded under the new departmental structure where they will not be located after the passing of these bills.

Clause 5, variation of allocation, sets out a procedure for varying the allocation made by these bills. Provided there is a need for extra funds for particular purposes and savings can be made in other votes within the same schedule, the Executive Member for Finance and Planning may make an order varying the expenditure allocation by an amount up to \$250,000. If the required variation exceeds \$250,000, he must first seek and obtain the approval of the Executive Council for the variation. In all cases, copies of any order for variation must be tabled in the Assembly within three sitting days after the making of an order. The Assembly thus remains fully informed as to particular variations to its allocations and may debate an order and express views on the action taken by myself or by the executive. This is a machinery measure only, and provides the necessary flexibility to meet unforeseen and emergent contingencies to the extent that savings can be made elsewhere or, where savings cannot be made or some special circumstances occur, from an amount provided by the Treasurer out of funds made available to the Treasurer by the parliament of the Commonwealth.

I now turn to items of special interest which reflect the direction of the Majority Party's priorities and objectives in terms of the functions at present under its control.

The transfer of functions - members are aware of the timetable proposed for the transfer of functions from the Department of Northern Territory which calls for a major and very significant transfer on 1 July 1978. During the interim period, elements of the management services functions and others will transfer from the department, as will certain elements of the Attorney-General's Department and the Apprentices Board. The sums

appropriated in these bills do not cover transfers subsequent to 1 July 1977. These will be the subject of special funding arrangements by the Commonwealth.

The total funds covered by the two bills of some \$50m reflects an increase of 14% on the equivalent expenditure for 1976-77. The increase is not as large as we had sought from the federal government. However members will see that the increase of some \$6m has been applied to areas which have been neglected under the previous financial arrangements. The application of these additional funds to these areas will help promote the development of the economy of the Northern Territory. The Majority Party is not prepared to sit back and be satisfied with the total funding of \$50m for 1977-78. We will continue to press the federal government to provide further funding during the course of the year, to meet the special needs of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

During the formative stages of the transfer of powers we will continue to ensure that gains made are not eroded and strict controls will be exercised over the funds provided by these bills to ensure that the objectives set out therein are achieved and that responsible self-government is maintained.

Revenue sources - under the existing financial arrangements between the federal government and the Northern Territory executive, the Legislative Assembly is responsible for the ordinances covering much of the revenue raised by the Department of the Northern Territory and these revenues are paid into the Commonwealth Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Legislative Assembly does not have direct access to these revenues. Nevertheless the Commonwealth revenue proposals are of particular interest and concern to the people of the Northern Territory as these charges are approved by the Legislative Assembly. I will deal further with the matter of revenue sources shortly.

Outlays - I mentioned some of the significant provisions of this budget. Details of these and other provisions are set out in explanatory paper No. 5.

Tourism - the Majority Party acknowledges the importance of tourism to the economy of the Northern Territory. The industry has been estimated to be worth some \$33m annually in direct spending within the Territory, with a subsequent turn-over value of some \$90m and is second only to mining. It probably offers the greatest potential for employment in the Northern Territory and increased business would quickly stimulate other aspects of the Northern Territory economy as well. This budget provides \$713,000 for the activities of the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau of which \$254,750 has been designated for promotion and advertising expenditures, an increase of more than 100%. The overall budget allocation in this area represents an increase of over \$213,000 or 42% over the allocation for 1976-77 and is aimed at stimulating interest in the Northern Territory in order to attract a greater share of the Australian tourist trade for the Territory.

Reserves - this budget provides a net \$1.140m for the activities of the Reserves Board, an increase of \$204,000 or 22% over 1976-77. In addition, the board will spend some \$210,000 from its own revenues and will receive a further \$260,000 from the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development for the operation and maintenance of Uluru (Ayers Rock National Park). In other words, the Reserves Board will have 50% more funds to spend this financial year. The level of the board's activities is of considerable importance to the tourist trade in the Northern Territory and, consequently, the economy of the Northern Territory. As visitors are attracted from all over the world to our reserves, it is of vital importance that they are continually improved and maintained to the highest possible standards.

Local government - assistance to local government authorities, because of the Commonwealth government's restraint on expenditure, has been at a somewhat unsatisfactory level over the past two years, notwithstanding the priority accorded to this area by the Majority Party. We recognise the need to inject funds quickly into this area

and honour the obligations previously given by the Commonwealth government. In this respect, we have increased the subsidies and grants to the Corporation of the City of Darwin and the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs by some 32% to a total for this year of \$2,566m.

Boards of trustees - there are a number of public recreation and sporting reserves in the Territory whose development and operation has been entrusted to trustees appointed under the Crown Lands Ordinance. In more recent years, the activities of these trustees have been restricted because of economic restraints and, to remedy this situation, the Majority Party has increased the allocation by some 90% to a total of \$277,000 for the current financial year.

Housing - the restoration of cyclone damaged housing and the provision of additional housing to meet the growing demands for low rental housing is considered to be of the utmost priority and the Majority Party is determined that the Northern Territory Housing Commission will be able to meet the current housing demand and reduce the waiting time to a more reasonable level. This budget provides \$21.2m or 42% of the total budget for the programs of the Northern Territory Housing Commission. These funds will provide for the completion and handover of 350 new dwelling units and some 350 restored units. It will also provide for commitment to the construction of some 360 new units and the restoration of 250 cyclone damaged units. In addition, this program has already committed the Majority Party to reserve some \$12,245m of its budget for the 1978-79 financial year for housing purposes. The demand for housing continues to grow and, while the situation at other centres is not unreasonable, the Darwin position is unacceptable. The Majority Party will continue to give priority to the program of the Housing Commission in order to reduce the current long waiting time in Darwin. I am informed that the waiting period in Darwin extends from 10 months for a one-bedroom flat to 17 months for a three-bedroom house. Although the funds provided by the Commonwealth for

housing attract low interest rates, there are a number of persons such as pensioners and deserted mothers or single parents for whom the commission's rent places a heavy burden on their limited income. The needs of these people have been recognised and this budget provides a total of \$132,000 to subsidise rents for such persons.

Staff - the approved level of staff appointments in the Northern Territory Public Service, excluding the statutory authorities, is 1,032 persons for which a provision of \$13,193,300 has been made in this budget. In addition, another 294 persons are employed by the statutory authorities responsible to this Assembly. The funds for these authorities have been made available direct to them or will be provided from their own revenue. As I mentioned earlier, income raised in the Northern Territory does not bear on our single-line appropriation budget. However, taxes and charges are of concern to everyone who pays and I therefore touch on the items in the federal budget which affect Territorians. I refer to the Commonwealth Treasurer's Budget Paper No. 4, page 18.

Electricity - revenue from electricity charges in 1977-78 is expected to reach \$17.5m, compared with \$10.564m in 1976-77. This represents an increase in receipts of approximately \$7m. I understand that this increase will occur mainly as a result of the full effect of the tariff increases imposed in 1976, as well as increases in electricity consumption, improvements in billing and tighter collection procedures.

Motor vehicle registration - receipts for 1977-78 are expected to be \$1.2m, an increase of \$115,000 over 1976-77. The increase reflects an anticipated rise in the volume of business to be transacted through the Motor Vehicle Registry.

Rates - this item largely comprises revenues from water and sewerage rating. Receipts for 1977-78 are expected to be \$3,280m, an increase of approximately \$1,293m over 1976-77. Again I am informed that this reflects

a full year's implementation of new tariffs introduced on 1 July 1976 which increased, among other things, excess water charges which will be first billed during the course of the current financial year. In addition, revenue will rise substantially because of the progress in the rebuilding of Darwin and the connection of services to re-constructed dwellings and new dwellings.

Miscellaneous receipts are expected to be \$8,062m for 1977-78, an increase of \$3.561m over the previous financial year. The principal increase in the miscellaneous area arises from the planned release by the Department of Northern Territory of more residential, commercial and industrial land and from the payment by the Northern Territory Housing Commission for land allocated to it. The increase from the sale of land is in the region of approximately \$3m.

Revenue increases - in the Treasurer's budget estimates on revenue of the Department of the Northern Territory, provision was made for a general revenue increase of \$6m. I understand that the Department of Northern Territory has proposed some areas of revenue increases to achieve that target figure. We have yet to study their suggestions. Members may recall that, on a number of occasions in the past, this Assembly and the former Legislative Council had rejected demands from the Commonwealth government to increase revenues, particularly stamp duties, from their current level to levels more comparable with charges elsewhere. Members may also recall that this Assembly and the previous Council consistently refused to increase some charges until such time as it had obtained the right to determine decisions affecting the government of the Northern Territory.

That time has now come. The Commonwealth government has approved the measures leading to political independence for the Territory. Arrangements for the further transfer of responsibilities are now being finalised and we are progressing rapidly towards a major transfer of functions on 1 July 1978. The government of the Northern

Territory must now face up to its obligations and move towards making responsible budget decisions for balancing, to whatever extent possible, future funding of Northern Territory expenditure. An immediate study is being undertaken of the total revenue-raising capacity of the Territory generally and of specific items for possible increases. When the results of that study are available to us, we will then be in a position to make more positive and forward-looking decisions concerning the range of revenue options open to us. We will not hesitate to take decisive action where increases in revenue charges are justified and necessary for effective and responsible self-government in the Territory.

I can assure this Assembly that, in no instance, will charges be more than is reasonable for the Territory people to bear, nor more than those charges imposed for comparable standards of service elsewhere in Australia where similar development and geographic conditions exist. Following the receipt of the results of the revenue study, I would expect to bring forward detailed proposals for the attention of the Assembly.

Accounting policies - I have given some attention to the accounting arrangements and policies of our Northern Territory Administration. There are a number of problems which I propose to deal with as soon as time, manpower and resources will permit. I would suggest that the main problems that have arisen in the past are due to the lack of effective planning and consideration of the particular needs of the Northern Territory. For example, one particular problem has been the delays and frustrations experienced by the general public and by commerce and community service organisations because they just do not know until nearly half way through the financial year whether their project, contract or government grant will be financed or not or the extent of any assistance which may be given. At the end of the financial year we witness a mad rush and associated wasteful spending as people frantically strive to spend any surplus funds before the vault door is closed on 30 June.

I am determined to see that this lack of planning and attention to the particular needs of the Territory is corrected and that the financial administration of the Northern Territory government will demonstrate to the people of the Northern Territory some of the real benefits which will flow from the fact that we are in control of our own financial affairs and are able to determine, for the first time, our own priorities covering revenue and expenditure proposals. With the transfer of additional powers, there is now the opportunity to re-examine the timing of our own budget cycle and, if necessary and desirable, arrange community programs to be tied to a calendar year January to December rather than the existing July to June financial year. I feel there is scope for considerable improvement in the timing and commitment of our funds to meet the real needs of the community and government efficiency. This will result in better utilisation of our funds and greater productivity and motivation throughout the community.

Associated with the transfer of additional functions and powers to the Northern Territory executive, there will be an exchange of a letter of understanding between the Prime Minister and the Majority Leader setting down a firm basis for the financial arrangements which are to apply following the transfer of further significant powers to the Northern Territory executive. The Assembly will be kept fully informed of the progress on these matters and the proposed detailed arrangements. Later in the financial year, I will be presenting to the Assembly a financial administration and audit bill which, in association with complementary Commonwealth legislation, will enable the Northern Territory government to establish its own consolidated revenue fund and its own Northern Territory government bank account.

Mr Speaker, for the information and assistance of honourable members, I have tabled the following papers: Commonwealth Government Capital Works Program for the Northern Territory 1977-78, Paper No. 4 and Explanatory Notes to the Allocation of Funds Appropriation Ordinance Nos. 1 and 2,

Paper No. 5. I point out, Mr Speaker, that some of these detailed breakdown figures which are being provided to members are not normally available in some other governments and I hope honourable members take advantage of receiving such documents and being able to peruse the budget proposals in detail. I would also like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation of the work done in preparing these documents by the staff of the Finance Department and other government offices. During the very short time which we have had to date, a great deal has been achieved to prepare these documents for today and it was only achieved because many people worked hard, totally regardless of the hours that were involved. It has been a tremendous effort and I thank all those who have participated in bringing that to conclusion.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the federal government Budget Papers Nos. 1 to 11. I understand that honourable members have received copies and I would like a copy tabled in the House.

Leave granted.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, within the constraints of the budget strategy of the federal government, the Majority Party has determined its 1977-78 budget expenditure priorities and, as a result, there are important significant changes in the expenditure programs of the units of administration and also outside organisations as well. I believe that these changes will produce a more effective and productive response from Territory people. I have referred to action now in hand for a general study of revenue matters and the Assembly will be kept informed of the progress in this regard as progress reports come to hand. In conclusion, I have much pleasure in commending the first Northern Territory budget to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Mr STEELE (Transport and Industry): It is the Majority Party's firm commitment that, where possible, Northern

Territory people will get the best possible service from their future government and their elected representatives. To this end, we will improve services to the community in the broadest possible way and, in my own portfolio area, we have already taken initiatives to facilitate efficiency and improve public relations.

The Motor Vehicle Registry unit of my department administers the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, the Traffic Ordinance and certain sections of the Control of Roads Ordinance. It is responsible for the licensing of drivers, registration of motor vehicles and the licensing of omnibuses and hire cars both public and private. I am aware that the Motor Vehicle Registry in Darwin has been the subject of adverse public criticism for a considerable time. I do not intend to go into the reasons for this; suffice to say that, since control has passed to the Legislative Assembly in January this year, a rigorous attempt has been made to remedy the shortcomings apparent in the system. I can now say with confidence that the test shed is operating satisfactorily and the general attitude of the public is that the test shed inspectors are efficient and are doing a good job. The same can be said of the many inspectors who have been appointed to inspect vehicles at garages within the Darwin area and at Katherine and Tennant Creek.

There are still problems in the office complex causing delays to the public but these are being ironed out progressively. One of the reasons for the delay in processing paperwork has been the record system which fell into arrears following Cyclone Tracy. We are now well on the way with conversion to computerised records and, by the end of the year, the record system will be considered efficient. The issue of a computerised licence will commence shortly. The first step will be the issue of computerised renewal notices about mid-October for licences due for renewal from 1 November this year. This new concept will be accompanied by changes in procedure which are intended to maximise convenience to the public. Computerised licences will be followed by computer-printed registration certi-

ificates which we hope to introduce at the start of 1978. We are working towards a goal where people will be able to process paperwork at places other than the registry and hopefully within 12 months this initiative will be a fact of life. To achieve this over the next 12 months, we will be encouraging people to bring their vehicles to the test shed or take them to an authorised inspector for inspection, and then either post the paperwork to or leave it at the registry, either for collection later or to have the registration sticker posted to them. I believe people will accept these changes readily and hopefully most of the delays in the system will be overcome.

There are many unregistered motor vehicles on the roads; these include vehicles bearing interstate number plates. We will be taking action to remove these unregistered vehicles from the roads in the Northern Territory. Quite apart from the loss of revenue, there is the inherent danger that these vehicles could be involved in accidents. In fact they have been, with the nominal defendant being the loser. This, of course, tends to increase third party and comprehensive insurance premiums. The computerisation of the records at the Motor Vehicle Registry will provide a facility whereby the police can obtain immediate, direct information from the central computer on motor vehicle registrations and drivers' licences. It is proposed to establish a visual display unit at police stations in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek. When these are installed, hopefully by the end of this calendar year, police will no longer have to visit the Motor Vehicle Registry office to obtain information about motor vehicle registration and licences. This will result in considerable savings in manhours for the police and for staff of the Motor Vehicle Registry. Mobile units will be able to radio to their stations where a visual display unit can be operated from the central computer. The information obtained can be transmitted by radio back to the mobile unit. Apart from the savings in manhours for the police and Motor Vehicle Registry staff, it will be convenient for the motoring public.

It is also proposed to transfer the responsibilities for checking vehicles for registration purposes at Gove and Nhulunbuy from the police to authorised inspectors. This follows the successful transfer of these functions from the police to authorised inspectors in Katherine and Tennant Creek. I hope that this transfer will be effected by the end of this calendar year. I am looking at the possibility of arranging for private individuals to conduct tests for driving licences in centres outside Darwin and Alice Springs. This will effectively remove the onerous burden of motor vehicle registration from police administration. The savings to the police, in terms of lost time and manpower, will be considerable and service to the public will be greatly improved.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

In speaking to the adjournment, I think a few words in relation to the new but unofficial position, manager of government business, are in order. It is basically a recognition by the Majority Party of the tremendous burden on the Majority Leader in an Assembly of this nature and is designed to take the day-to-day administration of the management of government business off his shoulders. Just a cursory glance through the executive positions and portfolios would lead anyone to understand the tremendous workload which all executive members have. Whilst saying that, I give credit to the public service side of our own organisation which has seen fit to provide personal staff to executive members and I note with satisfaction that the Majority Leader and, through him, the Director-General and the Public Service Commissioner for the Northern Territory have also seen fit to provide the Opposition Leader with staff equal to that of an executive member.

My role as manager of government business - and I have discussed this at length with members of the Opposition - I would have thought was to establish initially a smooth-working relationship

whereby we do not become involved in confrontation but encourage debate and the spirit of working together. While we may not agree on policy, I would have thought we could have looked towards a smooth working relationship. I would have thought that the promotion of debate, of smooth operation and cooperation in this House would have been the will of the Opposition; it is certainly the wish of the Majority Party. I would also say, without reservation, that it would be the will of the electors of the Northern Territory,

This morning, the deputy leader of the Majority Party, the Executive Member for Finance and Planning, sought the support of this whole Assembly on a routine matter of simple procedure. What he sought was a perfectly normal procedure which occurs in every parliament in the country and is supported almost universally by every party in every parliament in the Westminster system. He was seeking a suspension of standing orders to allow the second readings of two cognate bills to be taken together and the committee stages to be taken separately. The Opposition in a spirit of, I think, bloody-mindedness chose to sit and snub us on the very first sitting day of the second Legislative Assembly. I will put the Opposition on notice right now that, if that is a demonstration of their cooperation with me in my position as manager of government business, so be it. The boxing gloves will come off and we will play it in the same manner as the former Labor Leader of the House in the federal parliament, Mr Fred Daly, played it. By God, Mr Speaker, if we play it that way, they are going to realise how the opposition under Whitlam felt.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I do not wish to take up a great deal of the Assembly's time in the adjournment debate. In fact, it was not my desire to speak in the adjournment debate at all but, following that rather puerile attack from the manager of government business, I felt I should reply on behalf of the Opposition. I would not have thought the boxing gloves were ever other than off and, if he was ever under a misapprehension, I am glad the Opposition has eradicated that parti-

cular proposition from his mind. We make no apologies for sitting in our seats. It was surely up to the Majority Party to secure the numbers for the suspension of standing orders and they so secured them. As I said at the beginning, I do not wish to take up a great deal of time of the Assembly. If the manager of government business wishes to maintain these sorts of petty attacks on us, that is fine - but I think he will only do a disservice to himself.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): When the polls were declared recently at the electoral office, I heard the honourable member for Casuarina congratulating his ALP opponent Mr Bree on a good clean campaign and this feeling was reciprocated by Mr Bree. It was quite obvious that they had genuine respect for each other and the manner in which their respective campaigns had been run. It would give me a great deal of pleasure if I were able to stand up and say to this Assembly some nice things about the recent election campaign. However, if I did that, I would be a hypocrite and that is about the only thing that I have not been accused of during the last couple of months.

My original motivation in entering the political field was to do everything I could possibly do to block the complementary legislation to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976. I was quoted by the press early in the campaign as saying that I believed this legislation to be the greatest fraud ever attempted on an ethnic group in Australia, and I have in no way changed my opinion on the subject. Had I been interested only in getting into this Assembly, I can think of at least two other electorates where I think I could have pulled it off with a lot less difficulty. Having read that federal act, the complementary legislation and the extremely courageous criticism of that legislation written by some field workers of the Uniting Church of Northern Australia, it was my decision to attack the author of something I considered shameful. I finished up being the victor in the election, but also the victim of a very cruel, vicious and malicious character assassination in the process. I would like to say at

this point that, to the best of my knowledge, this was not engineered by any present member of this Assembly nor by my opponent, but I do point the finger most definitely at the tactics employed by at least some senior members of the CLP executive and, in particular, the wife of one of them. As the tempo of this campaign increased, so the volume of filth and lies increased. If it gives the sadistic minds of these people pleasure to know it hurt me personally, then I am sure they will be delighted to know it caused a great deal of distress to my family. Such twisted minds, I am sure, would derive immense pleasure from causing distress to little kids.

At first I imagined the reason behind this vilification was because the leader of the party was beginning to look unsafe in the safest seat the CLP held. But I was to learn that, in fact, this was really only a minor consideration. I had occasion recently to attend an ANU conference and it was there that the primary reason really emerged. One of the distinguished speakers invited to address this group was no less a person than Dr H.C. Coombs, who fled from the conference because he could no longer endure the diatribe against Aborigines to which he was being subjected by a female of the species. One would imagine that an old campaigner like Dr Coombs would be pretty well inured against rabid Aboriginal haters, but even the redoubtable "Nugget" could stand it no longer, and fled post haste from this woman to avoid an unpleasant scene. It then became clear to me that what was really upsetting my detractors was not that I was worrying their leader but that I was succeeding in ensuring that the Aboriginal citizens of this country were getting the opportunity to stand up and be counted - and this apparently was my cardinal sin. By resorting to these tactics, these highly regarded members of our pretty rotten society have made it abundantly clear that they and some of their friends have an insensate, paranoid hatred of Aboriginal people whom they regard as something less than human. They fear them, because they are so devoid of compassion that they will not even try to understand them. In past years Aust-

ralians have been noted all over the world because of their spirit of willingness to give the underdog a go. But I think that spirit is now dead and with its demise, democracy in this country has a very short prognosis indeed. There is, however, one great consolation. Obsessed by hatred as they appear to be, I do not think they will ever again ignore the Aboriginal voters unless their hatred drives them completely over the brink of sanity, and I am sure they are just too power hungry to make the same mistake again.

I can say in all honesty that winning Victoria River was only a bonus, as far as I was concerned, I knew I had already achieved what I had set out to do initially when a positive plague of ministers, senators and members, both local and federal, began to descend like locusts on this electorate during the last couple of weeks. I took this as a great compliment.

Dr Letts made a long statement in the southern press in which, although he went to some pains to point out that nothing illegal had occurred, nevertheless he referred to some sinister doings at the polling booths. These sinister doings were attributed to DAA officials, incidentally. The matters have been fully investigated; all parties have been exonerated and in fact it was a tissue of lies - I could go into detail and quote you where and when, but I will not bother. I am not particularly concerned at this kind of criticism of my campaign although it sounded rather petty from someone highlighted in the press as the only man in the CLP who possessed statesman-like qualities. What did concern me greatly was that it reflected adversely on a few people with a genuine interest in an underprivileged ethnic group. My most sincere thanks go to those very few people who had the moral integrity and courage to assist illiterate Aboriginal people to exercise their democratic right of franchise. They had absolutely nothing at all to gain, and they have to live permanently amongst some fairly hostile neighbours in some cases, whilst my visits are of a much more transient nature and I do not have to bear the brunt of what they have to bear. Personally, I suppose I should

feel honoured to have been criticised by someone of whom I have always heard the minister speak in the most glowing terms.

One last matter, just to keep the record straight, the electorate of Victoria River has 2,128 people on the roll. Of these, Aborigines make up only 44% and some hundreds of them did not exercise their right to vote. I therefore feel that I owe a very great debt also to the 56% European electorate. It is over a quarter of a century since I first went through VRD and the East Kimberleys and over those years I have made a great many friends, both black and white, in the area. To prove my gratitude and good faith I know I am under an obligation to repay their faith in me by doing everything in my power to assist them in every way I can. To paraphrase a recent press quote, "I'd like to get to the people with true Territory feeling" and the people of my electorate certainly fall into this category. They are going through perhaps the hardest period of their lives because of the present economic slump which is affecting the people in rural areas more drastically than most city dwellers could imagine. It is therefore my intention to spend as much time as possible in the area, to listen to their grievances and give them a voice in the Assembly whenever they want to be heard. And incidentally, to carry on with what has been said previously about boxing, as far as I am concerned after that campaign I no longer believe in the Marquis of Queensberry and if he likes to continue, I do not think the fight will start till the other bloke is on the ground. Thank you.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Mr Speaker, I heard the member for Victoria River in silence as it was his maiden speech. I am afraid, as I listened to him, my internal emotions grew. The honourable member referred to the tactics of the Country Liberal Party in the election campaign. He did not tell us what tactics were snide tactics; he just said there were snide tactics. He made vague allegations without any foundation or substance. He did not give us any facts; his speech was a mere tissue of innuendo.

The Country Liberal Party has always supported the dignity of the Aboriginal people and always will. As an indication of this, I tell you, Mr Speaker, that today the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs seconded to me as my personal adviser on Aboriginal affairs the Director of Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory, Mr Creed Lovegrove. We have the interest of the Aboriginal people of the Territory at heart and we always have had. The former member for Victoria River had them probably foremost in his mind and heart right through the time of the last Legislative Assembly. It appears to me, Mr Speaker, that the honourable member for Victoria River has some sort of complex about something. With him it appears to be personalities and not politics. Well, if that is his trouble we now know, so he can watch out.

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity in the adjournment this afternoon to bring to the attention of honourable members some activities that are about to take place in the Top End which relate particularly to the promotion of tourism in the Northern Territory. The prime objective of the Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau in the field of tourism is to bring people from outside the Northern Territory into the Territory as visitors and during that time we extract from them an amount of money that helps our own economy go round. It is not important how many people the Tourist Bureau can manage to attract to the Northern Territory unless the people within the Territory and the people servicing the tourist destinations appreciate the value of the custom they are getting and service the industry in a manner that is competitive with national and international markets. To do this, we must have regional tourist promotion organisations that work from the very base of the industry and supply beds, plane seats, meals etc.

In recent days, we have seen the very small community of Katherine take a great upturn in its tourist industry by virtue of the work of its own tourist promotion association. They have one very attractive venue to promote and

they do it well; it is a credit to them.

We have seen the Alice Springs Tourist Promotion Association, which has been active for many years, become so effective that it is almost impossible to get a bed in the town between March and September. This organisation has recently embarked on a program which is greatly to its credit. Instead of trying to crowd more people into the town during the peak period, they have now embarked on a program of extending their tourist season to cover the twelve months of the year rather than the more comfortable six months. Their latest promotion is in conjunction with the CATA, TAA and the Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau. These four organisations are promoting a campaign which is called "See Alice while she's hot". Just what there is to see while she is hot, apart from when she is cold, I could not indicate at this time. It is a very aggressive campaign which is going very well and I would like to compliment these people on it.

Closer to the scene of government, I would like to pay tribute this afternoon to a recent activity by the Darwin Regional Tourist Promotion Association and a particular tribute to the president of the association, Mr Peter Roberts. Under his guidance, this organisation has recently initiated a visit by travel agents from South-east Asia to visit Darwin and the Top End in the coming two weeks. The whole thing has been organised and promoted by the Darwin Regional Tourist Promotion Association. This is the sort of gut material that will make tourism become the viable and long-term industry which the Northern Territory needs to survive. The promotion association in Darwin, like all others, is made up of people who work in the industry and wish to see it thrive and develop.

The Asian travel agents will be here for 13 days. They will be going to Berry Springs, Howard Springs, the Arnhem Land escarpment, including the Obiri Rock, Jim Jim Falls and Katherine Gorge. They will also be going to the old Mataranka Homestead which was built in 1929 as an experimental sheep

station and to the Elsey graves and to Springvale Station. The latter is of particular interest these days because at Springvale there is a natural spring which has 40 times more contamination, as a result of the uranium in the water that comes from the spring, than would normally be allowed to be consumed by humans. It is also interesting that the Ronan family who lived at Springvale for two generations are fine healthy people and do not seem to have been affected by the amount of contamination in the water.

Lake Argyle is also on the agenda for the visiting Asian travel agents; they will be going to Kununurra and the Everglades, and this part of the visit by the visiting tourist people has been assisted by the Western Australian Government Tourist Bureau which, I believe, would be the most aggressive tourist promotion organisation at a state level in Australia.

The Northern Territory Tourist Bureau has for some time felt the Asian market is a significant market for the Northern Territory. But it is one thing to be able to have it on your door step;

it is another thing to be able to tap it. The servicing of international markets is carried out by the Australian Tourist Commission and, prior to these days, it has been almost impossible for individual states to set up their own tourist contacts in any other market, be it South-east Asia or America. I welcome the initiative of the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association. I wish them well in their trade with this particular area of South-east Asia because I believe it is going to be our greatest market in years to come. One of the great features about it is that it has in its total area over a thousand million people. I believe the Northern Territory tourist industry will achieve more by trying to attract a very small percentage of a large market like that than a large percentage of a small market such as Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide. With that, I would seek leave to table this paper for the interest of members.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Thursday 22 September 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION

BAGOT ABORIGINAL RESERVE

Mr STEELE (Transport and Industry): I present a petition from certain residents in the Ludmilla area relating to persons living on the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve. The petition is respectfully worded and has been certified by the Acting Clerk.

I move that the petition be received and read.

I would like to say that I believe that the problems described in the petition can be easily overcome but it will mean that at least two communities in the Ludmilla north area will have to get together.

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 in the Ludmilla area respectfully sheweth that they are deeply concerned by the excessive noise and foul language and unsightly littering created by residents in the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve. Your petitioners feel that the excessive noise pollution is most intolerable at times and the environment is being spoilt by the action of irresponsible litterbugs. Your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the appropriate authorities to take immediate action to see that residents in the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve be requested to show more respect and consideration to other residents in the same area and to amend their habits accordingly, and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader) (by leave): I present a statement on

constitutional development which I will read prior to moving that it be noted. In making this statement on constitutional development, perhaps I should recapitulate for the benefit of honourable members some of the more significant features in the slow march of the Northern Territory towards a degree of autonomy in its decision-making processes.

The first step of note was the establishment under the Northern Territory (Administration) Act of a Legislative Council in 1948. The membership of this Council was partly nominated and partly elected, and this situation prevailed in one way or another until 1974 when the Legislative Assembly was established on a fully-elected basis. During this time, many former members of the Legislative Council such as Mr Justice Ward, Mr Ron Withnall and Dr Goff Letts worked untiringly in the cause of the Territory having a say in its own decision-making processes.

The new Legislative Assembly, however, had no more powers than the old Legislative Council because it is one thing to pass laws and quite another to administer and enforce them or, in other words, to be responsible for their administration. Merely to be able to pass legislation does not necessarily mean that the legislative provisions will be implemented. Until we control executive government, which is what constitutional development is all about, there will exist only limited opportunities to give effect to the desires and aspirations of the people of the Northern Territory.

The then Whitlam government in the same spirit in which it had moved the Territory firmly on at an accelerated pace towards legislative autonomy by setting up the first fully-elected Legislative Assembly, at the same time took a firm step in the movement to executive autonomy for the Northern Territory. It did this by setting up a joint parliamentary committee on Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory and the report of this committee, having as it did a majority of members of the Australian Labor Party in its composition, has come to be regarded on all sides as the

blueprint for executive autonomy.

At almost the same time as the report of the joint parliamentary committee was released, Darwin was hit by Cyclone Tracy and constitutional development was put back in the Territory by two years. Following on and even before the federal elections of late 1975, the new government made plain its commitment to autonomy for the Northern Territory and eventual statehood. In pursuance of this, the Minister for the Northern Territory in 1977 handed over to control by the Territory executive the first package of functions recommended by the joint parliamentary committee. These were principally statutory bodies, and police and prisons which had been answerable previously to His Honour the Administrator. In these areas, executive government is now a reality. It then became a question of establishing a timetable for the hand-over of the balance of the recommended functions by the Commonwealth to a Territory government and this timetable was negotiated by the former Majority Leader, Dr Letts, with the minister and was released to the public in July of this year. I seek leave to incorporate that letter in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Dr G.A. LETTS, MLA
Majority Leader and Chief Secretary
Northern Territory Legislative
Assembly
DARWIN NT 5790

Dear Dr Letts,

In accordance with the decision of Cabinet on 12 July 1977 and consequent upon our discussions I outline the decision of the Cabinet with regard to Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory.

Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a Government of the Northern Territory from 1 July 1978 and the advancement of that Government to fully responsible Self-Government in relation to State-type matters by 1 July 1979. This approval is subject to prior agreement being reached with the Northern Territory Executive on the detailed financial arrangements to apply between

the Commonwealth and the proposed Government of the Northern Territory.

The following specific constitutional and other arrangements have been approved as the basis for establishing the new political entity with effect from 1 July 1978:

1. Self-Government - General Principles

- (a) The action to be taken to bring the Northern Territory to a stage of responsible self-government by 1 July 1978 will mean the formal creation by that date of a Government of the Northern Territory, with responsible Ministers, having control over and responsibility for its own finances.
- (b) The Government of the Northern Territory will be given autonomy to conduct its own affairs subject to the general oversight of the Commonwealth but without direction from it other than in exceptional circumstances.

Self-Government - Specific Issues

2. Office and Role of the Administrator

- (a) The office and title "Administrator of the Northern Territory" remain.
- (b) In matters pertaining to the appointment or the withdrawal of the Commission of the Administrator, the Commonwealth would seek to establish the convention that it will consult with the Chief Secretary.
- (c) Section 3A(3) of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act, which provides that the Administrator is charged with the responsibility of administering the Government of the Territory on behalf of the Commonwealth, will be repealed.
- (d) Section 3A(4) will be retained, on the basis that a convention will be established that instructions will only be given by the Commonwealth Minister in

relation to matters which have not been transferred to the Government of the Northern Territory.

- (e) The authority conferred on the Administrator by Section 42F of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act to give direction to Executive Members in respect of transferred functions will be withdrawn.

3. Commonwealth Legislation

- (a) The Payroll Tax (Territories) Act will be amended to allow the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly to impose a Northern Territory Payroll Tax.
- (b) The Government agrees that, unless requested to do so by the Northern Territory Government, it will not make any reference under Section 3(4)(b) of the Remuneration Tribunals Act in respect of a public office of the Territory.
- (c) Provision will be made to exclude the Northern Territory Public Service from the Ombudsman Act.
- (d) Provision to be made to exempt capital works proposed by the Government of the Northern Territory from the operation of the Public Works Committee Act.
- (e) The above changes to be brought into effect upon the establishment of the Government of the Northern Territory.
- (f) The Commonwealth Government does not undertake to refrain from introducing legislation on State-type activities in the Northern Territory.
- (g) The Commonwealth Government indicate that it would only proceed in the manner referred to in Recommendation 3(f) in exceptional circumstances and only to the extent necessary to secure the relevant national policy objective and in consultation with the Gov-

ernment of the Northern Territory. In amplification of this Statement the Commonwealth specifically reserves the power to legislate on uranium and related issues.

4. Northern Territory Legislation

- (a) The Administrator be empowered to assent to or withhold assent from Ordinances in respect of matters for which responsibility has been transferred to Executive Members.
- (b) The Administrator have the power to reserve for the pleasure of the Governor-General Ordinances dealing with any matter which has not been included in a Determination under Section 42E of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act.
- (c) The existing power of the Governor-General to disallow Ordinances be retained.
- (d) The question of the initiation of legislation in respect of non-transferred functions to be a matter for further consultation and consideration.

5. Electoral Matters

Determination of the number of electorates for the Legislative Assembly, procedures for electoral distribution and conduct of elections be transferred to the Legislative Assembly.

6. Transfer of Functions

The functions listed in the attached press statement be transferred in accordance with the timetable shown in that statement.

7. Financial Arrangements

- (a) Any significant transfers of executive responsibility to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly should await a firm agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Northern Territory Executive on the basis of the financial arrangements that

- will apply when the Northern Territory achieves Self-Government.
- (b) The basis of the financial arrangements should be the principles that, the acceptance of responsibility means the raising by the Government of the Northern Territory of a reasonable proportion of the funds required to pay for services at the standards desired by the Territory people, and that, overall financial arrangements between the Commonwealth Government and the Northern Territory Government should broadly follow those lines that exist between the Commonwealth and the States, due regard being had to the particular circumstances of the Northern Territory.
 - (c) Negotiation of financial arrangements should thus take cognisance of any special disabilities of the Northern Territory (these might include the impact on the Territory's economy of the Aboriginal Land Rights Legislation, hypothecation of royalties to the Aboriginal Benefits Trust Funds, Commonwealth policies in relation to uranium mining and high infrastructure costs.)
 - (d) The agreed financial arrangements should be comprehensively stated and explained in Letters of Understanding to be exchanged between the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary.
 - (e) The Commonwealth provide the Government of the Northern Territory with personal income tax sharing payments.
 - (f) Some Commonwealth funds be provided as loan funds under the same terms and conditions as State borrowing through the Loan Council programmes.
 - (g) To ensure compliance with the Gentlemen's Agreement, borrowings by the Government of the Northern Territory be subject to the approval of the Commonwealth Treasurer.
 - (h) Consideration will be given to the possibility of the Assembly having access to revenues from a Commonwealth income tax surcharge on the same basis as the proposals under Stage 2 of the tax sharing arrangements in the States.
 - (i) Government business undertakings (including housing) be transferred with financial adjustment as appropriate based on book values less depreciation/amortisation.
 - (j) Appropriate financial adjustment should be made in respect of agency services rendered as between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments.
 - (k) The cover provided by the Superannuation Act to transferred officers and employees continue and the Commonwealth be reimbursed in respect of employer contributions.
 - (l) The Commonwealth accept financial responsibility in respect of any restoration or reconstruction of Northern Territory assets attributable to damage caused by Cyclone Tracy.
 - (m) A periodic assessment be made of the fiscal disability of the Northern Territory vis-a-vis the States.
 - (n) A Northern Territory Consolidated Revenue Fund be established to receive all revenues and from which all expenditures would be appropriated by the Legislative Assembly.
 - (o) The principle that money votes require a message of the Administrator be applied to appropriations from the Northern Territory Consolidated Revenue Fund and that a convention should be established that the Administrator act on the advice of the Northern Territory Executive.
 - (p) Section 2A(1) of the Audit Act be amended to make it clear that the Act does not apply to revenue

or moneys of the Government of the Northern Territory,

8. Administrative Arrangements

- (a) In respect of transferred functions, that the principles, that staff performing the work be transferred with the position, be continued subject only to the consideration of exceptions in special circumstances.
- (b) Assistance be given for the early appointment by the Northern Territory Executive of key officials (e.g. the prospective head of Treasury and possibly an Auditor-General) to enable the establishment of their offices prior to the assumption of the responsibilities.
- (c) In order that future transfers may be effected smoothly, the transfer of functions be arranged to avoid, as far as is possible, the breaking up of existing operational units.
- (d) The widest possible use of agency arrangements between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments in areas of administrative infrastructure.

9. General

- (a) A selected Committee of Ministers be established to hold discussions with the Executive Members of the Legislative Assembly on matters relevant to the establishment of responsible Self-Government and the conferral of Statehood.
- (b) Formal approaches from the Government of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth be made through the Minister for the Northern Territory but once responsible Self-Government has been fully established it would seem appropriate for approaches to be made on a Head of Government to Head of Government basis.
- (c) Appropriate officers of the Northern Territory Public Service be

co-opted to an Interdepartmental Committee as necessary for the purpose of finalising detailed arrangements requiring joint action and to provide channel of communication between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory administrations.

- (d) Where Northern Territory Executive Members have observer status at Commonwealth/State Ministerial meetings, the Commonwealth would sponsor their full membership of such bodies upon the Northern Territory Executive assuming responsibility for the relevant function.
- (e) The existing arrangements under which Northern Territory laws are applied to the Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands will be reviewed by the Commonwealth.

The implementation of the foregoing will involve close consultation and negotiation between Commonwealth and Northern Territory authorities. To facilitate this a Committee of Ministers has been established comprising the Treasurer, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs, the Attorney-General, and the Minister for the Northern Territory to consult as necessary with Executive Members of the Legislative Assembly. A Standing Interdepartmental Committee has also been established to:

- (i) co-ordinate the legislative, financial and administrative aspects of the transition of the Northern Territory to responsible Self-Government;
- (ii) undertake the necessary associated consultation and communication with Commonwealth and Northern Territory authorities at officer level; and
- (iii) report to the Government on the issues involved in the conferring of statehood on the Northern Territory.

As indicated previously appropriate officers of the Northern Territory Public Service would be co-opted as

necessary for the purpose of finalising those arrangements requiring joint action.

There will of course be a need for early consultation between Ministers and Executive Members on the detailed working arrangements and other matters which flow from the Government's decision. However, it seems appropriate that any such meeting should be deferred until after the forthcoming elections of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

In the meantime, however, there would appear to be advantages in preliminary meetings held at officer level, particularly to determine the full work programme involved, and the allocation of specific tasks. Subject to the availability of your officers I have instructed my Department to convene such a meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Evan Adermann.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I also seek leave to incorporate in Hansard the text of a statement made by the Minister for the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives on 14 September last which is, in effect, a progress report of his view of the present situation.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY
MR A.E. ADERMANN, MINISTER
FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY,
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON 14 SEPTEMBER 1977

NORTHERN TERRITORY SELF-GOVERNMENT

In making this statement to the Parliament today I acknowledge with considerable pleasure the presence in the gallery of Mr Paul Everingham, the newly appointed Majority Leader and therefore the incoming Chief-Secretary of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, and other Executive Members. It is certainly very appropriate that a statement of such great importance for the Northern Territory happily coincides with his presence in the House

today.

In a public statement dated 17 July 1977 I gave a broad outline of the Government's decision to confer responsible self-government on the Northern Territory in the period to 1 July 1979. The decisions taken by the Government resulted from consultations and agreement with Executive members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Following the election for the Legislative Assembly held on 13 August 1977 there were significant changes in the composition of the Executive and I considered it appropriate to obtain a reaction from the new Executive on the proposals. I am now able to confirm that the previously announced program for constitutional reform in the Northern Territory is acceptable to the new Northern Territory Executive and the Government will proceed with the implementation of that program.

Because of their historical significance and the implications which they will have for the Parliament itself, it is appropriate that a detailed statement of the proposals for the conferral of responsible self-government on the Northern Territory be made in the Parliament. Before coming to office the Government made a policy commitment to devolve executive responsibility on the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and to bring the Northern Territory to ultimate Statehood. We have acted quickly to give effect to that undertaking. The Northern Territory (Administration) Act was amended in 1976 to facilitate the transfer of Executive responsibility to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly through the appointment of Executive members of that assembly. The new provisions of the Act were brought into effect from 1 January 1977 and Executive members having administrative responsibility for a range of local functions were appointed from that date.

Following on from these transitional arrangements it is proposed to create a government of the Northern Territory, with responsible Ministers having control over and responsibility for its own finances as from 1 July 1978. It is our intention that the new government

should be given autonomy to conduct its own affairs subject only to the general oversight of the Commonwealth but without direction from it other than in exceptional circumstances. In our approach to this matter we will be guided by the principle that the essence of responsible self-government is that a community should be free to make its own decisions in the full knowledge that it will be required to live with and be responsible for all the consequences of those decisions. We are concerned to ensure that the new political entity which we are proceeding to establish will be truly responsible in all respects. The constitutional structure to be developed for the Northern Territory will be directed towards ensuring to the greatest possible extent that coterminality is achieved between responsibility, authority and accountability within the structure of government in the Northern Territory and as between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments.

Establishment of a Government of the Northern Territory.

It is proposed to introduce legislation during the autumn sittings to formally establish a government of the Northern Territory. Provision will be made for the appointment of Ministers to administer Northern Territory Public Service departments and for the establishment of a separate consolidated revenue fund for the Northern Territory. After self-government the office and title of the Administrator of the Northern Territory will remain. The Administrator will continue to be appointed by the Governor-General and shall hold office at the Governor-General's pleasure. However, in matters pertaining to the appointment or withdrawal of the commission of the Administrator, the Commonwealth will consult with the leader of the Northern Territory government.

Legislative Authority

The Legislative Assembly presently has authority in the broadest terms to make ordinances for the peace, order and good government of the Northern Territory. No change will be made in

relation to this authority but in the coming months consideration will be given to means by which legislation in respect of matters not falling to the responsibility of the government of the Northern Territory will be introduced into the Assembly. At present the Administrator may reserve for the pleasure of the Governor-General any ordinance passed by the Legislative Assembly. In keeping with the principle that authority in government should equate to responsibility, the Government sees no reason to justify the reservation of ordinances in respect of matters for which responsibility has been transferred to the Northern Territory Government.

There is a body of Commonwealth legislation which has particular application to the Northern Territory. In general it is not intended to disturb such legislation at this stage other than in the following respects:

- (a) The Payroll Tax (Territories) Act be amended to allow the Northern Territory government to impose a Northern Territory payroll tax;
- (b) The Northern Territory Public Service to be excluded from the operations of the Ombudsman Act; and
- (c) Capital works undertaken by the government of the Northern Territory to be excluded from the operation of the Public Works Committee Act.

Because important issues of national policy - for example, in relation to uranium - may make it desirable to have Parliament pass further legislation in respect of State-type activities, the Government does not undertake to refrain from introducing such legislation. However, the Government will only proceed in this manner in exceptional circumstances and even then only to the extent necessary to secure the relevant policy objective and in consultation with the government of the Northern Territory.

Financial Arrangements

The implementation of the proposed

constitutional reforms will be dependent upon the finalisation of firm undertakings between the Commonwealth Government and the Northern Territory Executive on the financial arrangements that will apply when the Territory achieves self-government. The fundamental criteria governing financial assistance to the Northern Territory must be that, to the extent that citizens of the Territory determine the amount of government expenditure in the Territory, then there should be procedures designed to ensure that there is a direct relationship between the amounts of such expenditure and the total level of taxes and charges levied in the Territory. In the absence of such procedures, self-government would fall short of being responsible government. It is proposed that this will be achieved by following financial arrangements broadly on the same lines as those that exist now between the Commonwealth and the States, due regard being had of course to the particular circumstances and disadvantages of the Northern Territory.

Consistent with this approach the Commonwealth will provide the government of the Northern Territory with personal income tax sharing payments as it does with the States. Consideration will be given to the possibility of the Northern Territory government having access to revenues from a Commonwealth income tax surcharge within the Northern Territory on the same basis as the proposals under stage 2 of the tax sharing arrangements with the States. Some Commonwealth funds will be provided as loan funds under the same terms and conditions as State borrowings through the Loan Council programs. Negotiations of the financial arrangements will take cognizance of any special disabilities of the Northern Territory as assessment will be made periodically of the fiscal disabilities of the Territory vis-a-vis the States.

As general proposition the assets and liabilities relative to non revenue producing functions will be transferred to the government of the Northern Territory without financial adjustment. Government business undertakings will be handed over as going concerns with financial adjustments as appropriate

based on book values. Appropriate financial adjustment will be made in respect of agency services rendered as between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments.

The Commonwealth will accept financial responsibility for any restoration or reconstruction of Territory assets that remain attributable to damage caused by cyclone Tracy. The establishment of a separate Northern Territory consolidated revenue fund to receive all revenues and from which all expenditures would be appropriated by the Legislative Assembly is an essential ingredient to the machinery for responsible government. Such a consolidated revenue fund will be established.

Transfer of Functions to the Northern Territory Government

It is proposed that the government of the Northern Territory assume responsibility for a wide range of specific referred powers of a State-type nature. Details of the functions to be undertaken by the new government and the timetable for the transfer of responsibility are outlined in a statement which I seek leave to have incorporated in Hansard.

The statement reads as follows -

TIMETABLES AND FUNCTIONS TO BE TRANSFERRED

1 January 1978

Northern Territory functions of Attorney-General's department other than the supreme court and its support services, the prerogative of mercy, removal of prisoners and admission of legal practitioners,

Town Planning Board
Apprenticeship Board

1 July 1978

Forestry operations and plantations
Forestry research
Land surveying
Water and sewerage administration and operation
Electricity authority

Fisheries administration
 Water resources assessment and development
 Water supplies development assistance
 Primary industry administration
 Home finance and staff housing
 Primary production scientific and extension services
 Commercial and industrial affairs
 Urban development
 Child, family and community welfare
 Registration of births, deaths and marriages
 Soil conservation
 Government printing
 Preservation of historical objects and areas
 Parks and gardens
 Public bus services
 Payroll tax
 Stamp duties

1 July 1979

Educational services
 Darwin community college
 Land administration
 Mining services and administration (excluding uranium)
 Roads and transport services
 Health services

It can be seen from the statement that the transfer covers a wide range of important functions such as primary industry, child family and community welfare, payroll tax and stamp duties. In addition to the foregoing activities it will now be necessary for a government of the Northern Territory to have its own central control instrumentalities such as a treasury and audit office and public service commission and to make provision for the servicing of its administrative structure.

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication and to reduce the overall cost of government in the Northern Territory certain administrative service activities - for example, staff, housing, purchasing and transport services - will be undertaken through the use of agency and/or contract arrangements between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory governments. Details of such arrangements, including which government will have primary carriage, will be a matter for resolution between the Commonwealth and the Northern

Territory executive. However, where the Commonwealth provides a service on behalf of the Northern Territory government it will be the responsibility of that government to determine policy and to commit funds in respect of its use of that service.

Commonwealth/State Consultative Machinery

The establishment of a self-governing Northern Territory as a new political entity within the Commonwealth will have implications for Commonwealth/State consultative machinery. At present executive members of the Legislative Assembly attend most, if not all, of the Commonwealth/State standing ministerial councils and committees with the status of observer. It is appropriate that where executive members presently have observer status at Commonwealth/State ministerial meetings, the Ministers of the Northern Territory government should be accorded full membership of such bodies upon that government assuming responsibility for the relevant function. The Commonwealth Government will sponsor such membership at the relevant time.

As I indicated at the beginning of this statement the proposed establishment of a Northern Territory government is further confirmation of the Government's determination to give effect to its undertakings on the constitutional development of the Northern Territory. The move is fully consistent with the Government's underlying philosophy of devolving authority in government to those areas which can best meet the needs of the community. It is also consistent with our policies on co-operative federalism and with the inevitable march of the Northern Territory towards Statehood.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Constitutional autonomy or self-government implies financial autonomy and a degree of self-reliance. However, with the present resources of the Northern Territory, it seems to me that we must remain financially dependent on revenue being granted to us by the Commonwealth, as I suppose the states are anyway. The keystone to the accomplishment of the timetable for handover

of functions is the conclusion of a satisfactory financial agreement with the Commonwealth between now and about the end of February 1978. This agreement will be crucial to the future of the Northern Territory and my executive is approaching its task in this regard with the seriousness which its importance warrants.

Financial agreements between the Commonwealth on the one hand and states or territories on the other are matters of considerable complexity and difficulty. I have therefore taken steps to ensure that any special assistance or expert advice required in this important matter is available to assist us in developing our side of the argument. A proposal in respect of this assistance is now on its way to the Minister for the Northern Territory in Canberra. This administration is sensible of the fact that the Northern Territory must be in no way disadvantaged by the terms of this agreement, but it is inevitable that more revenue will have to be raised within the Territory. This is not a new concept and several federal governments, including the Whitlam administration, attempted to induce the Legislative Council to increase certain charges, including stamp duty, without success in the past. However, I wish to make it plain that in no way does this executive necessarily concur with all or any of the financial arrangements proposed by the minister in his statement of 14 September. These, I believe, are intended by the Commonwealth to establish its bargaining position and for this reason, amongst others, we must obtain the independent financial advice that I have referred to.

The program for transfers cannot proceed without financial agreement and, until I am satisfied that the Territory is getting a fair deal financially, I will not be concluding an agreement. There had been a measure of understanding between the previous executive and the government to attempt to raise \$6m in revenue from the Territory between September 1977 and June 1978. However, when these proposals were put to me as Majority Leader, I indicated that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the Territory executive to make any specific decisions on the

particular areas for such an increase without the benefit of a proper and effective study as to the most satisfactory and efficacious way to achieve such an increase in revenue. In association with my colleague, the Executive Member for Finance and Planning, I have directed that an immediate study be made of the revenue-earning capacity of the Territory generally and of the specific areas of possible revenue increases in particular. When we have examined the various options and alternatives disclosed by that study, decisions will be made as to the extent of the revenue increases and the areas concerned. The Majority Party fully recognises the need to act responsibly and will not ignore its obligations to the Commonwealth to meet its revenue-raising share. However, it is imperative that my executive be fully informed in this very important and delicate area before any precipitous or far-reaching judgments are made.

I believe that there is some measure of misunderstanding about the basis for transferring public service staff from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Public Service. I want to make quite clear to this Assembly what the position is. Late in 1976, legislation was passed in both the Commonwealth parliament and in this House providing for the transfer of those staff of Commonwealth departments whose functions are transferred. That legislation preserves for the transferees entitlements to which they are entitled on the date of transfer. The legislation also gives them rights to apply for transfer or promotion back to the Australian Public Service. Of course, it is extremely important that the Northern Territory have an effective and efficient public service. We need all of the Commonwealth staff to carry on with their work while the Northern Territory service is establishing itself. We hope that most, if not all, will make their careers in the service of the Territory. We will, of course, need to recruit some additional people to do things that are currently done for the Commonwealth departments by Canberra staff and I hope that a number of those people will come from the public services of the states. I

should say that self-government will mean an actual increase in the number of civil servants rather than any decrease.

The Public Service Commissioner recently wrote to the Australian Public Service Board asking that Commonwealth departments fully staff their establishments prior to handover. Furthermore, he undertook that the Northern Territory Public Service would accept on transfer any and all staff of Commonwealth departments where positions are transferred up to and including the level of the top positions in the Northern Territory departments - that is, departmental heads. I and my executive fully endorse that approach. I would like this Assembly to know that the Territory is receiving the utmost cooperation and assistance from the Australian Public Service Board, the Commonwealth Auditor-General and Commonwealth departments. Several Commonwealth departments are making available senior officers to assist the Northern Territory during the transitional period. We have also had offers of assistance and advice from some senior state officials and I hope we will be able to take advantage of some of these offers.

It was pleasing to note the support for the minister's statement, which I incorporated in Hansard a short time ago, from Mr Lionel Bowen, the honourable member for Kingsford-Smith and presumably the Opposition's spokesman on Northern Territory affairs in the lower house of the federal parliament. I welcome his support and the support of his party. I observe also his note of caution in the area of financing self-government. I take note of his advice to heed public opinion. I hope that I will never deserve his censure in that area as I hope I am sensitive to the force of public opinion. May I say that I particularly welcome and adopt Mr Bowen's remarks on page 1091 of Commonwealth Hansard of 14 September: "Therefore, statehood would not be given on the basis that there would be centralist control from Canberra. In fact, it would be on the basis that there has to be some fiscal support".

All in all, the attitude of my executive is that we welcome the proposed handover of powers. We are not prepared to pay a high price for them. We do, nevertheless, enter on the next phase of negotiations, namely on the financial agreement, with an open mind and considerable enthusiasm in the expectation that the Commonwealth will not wish to deal ungenerously with the people of the Territory. I shall endeavour to keep this Assembly and the public as fully informed as possible as negotiations progress.

I move that the statement be noted and I commend it to this Assembly.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I think I should make some remarks about the paper just presented by the Majority Leader. I believe it is a timely appraisal of the current position on our political development. I would like to thank the Majority Leader for a temperate and balanced recapitulation of developments so far. There was far less of the vitriol and spleen against the former Labor government in his speech than has been so evident in former speeches on constitutional development in years gone by. There is true recognition of the part played by the Australian Labor Party when it was the federal government. I trust that we on this side of the Chamber can ensure that, with constructive proposals, this spirit can continue.

I want to make it plain, though, that we have serious doubts about many of the aspects of the transfer. These relate to financial arrangements and staffing arrangements. I was interested to hear that the Majority Leader believes the issue of financial arrangements to be so complex and that he is seeking and obtaining expert advice for himself and his executive. Either he is admitting that the Opposition has more capacity than his own team in understanding these complexities or he applies double standards to the two parties in relation to the supply of expert advice. If we are to make, as an Opposition, a truly constructive contribution to this question of constitutional development then I once

again ask the Majority Leader to give us the same level of advice that he receives himself.

I am intrigued, though, by the apparent conflicts inherent in the Majority Leader's statement and that of the Minister for the Northern Territory. On the one hand the Majority Leader appears to repudiate the agreement existing between Dr Letts and Mr Adermann of July 1977. He says: "There had been a measure of understanding between the previous executive and the government to attempt to raise \$6m in revenue from the Territory between September 1977 and June 1978. However, when these proposals were put to me as Majority Leader, I indicated it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the Territory executive to make any specific decisions on the particular areas for such an increase without the benefit of a proper and effective study as to the most satisfactory and efficacious way to achieve such an increase in revenue." On the other hand, the Minister for the Northern Territory, in his speech on 14 September to the House of Representatives to which the Majority Leader referred, said: "I am now able to confirm that the previously announced program for constitutional reform in the Northern Territory is acceptable to the new Northern Territory executive and the government will proceed with the implementation of that program." He later said, in the same speech, when he was referring to these financial arrangements: "The fundamental criteria governing financial assistance to the Northern Territory must be that, to the extent that citizens of the Territory determine the amount of government expenditure in the Territory, then there should be procedures designed to ensure that there is a direct relationship between the amounts of such expenditure and the total level of taxes and charges levied in the Territory."

What worries us all, and I am sure I speak for the electorate at large, is what sort of commitment is required by the Australian government under the financial arrangements. By way of explanation, the Treasurer Mr Lynch has budgeted, in the budget just brought

down in the federal parliament, to receive from - and I quote - "proposed general revenue increases in the Northern Territory \$6m." I refer honourable members to page 135 of the Budget Paper No. 1 of the Treasurer's budget speech. In this context and without debating the issue at this stage, I note also the Executive Member for Finance and Planning's statement yesterday, in his budget speech, when he indicated that the time has now come for increased revenue charges. The problem, as we see it, is that the agreements in principle embody the current arrangements which exist between the states and Commonwealth. This agreement is not as loose as it sounds. Financial arrangements which exist between the states and the Commonwealth are causing increasing concern to the states, States are being forced by the Commonwealth's federalism policies to fend for themselves.

The federal government is now opting out of many areas in which it took an active interest during the 1970s under both Liberal and Labor administrations. The Fraser policy is that the user pays. We believe, and I am sure the people of the Northern Territory believe with us, that we are just not in a position to pay. The federal government just refuses to recognise this fact and, in four specific areas of concern, it has flagrantly abused the Territory. First, it continues the situation where first-home buyers can get a loan in the Australian Capital Territory of \$20,000 while we in the Northern Territory can only obtain the first \$15,000. I presume it means that the federal government believes that houses in the Northern Territory are cheaper than in the ACT. Secondly, there is the impost of high freight costs introduced in this federal budget despite our pleas for a freight equalisation scheme. The Labor government was severely criticised in 1974 for discontinuing this scheme. This present federal government has shown no inclination whatever to reintroduce a similar scheme; instead, it adds to our already high cost of living without any consideration for the Northern Territory economy. Thirdly, unemployment is the highest of any geographical region in Australia.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Mr Speaker, I hesitate to do this but I take a point of order. Are we debating constitutional development and my statement on it or are we debating the budget and other related social and economic problems?

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The budget and the statement are very closely connected. However, I would ask the Opposition Leader to confine his remarks to the statement of the honourable Majority Leader.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Certainly, Mr Speaker, I was just giving examples of four areas where the federal government is abusing the Territory. Unemployment is the highest of any geographical region in Australia yet no special recognition of this position has come from the government.

Fourthly, there is the failure to recognise the significance of federal spending in the Northern Territory and the consequences that the turning off of the tap brings to small businesses up and down the track.

As I said earlier, the financial arrangements which exist between the states and the Commonwealth are watertight. The smaller states can obtain money from the Grants Commission and indeed all states have at one time or another done so. This is only on the basis, however, that they are doing everything possible to raise their own taxes to the level of the other states. That is why, for example, there is so little disparity in the state levies from state to state. For example, state levies on vehicles, roads, tobacco and liquor vary only in the amount collected but not to any marked extent in the rate at which those levies apply. Our levies here in the Northern Territory are currently significantly less than those existing in the states and we will be required to pay more. This statement is borne out by a number of statements of the minister to which I have already referred.

Can I say, in conclusion, that it is a shame that so many of the decisions taken on constitutional development in

recent times have been taken at a time of political heat. There was the abortive proposal of 1972, the "statehood within five years" policy of Mr Fraser at the 1975 election campaign and the Adermann document introduced in a most timely manner for the 1977 Legislative Assembly election. In saying that, I am delighted that we have at last cured the Majority Party of the Fraser formula. Their admission of this is a positive result of the election; there has never been so much backpedalling as the Majority Party did on the question of statehood, but we welcome their current stance.

It is also unfortunate that the initial transfer took place with so little preparation. The Assembly will recall the need to backdate laws to give legal backing to police actions after the transfer of powers. There was a similar oversight which affected public holidays for Northern Territory public servants. January and July 1978 will see the transfer of many more functions, I trust the Majority Party are taking steps to ensure that similar problems are ironed out in advance so that public servants are aware of their new rights. This is a matter that the member for Sanderson will be taking up. You will detect, Mr Speaker, that the Opposition seeks the implementation of the joint committee's report just as the Majority Party seeks it. This debate today will be of a general nature because of the time available and the nature of the statement by the Majority Leader. However, I trust that the Majority Party will continue with this more constructive and less ambitious approach to autonomy.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Industry): I see Northern Territory constitutional development in two ways; I will only deal with some aspects of constitutional development and I will not try to answer the Opposition Leader. The first way is an attempt by people to develop themselves, to come together as a political force, to make something happen that will benefit those people around them, to accept the responsibility of government and the affairs of state, to recognise that we are different to the states and that the lessons learnt by the states are not

necessarily the lessons that apply today or that should apply in this area. The second way in which I view the evolution of the Northern Territory is the ostrich approach: the unwillingness to accept responsibility because it may just happen to achieve something; some people say it is too early and the cost is too great to bear.

Our general progress has not been made easy. Too often central governments have dangled the carrot of self-management before us but, at the same time, frustrated our progress through men who have questionable motives. Having lived in the Northern Territory for 29 years, I have lived with the frustrations of local people being hammered into the ground by the bureaucrats and their masters in Canberra. My parents saw their hopes fade away and, like many other disappointed people, my father has now left the Northern Territory. As a government, we will make the Territory a less frustrating place to live in. We will communicate with the electorate and the opponents of constitutional progress, the centralists, will not white-wash the wishes of most Territorians as far as I am concerned.

I would like to briefly touch on some departmental matters at this stage. I will try not to digress too far from the main area of discussion. Greater autonomy in decision-making in the Northern Territory will provide the first opportunity for Northern Territory people to improve their life style by actively participating in the decision-making process. Political decisions will now be made in the Northern Territory, I hope, rather than by Commonwealth ministers and bureaucrats in Canberra and the southern states. The public service will be more effective because channels of communication are more direct. Industry has direct access to directors of departments who then have direct access to executive members upwards. An executive member also has direct access downward on the same channel. Industry also has direct access to executive members. This direct feedback of political consideration ensures that the public service is aware of the attitudes of the executive. Executive members will

be aware of complaints sooner than ministers in Canberra and will be able to form a better viewpoint on the problem independently of public service advice. Ministers in Canberra are more or less totally reliant on the advice given to them by the public service.

The executive will be able to look at incentives to industry. Initiatives are being explored on the formation of a Northern Territory supply and tender board with representatives from commerce and industry. The allocation of contracts by such a board will tend to encourage persons to set up businesses or industries in the Territory because they will not be competing on an unfair basis with suppliers and industries in the other states. Matters which will be looked at include loan provisions, better co-ordinated policies for industrial land, industrial housing and, in some situations, there could be financial assistance. In other words, it will be able to look at the Northern Territory viewpoint in the same way as the states look at their needs in attracting industry, and some of those needs are very attractive indeed.

All Northern Territory transport matters will be handled by one portfolio instead of being scattered all over the place. This will cover provision and maintenance of roads, ports, airports, ferry terminals and the other operations of transport services to and from and within the Northern Territory. The present system whereby several government departments and ministers are responsible for different aspects of the transport task, each making separate decisions on these aspects, leads to a disintegrated transport system with, at times, waste of resources and with priorities of expenditure more related to each department's narrow interests than to the common goal of a progressive development of a modern integrated transport system to service the Northern Territory.

I see a great opportunity for people to come together to develop their aspirations in a spirit of cooperation. A program has been constructed but financial arrangements have to be made before the next stage in the transfer

of functions. The Country Liberal Party is mindful of the con tricks that have been perpetrated on Territorians in the past and we will work in the best interests of the total community.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): The honourable Majority Leader, in his statement on constitutional development, points out that the report of the joint parliamentary committee on Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory is considered the blueprint for the transfer of executive authority to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and indeed, if we could look to that document and feel that its recommendations would be exactly followed, the fears of any citizens regarding the transfer of powers might be eased but what we must also consider is the attitude of the federal government as enunciated by the federal Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Adermann. The fact is that there are already significant areas of divergence from the recommendations of the joint parliamentary committee in recent statements by Mr Adermann and indeed on occasions between various statements of Mr Adermann.

The first example, the most pertinent one at this stage of our Assembly, is the question of voting. Paragraph 3 of the joint select committee's recommendations suggests a system of optional preferential voting. Earlier this year, however, Mr Adermann changed that system without reference to this Assembly. Had he not done so, the composition of this Assembly would be somewhat different and you, Mr Speaker, might have been saved that \$600. In view of the reference in the Administrator's speech yesterday to the introduction of the electoral legislation, we trust that it is the intention of the Majority Party to reaffirm the recommendations of the joint parliamentary committee.

Dealing with recommendations on legislative responsibility, paragraph 6 of the parliamentary report recommends:

- that all "state-type" matters, the executive responsibility of the Australian Government, be introduced into the Legislative Assembly.

I ask you to compare this with paragraph 3 (f) in the letter from the Minister for the Northern Territory to the former Majority Leader on 26 July this year. Under the heading of "Commonwealth Legislation" he writes:

The Commonwealth Government does not undertake to refrain from introducing legislation on State-type activities in the Northern Territory.

There we have another area of significant divergence.

Consider further the very vital question of the authority of the Administrator. The joint parliamentary report's position is clear. With respect to state-type functions retained by the Australian government, it recommends the withholding of assent only after the fullest consultation with the Territory executive, and in paragraph 16 it says:

That the Administrator act as he does now in respect to "state-type" functions retained by the Australian Government and in the same manner as the Governor of a State in respect to functions transferred to the Territory Executive.

Mr Adermann in his letter to the former Majority Leader wrote in paragraph 4(c):

The existing power of the Governor-General to disallow ordinances be retained.

Fortunately, in his recent statement in the federal house, Mr Adermann has moved away slightly from this rigid position in respect of areas of authority transferred to the Assembly. But his position is apparently still to retain, without reference to the Territory executive, the power to withhold assent on legislation in areas not transferred. There we have three areas in which the federal government's position has already moved away from the recommendations of the joint parliamentary committee: first, the system by which the legislature is elected; secondly, its right to be the sole legislating body on state-type matters; and, thirdly, the right to

have its legislation assented to. Further, it has moved away in a direction which significantly decreases the rights of a future Northern Territory government. These three areas - the system of election, the right to be the sole legislating body in relation to state-type matters and the right to have legislation assented to - are not insignificant areas. They are indeed ones which relate to the very nature of responsible, representative self-government. I commend to the honourable Majority Leader caution in dealing with the present federal government and its minister in this area.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): I would like to speak on the Majority Leader's motion. I can remember when I first came into the Assembly and was first introduced to the joint parliamentary committee's report. We have used that report as a bible, if I may use that term, and we have been following along on its lines. I think that the Minister for the Northern Territory had a very difficult job after the cyclone - at the time it was Dr Patterson - and he did say prior to the cyclone that "the Joint Committee on the Northern Territory which had drawn up the report after many months of deliberation has produced an objective, in-depth document for progressive reform," and I am sure that he was quite genuine at that particular time. He said that the report had indicated the steps he had taken to get the Legislative Assembly elections held in time, on 19 October, and the steps he had taken which had been criticised in some quarters at the time and which the joint committee had recommended in its report on a 19-man Assembly for single member electorates and optional preferential voting. Reference was made to preferential voting and I am sure that it was discussed at the time of these previous elections but a decision was made to the contrary.

When the cyclone hit Darwin that progress stopped because it was not until March 1976, in fact, that we did progress towards some sort of self-government. Up to that time, we had no progress at all; we were thwarted by the then Labor government, and nobody can

deny that fact if he looks at the records. It was from that moment that the Fraser government decided to proceed with constitutional development for the Territory as quickly as possible to catch up, in effect, the time which was lost. It was then that the Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Adernann, formed a consultative committee to discuss the joint parliamentary committee's report and its recommendations. Those recommendations were handed down by a team of Labor members under Bert James, the chairman - I believe there were five Labor Party representatives on that committee and four Country Party and Liberal members. We have progressed from 1 January 1977 to where we are now. We will continue to progress in line with the joint parliamentary committee's report and I am sure that it is not an easy job to stick to all the facts because we are dealing with one of the biggest constitutional changes in Australia since federation. I believe that the remarks made today by the Majority Leader would be acceptable to most people in this Chamber. I believe the Opposition Leader would agree with most of them.

Certainly, there are pitfalls with regard to finance. I do not think anyone would ever take on a complete self-government without looking into the financial aspects fully. The former Majority Leader of this Assembly said in his speech prior to the election that he would be looking into the matter deeply and asked the people to give it consideration. He said that it would not burden their pockets. A few moments ago, the Opposition Leader spoke about \$6m to be raised by the people of the Northern Territory. Certainly, when we take over some self-government, we will have to commit ourselves to this otherwise we may as well not even look at it. If we want to govern ourselves, we will have to commit ourselves to revenue-raising but at least we will have a say through our cabinet system. The people of the Territory will have a better understanding of their government. At the present moment, there is confusion as to who is running what department. I am sure that the shortcuts that will come through self-government will make it

much easier for everybody.

I commend the Majority Leader for his statement and I believe that, when he has more to say to the people of the Territory, he will do it through the Assembly.

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): I wish to comment upon a particular aspect of the Majority Leader's statement - the staffing of the Northern Territory Public Service. I make this comment because the efficient discharge of the functions which are to be transferred to the control of the Northern Territory executive is dependent upon the support of an impartial and efficient public service whose officers display high morale. I note that the Majority Leader's statement contains an explanation of the basis upon which staff of the Australian Public Service are to be transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service. It is not so clear whether staff recruited from sources other than the Australian Public Service have the same entitlements. There is some degree of uncertainty among prospective employees of the Northern Territory Public Service as to whether or not there will be any changes implemented in the future with regard to the terms and conditions of employment. Those who have continuity of service with the Australian Public Service and the Northern Territory Public Service are not likely to be affected, but a situation whereby a dual system of terms and conditions of employment may arise cannot entirely be dismissed. It needs to be decided what precisely will be the continued parity between the terms and conditions of people transferring from the Australian Public Service and those who are recruited from outside the Australian Public Service.

I note also that the Australian Public Service has been asked to fully staff its establishments before the functions are transferred. I ask the honourable Majority Leader whether this is really what he wants. I suggest to him that it would be preferable to undertake prior to the handover an assessment of the functions and operations that are to be transferred. He should also ensure that the Northern Territory executive exercises its right

to determine how best these functions will be discharged. I am pleased to learn that the report tabled by the Majority Leader this morning from the acting Public Service Commissioner makes the same point on more than two occasions. There is not a great deal of rationalisation of functions in the Australian Public Service departments which contain functions whose transfer is imminent. I suggest this is because, upon their transfer, the Australian Public Service will be absolved from the obligation to look into the rationalisation of its functions. The unquestioning acceptance of the entire establishments can only perpetuate the deficiencies of the organisation and management of these establishments and further delay the rationalisation of them. I commend these suggestions for the consideration of the Majority Leader.

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): I doubt if any subject has been debated as long or as often in this House or the former Legislative Council as constitutional development. Be it in the guise of self-government, self-determination, transfer of powers, local autonomy, executive authority or whatever, it must have been responsible for more words in Hansard than any other subject. We can probably surmise that just about everything has been said before. Unfortunately, there seems to have been a change recently in the support for constitutional development for the Territory. I believe that, if there is a change of support, it will be a terrible shame for us all. The change of attitude seems to be from within the Labor Party's ranks, including the Opposition Leader, although I was pleased to hear him make further statements today about the recommendations in the joint parliamentary committee report on constitutional development. In the past, there have been many areas affecting the lives of Territorians which have been completely non-political. Members from both major political parties and independents have called with a united voice for Territory elected representatives to have responsibility for administering and developing the Northern Territory. It is a shame that the Opposition, purely for political

reasons, seems to have chosen to oppose self-government because, if ever there was a cause to be united on, it should be the gaining of powers necessary to do the job for which we have been elected to this Assembly. For too long members here have had to play the role of toothless watchdogs, whinging in adjournment debates about government action or inaction and passing motions condemning federal government ministers or departments. Surely, the public should expect more than that. Just for the effort of getting themselves to a polling booth on voting day, they should be able to expect more than a House of whingers, and that is without considering what this institution and the honourable members here cost the taxpayer each year.

If the Labor Party was genuine or consistent in its approach, it would not have conducted the recent election campaign with lies and deception about constitutional development and the financial implications involved with the transfer of executive powers to this Assembly. Let us look at what the financial aspects of constitutional development really are:

The only obligation the federal government should place upon the local executive is to bring its local levels of taxation up to the normal level applicable in other states. If the cost of providing state-like functions is in excess of what it would be in the southern states, then the federal government should foot the bill. We would think the federal enabling legislation would provide for, say, stamp duty and succession duties to rise to a level applicable to the other states, and we feel sure that any local executive would readily consent to this. The balance of the funds would have to be recovered from the federal government as is the case now.

That sounds like a reasonable statement. You might have expected to read such words in a Country Liberal Party policy document - that is, before we took the decision to abolish succession duties. It may come as some surprise that it is a quote from the formal submission presented by the Labor Party to

the joint parliamentary committee on Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory.

I now quote from the same document the paragraph preceding the one I just read. Under the heading "Local Taxation and Fiscal Policy", the Labor Party had this to say:

The earlier paper submitted by the Liberal government just before the 1972 election was a most cynical document which attempted to frighten the people of the Territory by putting forward the proposition that all the costs of the state-like functions to be devolved upon the local executive would have to be borne out of local taxation.

Any person in the Northern Territory during the recent election campaign would find that quote almost unbelievable as coming from the Australian Labor Party. The same people whose submission to the joint parliamentary committee closely represented the principles which were finally recommended by that committee - which, as the Majority Leader has pointed out, had a majority of Labor Party members on it anyway - these same people now seek to frighten the people of the Territory by putting forward the proposition that all the costs of state-like functions would have to be borne out of local taxation - the very stance they were so anxious to call cynical when proposed by someone else. "Double tax", they said, knowing it was a lie, "State budgets have to be paid for by the people of the states", they said - also a lie.

The Labor Party submission to the joint parliamentary committee contained some very sound advice on constitutional development for the Northern Territory. Much of it is still relevant, and I take this opportunity to quote further extracts for incorporation in Hansard. Concerning the areas of local executive responsibility that the Labor Party proposed, on page 1268 of the transcript they state that the following functions should be vested in the Territory executive: health, education, mining, law enforcement, labour and secondary industries,

urban and rural land, courts and Attorney-General's Department, agriculture, forestry, tourism, town planning, local government and community services and transport. I will quote from some of those sub-headings:

Health - Faults and inadequacies in any health system are quick to show themselves and require a quick response from local authorities. This has not happened and, as a politically sensitive area, it is clearly an area in which a local executive must be and would be responsive.

Education - We see the day-to-day administration of school services as a politically sensitive area which must be handled promptly and locally.

The earlier part of their submission did say that they saw that the federal government should retain some overall interest in mining, but finalised it by saying:

... All this does not mean that the day-to-day running of mining matters in the Northern Territory should not devolve on the local executive.

Law Enforcement - It would be a clear and frustrating derogation from the powers of the local executive for the control of the police to remain in Canberra despite whatever technical and scientific benefits might accrue.

We may all recall that, at that time, the Labor government had taken control of the Northern Territory Police to Canberra and I am pleased to see the local people wanted it back.

Labour and Secondary Industry - We feel the local executive should attempt to actively foster attracting industry to the Territory and work to cajole the government and industry to process so much of their products in the Territory as they can.

Urban and Rural Land - Urban and rural land policy is a matter which is increasingly concerning the federal government. However, we strongly urge the committee to

devolve these responsibilities on the local executive... We are presently experiencing the most extraordinary prevarication, delay and indecision in this area because of continued control from Canberra, and retention of control in this area would exacerbate a strained situation.

Courts and Attorney-General's Department - We in the Territory have every right to take pride in our judicial system and we cannot see how a local judiciary, magistrates or local legal profession can in any way be regarded as something of national interest, nor can we see these things being controlled locally as inefficient in any way. We urge the committee to make a forceful recommendation on this area ... Attempts to make a Canberra-controlled legal service would be no more than a gratuitous insult to the people of the Territory.

We can see that the Labor Party, at least in 1975, could clearly see the benefits of responsible self-government and were fully prepared to accept the realities of the situation by stating that any local executive could readily raise local taxes to the level applicable in the states if autonomy was conferred. I was pleased to hear the Opposition Leader endorse the stand taken in their submission to the joint parliamentary committee earlier at these sittings, despite what they said in the recent election campaign which was a total reversal of that stance.

A further example of the confusing and hypocritical policy on constitutional development which the Opposition expounds is its claim that a Labor executive would end the electricity chaos in Darwin by immediately negotiating a takeover of the power supply and forming a commission. That is a commendable move. The CLP has been doing just that for some considerable time and plans to take over the electricity supply on 1 July next year providing that a satisfactory financial agreement can be negotiated. The difference is that, at the same time we are negotiating the takeover of nearly all the Department of the Northern

Territory's functions as well, providing satisfactory financial arrangements can be made.

Why does the Opposition consider that it could negotiate satisfactory arrangements to take over electricity but it could not negotiate the same satisfactory arrangements to take over anything else? Surely the same reasons why a political party or a local executive would want to take over an electricity supply would also apply to the takeover of education, health, town planning and a whole range of state-type functions.

The subject of constitutional development and the Territory's progress towards self-government revolves around the financial arrangements which have yet to be negotiated. Most people will admit that additional local autonomy will mean additional local revenue and even Mr Waters and Mr Isaacs of the Labor Party accept this concept. I quote again from the official transcript of the joint parliamentary committee hearings. Mr Waters stated to that committee, and I quote from page 1275:

I think it would be quite inconsistent for the local Legislative Councillors once again to refuse to increase stamp duty and succession duty once they gained some element of state's function through the fully-elected Legislative Council.

Mr Kelly of the joint parliamentary committee pressed this point further. He said:

The privilege of self-government does carry the obligation for the state parliament, in whatever form, to take the unpalatable and unpopular step of passing unpopular measures to collect unpopular taxes. I hope that is clearly regarded as a responsibility not of the federal parliament but of the state parliament.

Mr Isaacs answered:

I would say that the federal government would probably want to know that the local people were fair dinkum. That would be one area where

they could show that they were fair dinkum.

Mr Isaacs was referring to the Territory executive raising local succession and stamp duties.

I believe that the transfer of powers will be made over a period of time as functions are transferred in convenient groups. Actual statehood, if we ever do get it, is many years away. That is how I see the situation. This Assembly is not expected to raise all state-type charges to the level of the states immediately; it may not even be the case that all charges will eventually be raised to state levels. These are options that are open to the government of the day. We accepted the report itself as a blueprint; we do not accept it word for word.

The report made it quite clear that a local executive may rightly choose to deliberately keep particular taxes or charges below those levelled in the states as a means of incentive or relieving hardship. We see that the subject of constitutional development and the financial aspects in particular are not as they have been represented to the people of the Northern Territory, particularly during the recent election campaign. We are not going to say to them after 1 July next year: "From 1 July, the Territory shall raise all charges that a state would raise and to state levels." It just will not happen because, even on 1 July next year, we will not have full self-government. There will still be a range of functions held by the Commonwealth. It would be unreasonable for them to expect us to raise full state-type charges when we do not have full autonomy. I would argue that we should not have to raise full state-type charges even when we do have full autonomy but that will be a subject for the government of the day to decide.

In conclusion, I believe we all have the same basic objective with respect to constitutional development and we should all be working towards obtaining the best possible deal for Territorians because that is what we have been elected for. I commend the motion.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): I will only comment briefly on the paper presented by the Majority Leader this morning. I believe this is one of the most reasonable statements from a politician of the Country Liberal Party. It is quite true that, prior to the elections, it seemed apparent to the people at large and to some members of this Assembly that we had embarked upon a course of statehood no matter what the cost. Elections are wonderful things. The Executive Member for Finance and Planning stated that there has been a change in support for constitutional development. There certainly has been and the greatest change has come from the Majority Party in this House, the Country Liberal Party.

If one compares the very reasonable document placed before us this morning with other statements made in the House by the members of the previous Majority Party, one sees significant differences. On page 4 of the printed statement circulated to members, the Majority Leader said: "Financial agreements between the Commonwealth on the one hand and states or territories of the realm on the other are matters of considerable complexity and difficulty. I have therefore taken steps to ensure that any special assistance or expert advice required in this important matter is available to assist us in developing our side of the argument." I would certainly hope so. The Treasury and the Fraser government run the country and everyone acknowledges that. If we are to negotiate with Treasury, we want people as smart as they are and people who are used to the increasingly complex world of fundings of states as they are. I am delighted to see that the Majority Leader has made it very clear that he will not proceed without that expert advice.

Further on the same page, he stated: "The program for transfers cannot proceed without financial agreement and, until I am satisfied that the Territory is getting a fair deal financially, I will not be concluding an agreement." I am delighted to support that statement. I must say again, rather cynically, what wonderful things elections are,

The Executive Member for Finance and Planning intimated that it was members of the Australian Labor Party who were opposing what appeared to be the previous arrangements between the Country Liberal Party and the Fraser government. In canvassing my own electorate, I can say to him that that may be so on the one hand but the most conservative people I know, people who would not vote Labor in a fit, were dead scared of the arrangements that seemed to be proceeding. This was mainly because very little detailed information had been given out. We had political speeches from both parties on broad concepts of what statehood would do for us. It would either make us or break us, depending on the particular ideology of the party concerned. People are not that stupid. What they wanted to know was exactly where the Territory was heading and what it was going to cost. There are only 100,000 people here; we have a very small population and a land mass one-sixth the size of Australia. Of course, we have particular problems and difficulties. We have high unemployment and very little industry. Our services were in a run-down state; look at some of the functions that have already been handed over - police, fire brigade etc. We have had debates on the paucity of the equipment and the need for trained personnel. Now we see an insistence that, before things are handed over, staffing levels will be adequate. I am delighted to see that because they were handed over, in the first instance, in an inadequate state. I have no doubt that the executive members now responsible for those particular areas are working their heads off trying to bring the staffing to an adequate level. Let us not repeat earlier mistakes.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy made what I regard as a very hilarious statement. He gave a slight history of constitutional development which was reasonably accurate and then said that, because of Tracy, things slowed down. That is a reasonable assumption too. The honourable member said that the Fraser government - bear in mind, of course, that the Fraser government consists of Mr Fraser, Mr Fraser, Mr

Fraser and Mr Fraser - decided to go into constitutional development quickly to make up for that time lost. May I say, Mr Speaker, that probably the only person in Australia who seems to understand Mr Fraser very well is the honourable member for Nhulunbuy. The rest of the 14 million of us are very suspicious.

I return now to the actual statements made by the Majority Leader. Being in close contact with my own electorate, which has a broad cross-section of people obviously not committed deeply to party ideologies, I support the statements he has made, particularly his assurances that, before each step forward is taken, he will be doing his utmost not only to see that we are not disadvantaged but quite clearly to see that the issues are explained clearly and concisely to the people of the Northern Territory who do have to bear the costs. It is not a simple financial cost either; we are going to win some, we are going to lose some. Take the example of the health services that are to be transferred; there is to be a health commission. The cost of health services in isolated areas is astronomical, not only in the Northern Territory, but also in the north-west of Western Australia and in northern Queensland. Those states have grave problems servicing the outback people of the area. The Majority Leader, I must assume, would not dare negotiate on the basis of services due to Darwin alone. He has too many members scattered around the Territory for him to be able to get away with it, or is he foolish enough to try?

In education - again a very contentious issue and one function which will come across to this Assembly - the utmost difficulties exist in adequately servicing outlying areas. Mention was made of the Teachers Federation's attitude to schooling in the uranium province. That certainly bears looking into. What about the adequacy or otherwise of schooling in fairly well settled areas outside of Darwin, places such as Katherine. There is a member of this House who has made many bitter adjournment debate speeches on the need for adequate secondary schooling in Katherine and for a rural college in

Katherine - these things will cost a hell of a lot. We have to commit the Fraser government, one way or another, and I am sure that, with the debating skills the Majority Leader has, he may convince Treasury that we have special needs in this regard. Those commitments have to be given before we accept any more of the duties and responsibilities that the present government is so anxious to give us. I am not anti-constitutional development. I am deeply suspicious of the present Prime Minister, not necessarily of all his colleagues.

I conclude, Mr Speaker, commending for once the very reasonable statements of the Majority Leader of the Country Liberal Party.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I will devote most of my address to replying to points raised by the Opposition.

For the life of me, I am at a loss to understand where the ALP - although perhaps I could excuse them because of their inexperience, though certainly not the honourable member for Nightcliff - ever got the idea that we were going to the electorate this year on the campaign of a state for the Northern Territory, including all that goes with it. They would have us believe and have the people believe, through a very effective and violent scare campaign, that we proposed setting up a vice-regal representative, that we proposed changing the name of the area and calling it the state of something or other. That just is not true. Indeed, I was almost amused at the Opposition Leader's suggestion that his campaign changed our attitude to this. It did not at all. Our attitude has been established for a long time.

On 19 February this year - and you cannot tell me we were campaigning then - the Majority Leader, Dr Goff Letts, outlined briefly our policy on constitutional development. He had this to say: "The policy of the Country Liberal Party is to proceed towards responsible self-government in a staged and planned manner. The question of eventual statehood" - not statehood, but eventual statehood - "is one which will

require the solution of certain constitutional and legal points, which will be complex and may take some additional time to resolve." His reference there was to time in addition to that put up by Mr Fraser, and in addition to that put up by the joint parliamentary committee's report. There has been no suggestion from this side of the House that we are going blindly ahead with statehood at all. What we are talking about is autonomy for the Northern Territory people in respect of matters which are purely Territory affairs. To suggest, as someone from the other side suggested, that the federal government should not in the interim maintain some form of general oversight, I think would be asking the federal government to abrogate its responsibilities. It is quite wrong to merely pluck out in one sentence, as one of the members of the Opposition did, the words, "the Governor-General will retain the right of refusal." What the honourable minister was talking about was where it is considered vital in the national interest, and he made it quite clear that it would not be in respect of general state-like matters - matters which are normally the prerogative of the local people.

Let us get it quite clear: those gentlemen over there and their scare campaign - all they did was put the fear of the devil into people with a lot of fabricated nonsense that was never the policy of this side of the House, and certainly is not now.

Mr Isaacs: It's not true and you know it.

Mr ROBERTSON: The only thing I know that is not true is what the honourable member's party was doing in its scare campaign.

Looking at a few of the other issues which have been raised here this morning, we had great store made by the Opposition Leader about the Labor Party's role in constitutional development in the Northern Territory. Certainly full marks and great credit has been given by members on this side of the House, by the previous Majority Leader here and by other members in the previous Legislative Assembly, to their

role in the formulation of the joint parliamentary committee's report. Since that day and with the greatest of respect to my colleague, the Majority Leader, I would suggest they have done nothing but scare people out of their wits with false statements. It is necessary for the people of the Northern Territory to really understand what autonomy for any of the states of the Commonwealth or autonomy for this Northern Territory - not statehood for a long time yet, but autonomy for this Northern Territory - means in the view of the Australian Labor Party. It is important that we understand it and I will quote from federal Hansard, the same federal Hansard that the honourable Majority Leader used in commending Mr Lionel Bowen, the honourable member for Kingsford-Smith in the federal House. I will now use it to really demonstrate to honourable members precisely what Labor means by regionalisation or by autonomous states:

The point we seek to make is that there should be uniformity of administration throughout Australia. If a person in Perth wants to go to Darwin, then that person should be able to find that there is no change of administration or laws. As far as the Opposition are concerned, a state boundary merely means the extent of administration; a state boundary should not mean an alteration in type of administration.

What does that mean? It means quite simply that the federal Labor Party is prepared to go along with autonomy for the Northern Territory provided it passes laws which the federal Labor Party in Canberra approves of. There is no other possible construction.

The honourable member for Fannie Bay examined the fiscal nature of the joint parliamentary committee report. She seemed to imply that what we are proposing is quite different to what the joint parliamentary committee directly recommended. The fact of the matter is that the joint parliamentary committee went to great pains to emphasise that the Northern Territory executive should exercise a fiscal responsibility, that it is not just to form a hand-out

society and run around all year as if it is a retired ladies' and gentlemen's club, that it is to be responsible for governing this Northern Territory and that includes fiscal responsibility,

I was appalled, quite frankly, at the honourable member for Fannie Bay's raising the subject of the alteration of the voting system. Let us get this one quite clear. We heard an awful scream from our friends opposite before they were in this place when the system of optional preferential voting was done away with and full preferential voting was brought in because this Assembly was not consulted and because the people of the Northern Territory were not consulted. I have no doubt at all that the Majority Leader would have been aware of it but it was a matter for the federal parliament. Let us face it: we want to get electoral matters here so that these decisions are accountable here and that is just another reason why we should be developing towards autonomy. What a piece of utter hypocrisy! The fact of the matter is that virtually ever since federation, the whole of Australia has used full preferential voting. It was not our side that changed the rules of the game without consulting anyone; it was the previous federal Labor government that changed the rules without consulting anyone before the 1974 Legislative Assembly election. The reason they did it was because they thought it would help them electorally. They were dismally disappointed because that little rig did not work. This was merely taking us back to a status quo which has applied right throughout the Commonwealth virtually since federation. It is nonsense to suggest that it was a "ready."

I would like to draw the honourable member for Sanderson's attention to what I have found to be a most disappointing practice from our friends opposite. They seem to be hellbent on inventing policy for us. It is probably the umpteenth time I have heard the question of differentiation of standards of service between two different sections of our own public service. I have argued this one in public forums ad nauseam. If it is the attitude of the Australian Labor Party to have

differential service conditions between various sections of the Northern Territory Public Service, then let them state that that is their policy. They are the only ones who are saying it; we are not. For heaven's sake, let us not have them running around fabricating policies which may be their own and claiming they are ours. I do not think it is on.

I would like to add a word to what the honourable member for Nightcliff said in relation to education. I can assure her that I share every concern that she expressed. The field of education is one in which we are going to tread very carefully and give a great deal of consideration to. I agree with what she said, but the minor functions which have come across to us have taught us quite a lot. We have had the chance now to examine them and we are more experienced in the matter of these transfers. I can assure members that the Majority Leader, his executive and this party as a whole will be working towards making sure that the problems the honourable member for Nightcliff raised will not occur with future transfers of functions.

I think I have negated most of what the Opposition has said. I hope that, in future, they will confine themselves to facts and not run around scaring people purely for political expediency, and get on with the job of providing a reasonable, balanced and constructive opposition.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): By way of reply, I will refer the House to what could be regarded as our policy in respect of self-government. I think the document that I incorporated in Hansard earlier, the letter from the Minister for the Northern Territory dated 26 July 1977 to the then Majority Leader, spells it out in the second paragraph:

Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a Government of the Northern Territory from 1 July 1978 and the advancement of that Government to fully responsible Self-Government in relation to State-type matters by 1 July 1979. This approval is subject to prior agreement being reached with the Northern Territory Executive on

the detailed financial arrangements to apply between the Commonwealth and the proposed Government of the Northern Territory.

I just cannot see how what I have said this morning is in any way back-peddalling or resiling from that. I maintain that stand entirely. I think my friends opposite went a bit further and presented to the people of the Northern Territory the fact that we were seeking statehood. After all, I think we can all remember that little slogan "First things first, statehood later," and who could say that that slogan could be based on any statement in that letter.

However, rather than say it was a misrepresentation, I will pass on to the matter of the apparent conflict that my friend, the Opposition Leader, referred to in relation to the raising of the \$6m. I see no conflict there. I have picked up the undertaking of the former Majority Leader, but on the basis that I want to know what areas of revenue are to be attacked in raising more money. I just want to find out exactly what amounts we are going to raise before we are persuaded to introduce any particular revenue-raising legislation.

Certainly it is not the policy of my party to deny assistance to the Opposition Leader. The specialists who will be coming here to advise the executive in areas of finance will be civil servants who will be either on secondment to or joining the Northern Territory Public Service and they will be available to the Opposition Leader in the normal way that public servants may be. Certainly I would be only too happy from time to time to arrange for him to confer with them so that he can keep abreast of events. As I say, I will do my best to see that the public and this Assembly is kept fully informed.

Motion agreed to.

URANIUM MINING AND KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Mr Speaker, I table documents associated with the mining of uranium and the

establishment of the Kakadu National Park, and seek leave to make a statement thereon.

Leave granted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Uranium has become a highly contentious and a politically and emotionally charged issue. Because we in the Northern Territory are at the very centre of these developments, I think it is most essential that this Assembly be in a position to examine critically and dispassionately all the elements of the issue. The federal government has taken the decision to mine and export uranium from the Northern Territory. I believe it is a decision which can only be taken by government and that the government in this case has exercised its judgment properly. We should attempt to avoid, so far as it is possible, any disruption to our social and economic life which could flow from this decision. What I hope we can do, therefore, in this debate is to put as candidly and as objectively as it can be done what we believe to be the effects and implications of the decision the government has taken, and particularly as these will influence social, economic and political developments in the Northern Territory.

I would especially ask honourable members to look at the history of the development of nuclear power, both in respect of nuclear weaponry and in its commercial uses in a number of overseas countries and, on this basis and on their evaluation of the findings of the Ranger inquiry, to come to a judgment. I do not wish to highlight any political differences in this debate or to score political points, although it is necessary to make some observations about the association of the Whitlam government with the early stages of development of the Ranger area and with the memorandum of understanding which was exchanged between that government and the mining companies.

I seek leave, Mr Speaker, to incorporate in Hansard a number of documents, including a ministerial statement of 31 October 1974 by the then Minister for Minerals and Energy, the late honourable R.F.X. Connor MP.

Honourable members will see, as part of the statement, the heads of agreement between the then government and the mining companies. At the same time, I wish to incorporate in Hansard a copy of a further agreement of 28 October 1975 between the government and the companies. These agreements provide some of the historical backdrop to the present decisions taken by the federal government. To bring the matter up to date, I ask leave to incorporate in Hansard a publication entitled, "Uranium - Australia's Decision" which contains a summary of the government's decisions and the steps which will be taken to implement them.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable member, is it essential that these are incorporated in Hansard?

Mr EVERINGHAM: I believe so, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: It means the printing of the daily Hansard will be held up. There is a terrific amount of extra work in incorporating this material.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I believe, Mr Speaker, that they are all matters of prime importance to the public of the Northern Territory and should be incorporated in the public records so far as is possible.

Mr Speaker, I would certainly seek leave to incorporate the first two documents in toto, and also the ministerial statements contained in the third bunch of documents.

Mr SPEAKER: That is "Northern Territory Uranium" by the honourable R.F.X. Connor?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: There is also the memorandum of understanding. Which is the third?

Mr EVERINGHAM: The third is the bundle of documents held by the Acting Clerk. They contain a number of ministerial statements and also some background papers. I would be quite satisfied if the ministerial statements were incorporated.

Mr SPEAKER: But these are public documents and they are available to anyone. There is really no point in putting the Hansard staff to this colossal extra workload if it can be avoided.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I appreciate that it is an additional workload, Mr Speaker, but I found that it was possible to have those ministerial statements typed myself without a great deal of difficulty and, in fact, that is what we were able to come up with.

Mr SPEAKER: But members will be looking for their daily Hansards tomorrow and these incorporations will make it impossible.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Very well, Mr Speaker, then I will withdraw my attempt to incorporate those documents in Hansard but I would certainly like the first two documents incorporated.

Leave granted.

NORTHERN TERRITORY URANIUM

The following statement was tabled by the Hon. R.F.X. Connor, M.P., Minister for Minerals and Energy, in the Australian Parliament's House of Representatives, Canberra, on Thursday, 31 October 1974.

My purpose in this statement is to outline the Government's program for the rational development of uranium resources in the Northern Territory; a program which will return substantial economic benefits to Australia from our supply of this vital energy resource to our overseas trading partners who face such grave difficulties in securing their energy requirements, and recognise fully the part played by those who have successfully explored our uranium resources.

Successive Australian Governments have recognised the economic and strategic importance of uranium. The first Australian legislation dealing with uranium and atomic energy was introduced by our predecessors in 1946. The 1946 legislation was amended in 1952 by the Menzies Government which in the following year introduced, with our

support while in Opposition, an Act which now stands on the Statute Book as the Atomic Energy Act 1953-1973. The 1946 legislation declared that uranium and similar substances in the Northern Territory were the property of the Commonwealth; the Menzies legislation of 1953 confirms in Section 35 that these substances became the property of the Commonwealth on 11 September 1946. The Menzies legislation also established the Australian Atomic Energy Commission with a range of functions extending to the exploration for, and mining, treatment and sale of, uranium and associated minerals. One of the Commission's first activities, as Agent of the Commonwealth, was, of course, to develop the Rum Jungle uranium deposit in the Northern Territory.

There are substantial reserves of uranium in the Northern Territory and I would remind the House that the first uranium discoveries in the South Alligator River area were made by the Bureau of Mineral Resources in 1953. Grievously, this information was not utilised by the then Government itself for the benefit of the people of Australia. And, too, the later discoveries of the Nabarlek and Ranger deposits were in areas recommended by the Bureau for uranium search in 1968.

The Annual Report of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission for 1973-74 states that reasonably assured resources in Australia are presently estimated at 188,000 tonnes uranium forming a significant part of total estimated world resources which presently stand in excess of 1.6 million tonnes uranium. Most of the Australian resources are located in the Alligator Rivers Uranium Field of the Northern Territory.

That report also states that estimated cumulative requirements in the Western World in the period 1973 to 1990 are about 1.5 million tonnes uranium and by the year 2000 a massive four million tonnes uranium. The report published jointly last year by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD emphasised that new world resources of uranium for future requirements would have to be proven from the early 1980s.

The United States of America, a country with substantial uranium resources of its own, seems now about to lift its embargo on imports of uranium in an endeavour to obtain adequate feed-stock for an expanded enrichment capability.

The knowledge of these emerging shortages has caused the large energy-consuming nations to scour the world for uranium supplies. This same knowledge has brought an end to the era of cheap uranium, a time in which I have been under much pressure inside Parliament, from the Opposition, and outside Parliament to approve give-away sales, e.g. proposed deliveries between 1977 and 1980 of 2,400 short tons of uranium oxide at prices of about \$A6.49/lb and, through the sale of 20% of the equity ownership in a major deposit to foreign interests, the delivery of 20% of the deposit at cost plus approximately 54 cents/lb.

In this context I need only mention the experience of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which in 1973 invited 53 uranium producers to tender for major supplies to it, and received offers from only two and at a price for initial deliveries of about \$A9.24/lb.

Major deposits of uranium have been discovered in the Northern Territory by the Peko Mines Ltd and the Electrolytic Zinc Co. of Australasia Ltd joint venture (the Ranger participants), Pancontinental Mining Ltd, Noranda Australia Ltd, and Queensland Mines Ltd. Despite the terms of the Atomic Energy Act, in last-minute decisions the McMahon Government approved export contracts for the sale of uranium to Japan by Peko/EZ and Queensland Mines at unsatisfactorily low prices.

Peko/EZ and Queensland Mines sought approval in the early months of our administration to sell to foreign interests part of the uranium deposits they had successfully explored - Ranger and Nabarlek. This, of course, flew in the face of the Government's policy on Australian ownership of uranium and other energy resources and was not approved.

All of this has strengthened our determination to bring order and

coherence to the confusion that developed under the previous Government and to approach the development of this vital industry on a responsible basis.

Some countries have sought equity participation, albeit small, in the energy resources of other countries as a means of guaranteeing supplies from those resources. We have constantly assured our trading partners that this is not necessary and that we shall see that they receive supplies from our available exports. They understand our policy and appreciate our assurances of supply.

Whilst I have questioned the propriety of the approvals of uranium export contracts immediately prior to December 1972, I have stated on numerous occasions that this Government will ensure that the commitments under those contracts are met. But the Government has not been prepared to approve further export contracts because of the unsatisfactory nature of the market.

The Atomic Energy (Prescribed Substances) Regulations authorised me to issue under the Atomic Energy Act licences for the development of uranium deposits in the Northern Territory. After frustrating delays by the Senate Opposition, the Regulations were finally disallowed on 19 September 1974 - a waste of six valuable months. Thus the Opposition in the Senate prevented my proceeding with licences for the companies which had successfully explored deposits in the Northern Territory.

Despite this frustration of the exploration companies by the Senate Opposition, the Government is determined to ensure that the Northern Territory uranium resources are developed in a sensible manner. Pursuant to the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act 1953-1973, the Australian Atomic Energy Commission will participate, as Agent of the Australian Government, in the mining and treatment, and undertake the sale, of the Government's uranium located in the Northern Territory and will also undertake all new exploration in the future for uranium in the Territory. I will

now outline the Government's program in more detail.

The Atomic Energy Commission will mine ore from the Ranger deposits, in conjunction with the Ranger participants, and at the appropriate time similarly from the other deposits. For the Nabarlek deposit, which is located within the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve, the agreement of the Aboriginal people concerned must be given and their interests safeguarded before mining commences. These are matters within the administration of my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. For the Koongarra deposit the proposed Kakadu National Park must be declared and mining, when undertaken, must conform with the proposed legislation on National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. It is essential that the framework of a National Park be thoroughly established before uranium mining commences.

A uranium milling plant will be established in the Northern Territory financed by the Australian Atomic Energy Commission and the Ranger participants. It will have a capacity of 3,300 short tons uranium oxide per annum and will be equivalent to that earlier proposed by the Ranger participants. It will treat ore from the Ranger deposits. The early duplication of the operation is envisaged.

My colleagues, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, and I have agreed with the Ranger participants in the terms attached on the construction and financing of the operation.

Future export sales of uranium will be negotiated by the Government within the special terms of Section 17 of the Act. Uranium oxide produced at the treatment plant will first be used to meet the existing approved contracts of Peko/EZ and Queensland Mines and the balance will be sold by the Australian Atomic Energy Commission as provided for by the Atomic Energy Act. It is anticipated that by the time of the commencement of the milling plant the market will be sufficiently mature for the negotiating of new export contracts. The approved contracts call for deliveries to Japanese power utilities

commencing in 1977 but as uranium oxide will not be available from the treatment plant until some 12 months later, the Government will make available on appropriate terms and conditions, uranium oxide from its existing stockpile to ensure that each utility will receive the deliveries provided under the contracts. Uranium oxide produced following the re-commissioning of the Mary Kathleen mine could also be available for this purpose.

When Australia negotiates further sales it will do so as a willing seller seeking willing buyers. In particular, we will ensure that our major trading partners - Japan, Italy and West Germany - obtain an equitable share of the uranium we have for export. We will also take into account the Treaty on the non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Prime Minister in his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly, stressed the importance of that Treaty and Australia, which has ratified the Treaty on the initiative of this Government, will naturally act with due regard to the obligations imposed by the Treaty and to the need to strengthen its application.

Our policy is to treat and fabricate Australia's minerals in Australia to the greatest practicable extent. The time necessary to bring the treatment plant into operation will enable full consideration of the technology to be used in a uranium enrichment plant to be built in Australia to upgrade the value of Australia's uranium exports. Existing enrichment technology is based on gaseous diffusion but considerable attention is being given to the centrifuge technology. To assist in our assessment of this technology the Australian Atomic Energy Commission was a member of the Association for Centrifuge Enrichment; this Association was formed in June 1973 by organisations from various countries, including Japan, to study all aspects of centrifuge technology. Last year we commenced discussions with the Japanese Government on collaboration in the establishment of a uranium enrichment plant in Australia including the joint acquisition of technology.

In its arrangements for the mining, treatment and sale of its uranium in the Northern Territory, the Government fully recognises the exploration companies, some of which have a large number of small shareholders, which identified these resources. Their success will be rewarded. Between 1948 and 1961 rewards of up to \$50,000 (aggregating to about \$225,000) were paid to successful explorers for uranium in the Northern Territory, including the discoverer of the Rum Jungle deposit. The Government has therefore decided that a company which has undertaken successful exploration will receive the net proceeds from the sale by the Australian Atomic Energy Commission of 50% of the uranium oxide obtained from that deposit.

At today's estimated world price of \$A11/lb, 50% of the announced Ranger reserves, which total 110,000 short tons U_3O_8 , have a gross value of \$1,210 million compared with some \$714 million when I was being pressed to agree to new sales contracts.

Because deposits explored by Queensland Mines, Noranda and Pancontinental will be developed later, the Government will consider separately the question of some earlier return for their shareholders.

Overseas countries are now exploring for uranium in Australia in the expectation that successful exploration will carry with it a right, or entitlement, to a share of the uranium discovered. No special skills or technology are required for uranium exploration and the Government, as a matter of policy, does not wish to see foreign participation in new uranium exploration in the future. The amount of uranium to be exported to any country will not depend upon whether that country does, or does not, sponsor exploration for uranium in Australia. I have earlier referred to the criteria that will determine this matter. All new exploration in the future in the Northern Territory for uranium and kindred minerals will be carried out exclusively by the Australian Government through the Australian Atomic Energy Commission as provided in the Atomic Energy Act.

The Government's policies that I have outlined today are based on the recognition of the economic and strategic importance of uranium and of our obligations to the owners of the uranium - the Australian people - as well as to those members of the world community with limited access to energy resources. Australia is not alone in reviewing its policies on this important industry. I have already mentioned the review by the United States of America of its import embargo; Canada has recently announced changes in its policies designed to ensure that that country receives a proper return from the development and utilisation of its uranium resources.

The following Northern Territory Uranium Agreement was attached to the Ministerial statement. The agreement was signed by E.G. Whitlam, Prime Minister; J.E. Cairns, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Overseas Trade; and R.F.X. Connor, Minister for Minerals and Energy, for the Australian Government, and J.S. Proude and G.A. Mackay for the Ranger participants.

1. The title to Uranium in the Northern Territory is vested in the Australian Government pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act 1953-1973.
2. Regulations authorising the Minister to issue licences for mining the uranium were disallowed by the Senate.
3. The Australian Government has therefore had to make different arrangements for mining the uranium through the Atomic Energy Commission pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act 1953-1973.
4. The mining of designated portions of the Ranger deposits, the delivery of the ore to a mill nearby and the construction and operation of the mill will be undertaken by Ranger Uranium Mines Pty Ltd, of which half the directors will be nominated by Peko Mines Ltd and the Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australasia Ltd (hereinafter called the Ranger participants) and the other half by the Commission.
5. The mine and the mill and the necessary infrastructure will be financed by the Ranger participants and the Commission in the respective proportions of 27½% and 72½%. The operation will have an initial capacity of not less than 3,300 short tons U₃O₈ per annum. The early duplication of the operation is envisaged.
6. Future sales of yellowcake produced at the mill will be negotiated by the Commission as agent for the Government.
7. The Ranger participants will provide their studies of future world markets for uranium and may introduce to the Commission particular sales proposals and the Commission will consult with the participants thereon.
8. The Ranger participants will receive the net proceeds from the sale of 50% of the yellowcake produced at the mill from ore mined in the Ranger deposits.
9. Deliveries to Japanese utilities pursuant to the export contracts of the Ranger participants approved prior to 2 December 1972 (or the repayment of borrowings of yellowcake undertaken for that purpose) will first be deducted from the Ranger participants' share of the yellowcake produced.
10. In calculating the net proceeds from the sale of yellowcake from the mill the proportionate costs of mining and selling and milling charges will be deducted from sales revenue.
11. The Ranger participants will be entitled to complete exploration within the terms of their existing exploration licences.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

PARTIES TO THIS MEMORANDUM

The Commonwealth of Australia -
(Australia)

Peko Mines Limited - (Peko)

Electrolytic Zinc Company of
Australasia Limited - (EZ)

1. PRELIMINARY

The parties to this memorandum desire to procure the development and mining of uranium ore deposits in the Ranger Project area in the Northern Territory and the production and sale of uranium concentrate from that ore.

To these ends, Ministers and representatives of the companies signed an agreement dated 30 October 1974 ("the 1974 Agreement"), a copy of which is attached,

It is now desirable to elaborate and supplement the 1974 Agreement and to set out agreed understandings on major issues affecting the development of the Ranger Project to facilitate the early preparation of formal, definitive and binding contracts in relation to it.

Contracts to give effect to this Memorandum of Understanding to which Australia is, or is to be, a party shall not become effective until Australia has affirmed them following consideration of:

- (a) The report of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry;
- (b) a report by the Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner on any claims by aboriginals in respect of land within the Ranger Project area.

CLAUSE 2

2. SCOPE OF RANGER PROJECT

- (a) The Australian Atomic Energy Commission (The Commission), Peko and EZ shall carry on a joint venture in the Northern Territory for:
 - (i) the development and mining of uranium ore deposits on behalf of Australia in the Ranger Project area;
 - (ii) the construction, operation and maintenance of a uranium ore treatment plant for

the production of uranium concentrate and other agreed mineral products derived from ore mined in the Ranger Project area;

- (iii) the delivery to Australia of uranium concentrate produced from the uranium ore treatment plant;
- (iv) the provision and operation of facilities, equipment and services directly, related to and reasonably required for the foregoing.
- (b) The Ranger Project area shall be an area of approximately 32 square miles being the area delineated in blue on the attached plan.
- (c) The Ranger Project shall be conducted as a commercial venture and in accordance with good commercial, mining and industrial practice.
- (d) Australia, Peko and EZ shall do all things necessary to enable the objects of the joint venture to be achieved.
- (e) In particular, Australia -

- (i) shall grant any necessary and appropriate authorities under the Atomic Energy Act. The initial authority shall be granted for a period of twenty one years;
- (ii) shall, if Peko and EZ in respect of their participation in the joint venture are not treated as carrying on "prescribed mining operations" on the Ranger Project area for the purposes of the Income Tax Assessment Act as it stands at the date of this Memorandum of Understanding, seek amendment of the law to enable them to be treated under the income tax law as if they were carrying on "prescribed mining operations" on that area;

(iii) shall ensure that the Ranger Project area is reserved from occupation under the Mining Ordinance of the Northern Territory.

(f) In particular, Peko and EZ -

(i) shall provide to the Commission as a joint venturer without charge all information and technical data in their possession or in possession of Ranger Uranium Mines Pty. Ltd. (RUM) with respect to the Peko-EZ Ranger joint venture;

(ii) shall ensure that the Memorandum and Articles of Association of RUM are amended so that they will be consistent with the 1974 Agreement and with this Memorandum of Understanding;

(iii) shall not dispose of any part of their shareholdings in RUM or exercise their voting power as shareholders in RUM in a manner inconsistent with the 1974 Agreement or with this Memorandum of Understanding.

(g) The Ranger Project shall continue in force during the economic life of the uranium ore deposits in the Project area.

(h) There will be no royalties imposed in respect of the Ranger Project of a kind similar to the royalty that would have been imposed under a mining title granted under the Northern Territory Mining Ordinance.

CLAUSE 3

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The joint venturers shall engage RUM to be the manager of the Ranger Project. RUM shall be responsible for the planning, development, construction, operation and maintenance of the Ranger Project and shall, for that purpose, be furnished with all necessary funds by

the joint venturers and shall have possession and control (but not ownership) of all joint venture assets. All contracts entered into by RUM in connection with the Project shall be as agent for and to the account of the joint venturers.

CLAUSE 4

4. PROJECT DECISIONS

(a) There shall be a Ranger Project Committee consisting of four members. Two members shall be appointed by the Commission and one member shall be appointed by each of Peko and EZ. This committee shall be responsible for making certain fundamental policy decisions such as cessation, curtailment or suspension of construction or operation of the Project and major expansion of treatment plant capacity. The decision of the committee shall require a unanimous vote.

(b) RUM shall have a board of four directors. Two directors shall be appointed by the Commission and one director shall be appointed by each of Peko and EZ.

CLAUSE 5

5. SCALE OF OPERATION

(a) The treatment plant shall :

(i) be promptly constructed near the Ranger Number One ore body (the precise location to be determined by the Board of RUM);

(ii) have an initial annual capacity of not less than 3,300 short tons of U_3O_8 in uranium concentrate conforming to the quality specifications of Allied Chemicals Corporation, U.S.A; and

(iii) be operated at optimum capacity consistent with good engineering practice and with sound commercial practice,

When commercially practicable the annual capacity shall be increased to 6,600 short tons of U_3O_8 .

- (b) The uranium ore deposits in the project area shall be progressively developed and mined (commencing with the Ranger Number One ore body).
- (c) All uranium concentrate produced at the treatment plant shall be delivered to the Commission as agent of Australia.

CLAUSE 6

6. JOINT VENTURE, COSTS, ASSETS AND SHARING PROCEEDS OF SALE

- (a) The relevant proportions of contributions of capital from time to time including working capital shall be:

The Commission -	72½ %
Peko	13½ %
EZ	13½ %

and project assets shall be held in like undivided percentages. There shall be no interest charges on capital contributions to the Ranger Project.

- (b) Project assets shall not be the subject of partition.
- (c) Subject to paragraph (d), Peko and EZ shall each be entitled to receive the nett annual proceeds of the sale of 25% of the uranium concentrate produced by the Ranger Project.
- (d) In any year in which uranium concentrate produced by the Ranger Project -
 - (i) is made available to Peko or EZ to enable them or one of them to meet contractual obligations already undertaken; or
 - (ii) is applied to replenish drawings by Peko or EZ from Australia's stockpile of uranium concentrate,

an appropriate adjustment shall be made to the entitlement of Peko and EZ to share in the nett annual proceeds of sales (see Clause 9 below).

- (e) The nett annual proceeds of sale of uranium concentrate produced by the Ranger Project shall consist of gross proceeds of sales less the costs of mining, milling and selling the uranium concentrate. In determining nett annual proceeds of sale no account shall be taken of depreciation of capital assets or of interest charges in respect of the provision of capital by the joint venturers.
- (f) Project buildings, structures, plant and machinery shall remain the property of the joint venturers even though the same may be affixed to Crown land.
- (g) The joint venturers shall acquire at cost or at current market value, whichever is the less, the tangible assets of the Peko-EZ joint venture in the Ranger Project area or otherwise held by RUM.

CLAUSE 7

7. SALES

- (a) All future sales of uranium concentrate produced by the Ranger Project shall be effected by the Commission as agent for Australia. Subject to the stockpile requirements referred to in Clause 8(a) and (d) herein, the uranium concentrate output of the project shall be sold at least at world market prices with the object of maximising profitability and cash flow on a continuing basis. Prior to the decision to commence construction of the project, the Commission shall use its best endeavours to sell sufficient uranium concentrate output of the project to facilitate appropriate financing arrangements by Peko and EZ to enable them to meet their obligations under Clause

5(a)(i) and (ii) and Clause 6(a) above. By the time the treatment plant commences commercial production, the planned plant capacity shall, as far as practicable, have already been contracted for sale.

- (b) All minerals products, other than uranium concentrate produced at the treatment plant, shall be sold by Peko and EZ on behalf of the joint venturers.

CLAUSE 8

8. STOCKPILE

- (a) *Vendor's Stockpile*

The Vendor's stockpile of Ranger production shall be maintained at a level determined by the Commission from time to time having regard to existing and forward commitments and production rates. The stockpile shall not exceed a tonnage equivalent to the nominal production capacity of the Ranger treatment plant for three months of continuous operation unless the joint venturers otherwise agree.

- (b) *Inability to Sell*

If the Commission is unable to sell Ranger production on world markets on reasonable terms and conditions, the joint venturers will confer in the Ranger Project committee as to what action should be taken, consistent with good commercial practice, in relation to the continued operation of the mine and treatment plant.

- (c) *Withholding from Sale for Commercial Reasons*

If the Commission withholds uranium concentrate from sale on the market for commercial reasons and thereby causes an increase in the holdings of Ranger uranium concentrate above the maximum level specified in paragraph (a) above, the Commission will inform Peko and EZ of the fact and Peko and EZ may request the Commission to

offer for sale at the prevailing world market price that share of the Ranger production the nett proceeds of the sale of which they are entitled to receive. If such a request is made to the Commission, the Commission shall forthwith inform the Minister for Minerals and Energy of the request and, if the Minister so directs, the Commission shall comply with the request. In considering whether such direction should be given the Minister will have regard to and give due consideration to any financial hardship which Peko and EZ may suffer if such direction is not given.

- (d) *Withholding from Sale in the National Interest*

In the event that in the national interest Australia withholds from sale uranium concentrate produced by the Ranger Project, an arbitrator shall be appointed to decide what compensation, if any, but not exceeding world market price, should be given by Australia to offset the adverse financial effect on Peko and EZ resulting from this action. If the purpose of withholding from sale is to establish a stockpile for enrichment or strategic reasons, the Government will pay world market price.

CLAUSE 9

9. CONTRACTS WITH JAPANESE UTILITIES

- (a) Until the treatment plant is in commercial production, uranium concentrate of the necessary quality shall, to the extent required, be made available to Peko and EZ from Australia's existing stockpile to enable them to meet their obligations to Japanese utilities under contracts approved prior to the date of this Memorandum of Understanding.
- (b) Where a quantity of uranium concentrate is made available to Peko or EZ (the borrowing company) from Australia's stockpile

for delivery under an approved contract referred to in paragraph (a) above, the borrowing company in consideration of such action by Australia shall within seven (7) days after the due date for each payment under the contract pay to Australia a fee equivalent to the amount payable to the borrowing company under the contract less deductions for freight, insurance and selling commission (not exceeding in the aggregate 5% of the payment) payable by the borrowing company.

(c) During each year of the five-year period commencing on the date of completion of full scale commissioning of the Ranger plant, Australia shall be entitled to retain for its own purposes up to five hundred short tons of the uranium concentrate produced at the plant, provided that the aggregate amount so retained shall not exceed the total amount of uranium concentrate made available from Australia's existing stockpile in accordance with paragraph (a) above.

(d) Operating costs in respect of the production of that uranium concentrate shall be borne by the Commission to the extent to which such costs do not exceed the relevant fee referred to in paragraph (b) above. Operating costs in excess of such fee shall be borne by the borrowing company. If such operating costs are less than the relevant fee referred to in paragraph (b) above, Australia shall, subject to paragraph (j) below, pay to the borrowing company an amount equal to the excess of the relevant fee over the operating costs in respect of the production of the uranium concentrate appropriated and retained by Australia pursuant to paragraph (c) above.

(e) Once the treatment plant commences commercial production following completion of full scale commissioning, Australia will make available to Peko and EZ, out of the production of the Ranger pro-

ject, uranium concentrate of the necessary quality to meet obligations to Japanese utilities under contracts approved prior to the date of this Memorandum of Understanding.

(f) Peko and EZ shall pay to Australia in respect of uranium concentrate referred to in paragraph (e) above, an amount equal to operating costs in respect of that production.

(g) Proceeds received by Peko and EZ under their approved contracts shall not be joint venture receipts.

(h) Until the contractual obligations of Peko and EZ have been fully met, Peko and EZ shall only receive from the joint venture the excess of sales revenue over operating costs and selling costs in respect of the tonnage by which one-half of Ranger project uranium concentrate production in each year exceeds the tonnage of uranium concentrate made available to Peko and EZ in such year in accordance with paragraph (e) above and the tonnage retained by Australia in accordance with (c) above.

(j) If at the end of the period referred to in paragraph (c) above, insufficient uranium concentrate has been produced at the plant to enable Australia to fully exercise its entitlement under that paragraph, the entitlement of Australia to appropriate and retain for its own purposes up to five hundred short tons of the uranium concentrate produced at the plant in each year shall continue until the aggregate amount retained pursuant to paragraph (c) and to this paragraph equals the total amount of uranium concentrate made available from Australia's existing stockpile in accordance with paragraph (a) above. Operating costs in respect of the production of uranium concentrate retained by Australia pursuant to this paragraph shall be paid in accordance with

paragraph (d) above but, to the extent that the relevant fee referred to in paragraph (b) above exceeds such operating costs, Australia is entitled to retain that fee.

CLAUSE 10

10. ASSIGNMENTS

If either Peko or EZ wishes to assign its interest in the joint venture, then the other of them shall have a pre-emptive right of purchase. If this pre-emptive right is not exercised, then the party wishing to assign may assign to Australia or to a corporation nominated by Australia. If the Commission wishes to assign its interest in the joint venture, then Peko and EZ shall have a pre-emptive right of purchase. If either Peko or EZ defaults, then the other of them shall have a pre-emptive right to take over the rights and obligations of the defaulter.

CLAUSE 11

11. RELINQUISHMENT OF RIGHTS UNDER MINING ORDINANCE

When the last of all contracts necessary to give effect to this Memorandum of Understanding has become effective, Peko and EZ shall relinquish all interests held by them under the Mining Ordinance of the Northern Territory within the Ranger Project area.

28 October 1975.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): I believe we should first examine the decision of the federal government as announced by the Prime Minister against the background of the major findings and recommendations of the Fox inquiry and the statements made by the Prime Minister and some of his ministers when announcing that decision - these being contained in "Uranium - Australia's Decision".

At that time, he emphasised four points - firstly, the role of Australia in helping to meet the energy needs of the world over the next 20 years;

secondly, the decision must be looked at with a sense of moral responsibility to Australians and to the community of nations, and not in a purely selfish and opinionated way; thirdly, mining and milling will be carried out on the basis of the application of the most stringent criteria concerning the environment and the interests of Aborigines; fourthly, the government will provide absolute priority to measures to safeguard against nuclear proliferation.

The executive accepts the assurances of the Prime Minister that the conditions and safeguards spelt out in the Fox inquiry and additional stringent measures the government proposed will be fully applied. Let me say that all the agencies of the Northern Territory executive will, where possible, be directed to report on the efficacy of the safeguards. I believe there are people of goodwill on both sides of this argument. I hope we are not all regarded as being dollar-happy, and I hope the other side does not think we regard them all as "greenies" and "flat-earth" men. We are people who have come to opposing decisions after what we consider to be a rational examination of all the facts available. I and my executive share their concerns, but we do not find these concerns to be stultifying. I have no doubt of the validity of the government's decision in the face of all the information and advice available to me, and on the basis of the best judgment I can make of that material. I believe also that the Fox inquiry, with the scientific evidence submitted to it and with the evaluation by the multi-disciplinary team which made up the inquiry, has reached a series of findings and conclusions which indicate that mining can proceed.

I should like, first of all, to spell out a number of what I consider to be basic facts on this issue. For the most part, I believe these are facts which are now generally accepted. The first fact is that the world is facing an energy crisis which was precipitated by the oil crisis in 1973 and which will have increasingly serious consequences, at least up to the turn of this century, for the development of an

alternative technology. Solar power does not at the moment appear to provide a viable alternative. We have been fortunate because Australia has been insulated from the worst effects of this crisis by a plentiful supply of energy resources and is likely to remain in that situation whilst other countries, because of dwindling supplies of petroleum, must change to other sources of energy supply. However, Australia should be doing all it can to encourage petroleum conservation and exploration.

There has been some attempt by countries in this crisis situation to conserve energy, to use existing resources more effectively and to develop new energy resources. Whilst they are doing this, there is no guarantee that they will have energy on a sufficiently large scale to meet their needs even for the remainder of this century. In the face of this crisis, nuclear energy is the only readily available alternative source for most countries to meet their essential needs for electrical energy up to the year 2000. In the United States, it is estimated that energy sources other than those in use today, and including developments in shale oil, geo-thermal, hydro, tidal, wind, solar and fusion, will supply no more than 10% to 15% of the United States' energy needs in the year 2000. Thirty-four countries, accepting the best technological advice available to them, have clearly opted for nuclear power. In 20 of these, some 184 nuclear power plants are in operation and some 500 units are under design, construction or are on order - 168 of these in the United States, Switzerland with 18% of its electrical capacity produced by nuclear power leads the world; West Germany has 15%, Sweden 13%, UK and France 10%, the USA 8%, Spain 5%, India 3% and Japan 1.8%. In terms of total nuclear plants operating or planned, the United States is the world leader with 228 units. Because of their concern about uranium supplies, some countries are turning to nuclear technologies involving reprocessing and the fast breeder reactor which, whilst it means the most effective use of available supplies of uranium, will increase nuclear proliferation risks and problems of

high-level waste disposal. Australia possesses approximately 20% of the western world's known reserves of low-cost uranium. Australia will be concerned initially only in the mining and milling of uranium.

After considering all the evidence submitted to its inquiry, the Fox report concluded on this matter: "The hazards of mining and milling uranium, if those activities are properly regulated and controlled, are not such as to justify a decision not to develop Australian uranium mines". The government's policy on nuclear safeguards directed at reducing the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation, announced on 24 May 1977, in some instances goes beyond the Fox inquiry recommendations and is stricter and more rigorous than that adopted to date by any nuclear supplier country and indeed in many respects goes beyond the requirements the Opposition Leader laid down in the House of Representatives on 20 March 1977. Technology for handling, solidification, vitrification and safe storage of high level radio-active liquids exists. Its application on a commercial scale is being developed as the quantity of commercially produced waste, up to the present, has not warranted a fully commercial process. The issue of nuclear waste disposal has been examined by a number of independent authorities, including the British Royal Commission on Environment Pollution, the Flowers Commission and the Ford Foundation. The vitrification and solidification process will use boro-silicate material. There is no intention of Australia storing other country's radio-active wastes.

The government has accepted all the Fox inquiry's findings and recommendations on mining and milling and an Australian uranium code is to be written which will be monitored and implemented progressively by legislation together by the states and the Territory. As an important element in the full code, the "Code of Practice on Radiation Protection in the Mining and Milling of Radioactive Ores", prepared and published by the Health Department, will be prescribed by the Commonwealth legislation but, where a state or territory legislation has equal force,

the Commonwealth legislation will be held in reserve and the administration of the code left in the hands of the state or territory. This is an area of legislation which the Assembly should enter with minimal delay. The code is to be developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health in consultation with other Commonwealth and state authorities, with industry and trade unions. Further elements will be developed where possible on existing international and overseas codes. Expert advice will also be obtained from bodies such as the Australian Ionising Radiation Advisory Committee, the Australian Radiation Laboratory and the National Health and Medical Research Council. The widest range of consultative machinery will be set up to ensure that the code contains all those measures relating to environmental standards, procedures and practices, even extending beyond the recommendations of the Ranger inquiry.

One of the major recommendations of the inquiry concerning the development and co-ordination of environmental protection and control dealt with the appointment of a supervisory scientist and the establishment of a research institute where multi-disciplinary, integrative research and monitoring programs would be developed and which would be headed by the supervisory scientist. A co-ordinating committee to co-ordinate the formulation of standards and procedures and control measures for environmental protection in the region will be established. It is to be made up of representatives of bodies such as the Northern Land Council, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, mining companies and chaired by the supervisory scientist. The Majority Party believes the protection of the environment in the Alligator Rivers region to be of paramount importance and will seek to have appropriate agencies of the Northern Territory government fully represented on this committee and for the Assembly to be kept fully informed on its findings and recommendations. The Majority Party is also negotiating with the federal government for the secondment of a senior environmental officer who will be able to advise the Assembly over the whole range of

matters concerned with environmental protection and control. I seek leave to table a summary of the proposed role of the Northern Territory executive in the arrangements for uranium development.

Leave granted.

Mr EVERINGHAM: It would be my proposal that a standing committee of this House be set up to oversee Northern Territory involvement in environmental protection areas. The federal government has accepted the recommendation of the Fox inquiry to establish a uranium advisory council within the administration of the Minister for National Resources and which will report at least annually to the federal parliament. The relationship of the role of the uranium advisory council must be considered in relation to the government's decision not to accept the recommendation of the Fox inquiry that the Atomic Energy Act 1953 should not be used for the granting of an authority to Ranger to mine uranium.

It will be recalled that the Whitlam Labor government, when negotiating with Peko EZ on the mining of uranium in 1974 and 1975, developed a memorandum of understanding which, among other things, provided for the application of the Atomic Energy Act to the operation. This memorandum is among the documents that I produced earlier. The government has said that it is prepared, as a matter of public policy, to honour the agreement with Peko EZ inherited from the Whitlam government.

The government has accepted all recommendations on Aboriginal land claims recommended by the Ranger inquiry including those made on the basis of secondary succession comprising unalienated crown land to the west of the existing Aboriginal reserve on the South Alligator River, but excluding the special purpose lease at Jim Jim and the area to be selected as the regional centre. This is the first recognition outside an Aboriginal reserve of an additional land claim in Australia and obviously marks an important milestone in the granting of Aboriginal land rights in Australia.

In addition, the Fox inquiry recommended the resumption of Mudginbarry, on which the Jabiluka deposit is located, and Munmarlary pastoral leases with opportunity for Aboriginal land claims to be made and determined in respect of those areas. The government's decision in this regard is a milestone in the history of the Aboriginal peoples of the Territory and I hope that we see them taking their just place in the Territory community with a degree of assurance which has, in the past, perhaps been denied them.

A national park somewhat larger than the area originally envisaged is to be created and arrangements made for Aboriginal land within the park area to be leased back to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife. This will involve amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 and the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act. The total area of the national park as recommended by the Fox inquiry will be approximately 5,000 square miles and will include Mudginbarry and Munmarlary leases, the CSIRO reserve and all unalienated land west of the South Alligator to the boundaries of Carmor Plain, Point Stuart, Wildman River, Annaburroo, Mount Bunday and Goodparla leases.

It is proposed that control of this area will be exercised initially through the Departments of Aboriginal Affairs, Environment, Housing and Community Development, National Resources and the Northern Territory, with the Department of National Resources having the principal role in relation to exploration and mining. There will be arrangements to ensure proper co-ordination of the activities of the four departments in exercising such controls. It is assured that, with the transfer of most of the remaining functions of the Department of the Northern Territory to the Assembly in July next year, the executive will take over the role of the Department of the Northern Territory. In the meantime, proposals will be made to the Commonwealth government for the executive to be represented on the committee of these departments by an appropriate officer.

It should be noted that it is proposed that the Ranger town site will be included in the national park but not on Aboriginal land and the Ranger, Pancontinental and Noranda mining areas will be excluded from the national park. The Fox inquiry has recommended, and the government has fully accepted the recommendation, that the management of the Alligator Rivers region in its totality should be undertaken in conformity with a master land-use plan prepared by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife and controlling activities associated with mining, tourism, protecting Aboriginal sites and safeguarding other Aboriginal interests, controlling commercial fishing and buffaloes and ensuring that the town is so planned and managed as to be attractive to live in. The town is to be a closed mining town and will be limited to a population not exceeding 3,500. It will be subject to the plan of management prepared by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife. The design, construction and management of the town will be the responsibility of the Department of the Northern Territory and the mining companies under principles and standards established by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

The acceptance by the federal government of the lease-back arrangements of Aboriginal land is quite unusual and its general operation will undoubtedly be watched with great interest by park authorities elsewhere in Australia and indeed in the world. The direct effect of this arrangement is that a further substantial area of the Northern Territory, some 5,000 square miles, will be taken outside the direct jurisdiction of the Northern Territory government and will be developed and administered by authorities established under federal acts. Admittedly, there will be limited participation by the Northern Territory government in the administration of the park area and the proposed regional centre but the Territory government will obviously not play the major directing role, as presumably any state government would have expected to play, in the planning and management of the area.

In the declaration of the larger area west of the South Alligator, there are some important implications in respect of commercial fishing and recreational fishing and other activities by the citizens of Darwin. I propose to say something further on these particular matters later.

I believe it is important that there should be detailed discussions and full collaboration between the executive and the various government agencies involved in the management of the area on the role the Northern Territory government will play in the development and management of the national park, the establishment of a regional centre and the mining of uranium, including environmental protection and control.

The economic benefits to be derived from the development of the northern Australian uranium resources will be of considerable national importance. However, their significance to the Northern Territory with the prospects for an early and effectively based economic development of the Alligator Rivers region will be very large. The secondary or multiplier effects will also be very significant. The Ranger and Jabiluka projects alone represent a capital investment of well over \$500m. The Ranger inquiry made a number of studies of the potential economic significance of the industry. These studies concentrated only on the first phase, the mining and milling phase of development, and many assumptions were made which were, of necessity, quite conservative.

In spite of the conservative nature of the assumptions, the benefits which the inquiry estimated would be derived by the Territory from the development of uranium mining and milling are substantial and worth repeating as they clearly demonstrate the magnitude of the figures involved. The inquiry estimated that uranium mining operations would add between \$65m and \$105m to incomes in the Territory. This is equivalent to an increase of between 16% and 26% to incomes in the Territory. The operation of the uranium mines would create direct employment opportunities, including the provision of local services, for 1250 to 1500

workers and this is about 3% to 3.5% of the present labour force in the Northern Territory. The inquiry noted that the magnitude of the estimated effects on incomes suggests that very important additions to employment opportunities in the Territory could occur in the supply of consumer goods, community services and the construction of dwellings and other buildings - in other words, the establishment of an industrial infrastructure.

The report concluded that a regional uranium industry producing up to 12,500 tons of uranium per year would substantially enlarge the Northern Territory's economy and could provide the stimulus for a much faster rate of economic growth in the area than would otherwise occur. These figures do not take into account the many indirect economic effects which will flow from the development of uranium mining, as the employment opportunities created and economic developments derived from the development of our uranium resources do not end at the mine site. Manufacturers supplying materials and equipment to these projects will need to employ workers as will the transport industry, the retail service and many other industries. The overall economic contribution from the uranium mining industry would exceed many times the direct benefits which would be derived.

To use the example of employment opportunities created, figures presented in the Ranger reports suggested that, for the industry in Australia as a whole, direct employment opportunities created by 1990 could be as high as 3,500. However, a study undertaken by W.D. Scott and Co. Pty Ltd has estimated that additional employment resulting from flow-on expenditures would be 4,000 during the construction phase and 6,000 at full operation of the industry, and the reinvestment in fixed capital of the Australian components of the after-tax profits would produce about 6,000 added jobs. There is no doubt that, in view of the dominance of the Northern Territory in the industry, a considerable proportion of the indirect benefits will flow to Territorians and this executive will do its best to see that this is the case. The development of industrial capacity

of this magnitude in north Australia will provide benefits and economic stimulus which will far exceed those derived from mining and milling alone. The flow-on benefits from these activities would be considerable, providing stimulus to many sectors of the economy. An authoritative report commissioned by the South Australian government has attempted to quantify the national benefits to be derived from the development of an integrated and co-ordinated uranium industry in Australia. The South Australian study was based on the development of about 15,000 tonnes of uranium per annum by the mid-1980s, a figure which would not be inconsistent with the levels of production projected by the Ranger inquiry for late in the decade. The report suggests that the build-up of new, direct employment possibilities could conservatively amount to 20,000 persons. The further economic benefits and effects of an industry of this scale are discussed and the report makes the remarkable conclusion that:

Employment opportunities on the statistical data for the already established North American uranium industry would be such that a fully-developed uranium industry in Australia could support directly and indirectly about half a million people, starting with a mining work force of about 5,000.

Lastly, I will deal with the question of a referendum or a moratorium on uranium mining. The fact is that, whilst the majority of people might accept the verdict of a referendum, there would be those on either side who would not, so no lasting peace would be secured whatever the result. The fact of the matter is that to mine uranium is an executive governmental decision. There is a place for referenda and that place in Australia is defined in the Constitution. I would suggest that, to have referenda in areas like these when we have a democratically elected government, we are turning to the France of Charles De Gaulle and I just do not see the point in having a democratically elected parliament to make decisions and then asking for referenda.

As for a moratorium, the government has met all the criteria laid down by the previous administration. The debate has been going on since pre-1974. It can only exacerbate the problem to prolong it. Decision-making is the function of government. The decision on this matter is timely and could be delayed no longer.

I reiterate my offer to this House to establish a five-member committee to act as a watchdog on the environment in the uranium province and to keep this House informed. I hope members will let me know whether the offer is to be taken up and then we will be able to approach the question on the basis of what is best for the majority of Territorians.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the Assembly note the statement and commend the Commonwealth government's decision on the matters contained therein.

Debate adjourned.

DARWIN RECONSTRUCTION COMMISSION - ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATION

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a statement on the Assembly representation on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

Leave granted.

Mr PERRON: Section 19 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act provides for a commission of eight persons, one of whom shall be a member nominated by the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory. Pursuant to this provision, the Assembly first nominated Dr Letts, the then Majority Leader. When the workload of his office became too large to permit the carriage of the extra function, the Assembly in 1975 nominated Mr Grant Tambling to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Mr Tambling is still a member of the commission nominated by this Assembly. The question of Assembly representation on the commission was considered by the executive as part of a review of Assembly appointments following the recent election. As honourable members will

know, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission ceases operations on 31 December this year. Mr Tambling has well served the Assembly and the people of Darwin during the term of his membership of the commission. His two years of service provided him with valuable experience and understanding of commission affairs and operations. It would be unfortunate for the Assembly and for the people of Darwin if Mr Tambling's knowledge and experience were not available during these final few months of the commission's operations. The executive has decided, therefore, that Mr Tambling should continue to represent the Assembly on the commission for the remaining months of the commission's operations. The Executive Member for Finance and Planning will assume the role of reporting to the Assembly on matters pertaining to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the statement be noted.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to move an amendment to the motion. The amendment I wish to move is that all words after "that" be omitted, and the following be inserted, "this Assembly terminate the appointment of Mr G.E.J. Tambling to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and appoint Ms J. D'Rozario as its representative on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission".

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, standing order 212 covers this. The motion that the paper be noted is in order. The amendment may take place at a later date, but it is not in order at this stage.

Mr ISAACS: Mr Speaker, I would just seek your guidance on the matter. Am I to take it that there can be no debate on the ...

Mr SPEAKER: There will be a debate; there is a motion that the paper be noted.

Mr ISAACS: Well, then, I speak to the motion. Surely I can foreshadow an amendment to that motion.

Mr SPEAKER: You can certainly foreshadow an amendment.

Mr ISAACS: I do that, and I foreshadow the amendment which I have already read to the Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Opposition Leader will speak to the motion that the paper be noted.

Mr ISAACS: Before I do that, Mr Speaker, could I just have some indication as to when I might be able to move the amendment that I have proposed.

Mr ROBERTSON: Perhaps if I may intervene, Mr Speaker, it might be useful if the honourable Opposition Leader simply allows the vote to go through on the noting of this document, and then moves a substantive motion of his own at a later time.

Mr SPEAKER: Is that what you wish to do?

Mr ISAACS: So long as I could do that at the conclusion of the debate. I will just speak now to the motion that the statement be noted.

It seems to us that the Majority Party is hiding behind a technicality. It is quite true that the Darwin Reconstruction Act provided that the Assembly shall nominate somebody to serve on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission; it does not provide that the nominee be a member of the Legislative Assembly. But with the complaints we heard about the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and about its nature, surely this Assembly has been one body which has stuck very firmly for the principle of representation.

Let me refer you to the very fine words of the honourable gentleman sitting opposite, the then deputy leader of the Majority Party, now the Majority Leader. On Thursday 2 January 1975, the honourable member moved by leave: "That the Legislative Assembly appoint as its representative on the Reconstruction Commission the honourable Majority Leader". Then he went on to point out the representative nature

of the Commission and that the Majority Leader, being the representative of this body, should be the representative on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

At a later time, on Thursday 21 August 1975, when it became clear that the then Majority Leader could no longer continue to serve on it due to pressure of work, he notified the Assembly of his intention to resign and he made the following remarks. I refer honourable members to Hansard No. 5 of the First Legislative Assembly. The then Majority Leader is quoted as saying:

I am sure that all members will desire to see a continuity of representation or what I might call the "people's representative" on this body and particularly continuity in the form of somebody who is well aware of the affairs of the commission and capable of making the best representation possible on behalf of the people of Darwin.

Mr Tambling no longer has the qualifications insisted upon by this Assembly. Mr Tambling no longer has the support of the electorate of Fannie Bay, let alone the city of Darwin. It is quite clear that the Majority Party intends to treat the commission in its last three months in a most cavalier manner and is treating this Assembly in a similarly cavalier manner. It is not the first appointment or continuity of appointment that the Majority Party has made in this most improper fashion. I refer to the appointment recently, during the election campaign itself, by the Majority Party of a person to the Northern Territory Port Authority, an appointment made in a most improper manner, without reflecting ...

Mr ROBERTSON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! He is now talking about a completely separate statutory authority and it is utterly irrelevant to the debate of this House.

Mr ISAACS: If it hurts you so much - I was not making such a great point of it at all, Mr Speaker, I am only referring to the improper way in which the Majority Party has behaved. It con-

tinues to do so. It says that there are only three months to go. The statement by the Executive Member for Finance and Planning indicated that it would be ideal for Mr Tambling to continue to represent the city of Darwin. The point is that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, in its great haste of off-load its responsibilities, is making decisions which are affecting the people of Darwin. I instance just as one example: the decision to put the skids under the Tracy Village Social Club. If these are the decisions that the DRC is going to continue to make, we require a representative from this Assembly and, if the Majority Party is not prepared to nominate their own member responsible for this vital area, then we on the Opposition are so prepared and we have given notice that we will be nominating Ms D'Rozario as that representative.

Mr SPEAKER: For the information of honourable members, standing order 113 says: "An amendment to any motion before the Assembly must, for purposes of record, be in writing and be signed by the mover." I would ask the honourable member to attend to that.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): May I say that I do not agree with the statement of the Majority Party concerning the Darwin Reconstruction Commission representative and I urge them to reconsider. Quite clearly, they have the numbers to pass this motion that the report be noted, but I do ask them to seriously reconsider their position. At a later date, I think it would be more proper of them to nominate the present Executive Member for Finance and Planning to be this Assembly's representative for whatever time is left for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I participated in all the debates when the DRC was first constituted. There has been acrimonious debate in this House and in other places on the actions taken by the DRC. It is vital that this Assembly continue to be represented by one of its members on any such instrumentality which the federal government may set up in the future.

I ask the Majority Party to reconsider. Given another disaster, given

another decision by any Australian government to constitute some other body, is it not a matter of the highest principle that we should have representation by one of our members? The Assembly representative on the DRC is in a position to answer questions without notice and to confer with such members of this Assembly as he thinks fit. Members will be aware that many of the questions put to the DRC cut across party-political lines. It is of the utmost importance that the executive member with responsibility in that area should represent us on the DRC. If the Majority Party persists in refusing to have one of its executive members on that commission, I will vote for another member of this House to so represent us. I feel it is a principle of the utmost importance: the representative must be a sitting member of this Assembly and no one else. If we say there are other qualified people in the community, I have no quarrel with that; there are probably hundreds of such people. The former member for Fannie Bay happens to be one of those hundreds. But past service is no substitute for a sitting member of this House taking his proper place in the DRC. Even if he is only to be there for one more week, I want this Assembly represented by a sitting member. If the DRC lasts three months, it will be taking important decisions. It is handling the taxpayers' money. I think it is improper and astounding of the Country Liberal Party to put this proposition to us because it fought, along with other members of this Assembly in its early days, to ensure a proper representation. Now it is giving it all away and, according to this statement, saying that it will only be for a little while. I have no quarrel with the part of the statement that says Mr Tambling has well served the Assembly and the people of Darwin during the term of his membership of the commission. I accept that. However, he no longer has the right to sit as the Assembly's representative. I firmly believe that only a sitting member has that right. I sincerely urge the Majority Party to reconsider and to appoint as the Assembly's representative on the DRC the Executive Member for Finance and Planning.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): Once again we have seen that all too characteristic political hypocrisy from the other side. I might remind honourable members that it was the Majority Party in the previous Legislative Assembly which fought tooth and nail against the federal Labor government to have any sort of representation of Territory people on the DRC. They were hellbent on denying us that. The fact that we had an Assembly representative at all was totally a result of our fighting for it. I might also remind the Opposition Leader, if he is harping upon representation, what his own Dr Patterson did when he was Minister for the Northern Territory in respect of the Darwin Citizens Council. He appointed them without any reference to this Assembly and without any reference to anyone else except his own colleagues and his own department. Let us not have this humbug.

The honourable member for Nightcliff says that she disagrees with us on this decision concerning the Darwin Reconstruction Commission appointment. In respect of this particular matter, she has never agreed with anything we have done or anything the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has done, if she could find some political mileage in disagreeing with it.

Mrs Lawrie: What a lot of rot!

Mr ROBERTSON: Unlike our opponents, this side of the House is interested in efficiency and common sense and it would be an utter denial of basic common sense to appoint anyone else to that Darwin Reconstruction Commission, particularly someone from the other side of the House, when the commission has three months to go and is purely in a wind-down period. It would take at least six months to get a basic understanding of what the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is all about. As far as I am concerned, the whole thing is a bit of grandstanding.

Motion agreed to.

AUDIT OF NORTHERN TERRITORY ACCOUNTS

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): Honourable members will recall that, earlier this year, the Assembly passed supply bills which determined the distribution of funds among units of administration transferred from the Commonwealth on 1 January 1977. At this sittings, appropriation legislation has now been introduced to determine the patterns of expenditure within those units of administration for the current financial year. The audit of Northern Territory accounts has always been carried out by the Commonwealth Auditor-General. They formed part of the Commonwealth accounts and the Commonwealth Auditor-General has a statutory responsibility to audit these accounts and report on them to the Commonwealth parliament.

As part of the developing self-government of the Northern Territory, it will be necessary to establish a treasury and an office of auditor-general for the Northern Territory. Until this office is established, some arrangements for auditing Territory accounts and for reporting on that audit to this Assembly must be made. The Commonwealth Auditor-General agreed to audit the accounts of the Northern Territory executive for the 1977-78 financial year. As part of his statutory responsibility, the Auditor-General must report to the Commonwealth parliament. However, he has agreed to include an explanatory summary of the position with the Territory accounts, with details of allocations and expenditure in accordance with Assembly legislative provisions and to send a copy of his report, including the report on Territory accounts, to the Speaker of this Assembly so that it may be tabled and debated here. I am sure all members will appreciate the cooperation offered by the Commonwealth Auditor-General in this matter. We all look forward to the day when a Territory auditor-general is able to provide this service but the cooperation of the Commonwealth Auditor-General will ensure effective oversight of the Territory finances in the interim.

REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO
LOTTERY AND GAMING ORDINANCE

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): I move that the report of the inquiry into the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance tabled in the Assembly on 12 July be noted.

I would like to point out to honourable members the background behind the inquiry by Mr Neilson. In 1975, the Majority Party recognised the problems that inadequate legislation was causing in the lottery and gaming industry in the Northern Territory. It made a move at that time to have a commission to investigate all aspects of lottery and gaming with particular reference to the racing industry. By virtue of the fact that we were still in the hands of our federal colleagues, 18 months was lost before the appointment was finally arranged. In January 1977, Mr A.R. Neilson from Tasmania was appointed as the commissioner. To his credit, Mr Neilson acted very quickly to bring his report before the House. It took him three months of inquiry and several months of writing. He travelled widely throughout the Northern Territory and he spoke to many hundreds of people on all aspects of gaming. He took evidence from 40 to 50 persons and organisations. He has looked at as many aspects of the gaming, lottery and racing industry in the Northern Territory as possible.

In my opening remarks, I would like to bring to members' attention some of the points Mr Neilson has raised. There are two comments made by Mr Neilson relating to unlawful games and whether betting and gambling is or is not ethical and a moral wrong. I believe this is a personal judgment for all people. In referring to unlawful games, while it may be lawful to play a game where there is no money attached, immediately money becomes attached to it and there is a wager involved, it becomes unlawful. I find that hard to rationalise myself. Whether gambling is or is not unethical, as far as I am concerned, is purely a matter for the individual. Given the fact that, while gambling has always been with society

and while governments today are expected to pick up the human problems that are caused in many instances by excessive gambling, there is no doubt that governments have an involvement and a responsibility in gambling. Mr Neilson points out that one of the essential requirements of government is that it be aware at all times of the volume of gambling and of any change in gambling habits which are often a reflection of community attitudes. The Northern Territory would be a very fertile area in which to make such an assessment because I believe there would be more gambling in the Northern Territory on a per capita basis, that is not acknowledged or recognised in any way, than probably anywhere else in Australia. On top of that, we have in the Northern Territory a system of off-course SP bookmaking that does not exist anywhere else in Australia at this time and one that Mr Neilson brings into question later in the report.

We have had for many years provision in the ordinance to enable bingo to be a form of gambling and Mr Neilson says he believes that bingo should be legalised and that it has a very rightful place in the fund-raising functions of various sporting bodies and organisations. I agree and I would seek from honourable members on both sides of the House their attitudes towards controls on bingo in relation to its profitability. It has been assessed by Mr Neilson that there should be a control that would enable bingo to be profitable at all times which may mean putting a limit on the sorts of prizes and the number of games. To carry that to one further extension, he is perhaps suggesting that only certain organisations that can well utilise the funds they raise should be able to put the game of bingo to use for club fund raising. A dart club that has no travel expense and plays in a very limited area with very low-cost materials would not need the same level of funding for its organisation as perhaps an Australian rules football team that needed funds to equip itself and play interstate. However, I cannot see any reason why one organisation or another should be disadvantaged simply because it has a better fund-raising capacity

and I would seek the comments of honourable members on this point,

In relation to lotteries, Mr Neilson points out that there is already in existence a Northern Territory Lotteries Ordinance which was passed by this House in 1972 and has never been assented to. I have no knowledge at all why the original ordinance was not assented to. However, I do believe that, in view of the great number of interstate lottery tickets that are sold in the Northern Territory, we have perhaps reached a period in our development when a recognised lottery of some repute should be established in the Territory which would be of benefit to Territorians generally, rather than having our funds channelled out of the Territory to Tattersalls and hospital art unions that are run in other states. Mr Neilson suggests that there should be a 30% duty on such a lottery. That seems to be particularly high and I would again look for comments from the other members of the House on this point. Mr Neilson seems to doubt that any entrepreneur could run a lottery in the Northern Territory and make money out of it. He should be able to, I would encourage this as I believe it will be some time before a Northern Territory state government is in a position to be able to organise a lottery of that size.

He also goes on to say that the statute should not, in his view, require any specific permit or authorisation to conduct a raffle in the case where the value of the article or articles to be raffled does not exceed \$500. I think that is a very relevant point as we have passed the time when a ticket of 20 cents can be purchased for a lottery or a chook wheel or whatever. There were days when we had an absolute proliferation of 20 cent lotteries going on but I would think that, by the time we have a lotteries commission, there will be no such thing; they will be 50 cent tickets. I cannot see the point in going through all the red tape to license such lotteries, particularly as the groups organising them are generally clubs who are out to help themselves and promote their own interests throughout the community.

Mr Neilson reflects on the beer tickets that are sold through machines and various licensed outlets in the Northern Territory and he again assumes that the amount of revenue derived may exceed the reasonable needs of any organisation. I would appreciate having the attitude of members generally to those beer ticket machines. I have only become acquainted with them in the last six to eight months; I had never seen them before that. They seem to me to do a roaring trade and I wonder whether people or organisations who run these things for their own benefit should be taxed out of existence or whether we should continue to encourage them.

Mr Neilson questions the situation where the police do not have a direct right to bring legal action in cases which arise in contravention of the law; in fact, in the present ordinance, the police have to get the permission of the Administrator. I think all members of the House would agree that this is an unsatisfactory situation but one that has flowed from the earlier legislation which was drawn up in 1966.

Mr Neilson also reflects that various aspects relating to unlawful games should be contained in an ordinance rather than in regulations. We have a great proliferation of games, lotteries etc coming in and out of fashion. They are rather like marbles and yo-yos; I think they appeal to the fancy of the general public from time to time. I cannot see the point in putting these things into the ordinances; they can be dealt with in regulations.

Mr Neilson devotes some eight pages of his report to the consideration of poker machines. I am not a fan of poker machines at all. In fact, I think they have done a lot more harm to society than they will ever do good. However, I believe that in most states before very long they will be a fact of life. I would be quite happy to see poker machines recognised in a proper place of gaming, if there is to be such a thing in the Northern Territory, but I personally would not be in favour of the admission of poker machines ad nauseum to every club in the Northern Territory, to enable the clubs to over-

come their financial difficulties. It may well be that the clubs will overcome their financial difficulties and it may well be that the social habit they leave behind is much worse than the benefit. The report reflects greatly on the amount of money that is channelled through poker machines and I think that members will find it interesting that Mr Neilson claims, since the inception of poker machines in New South Wales, some \$5 billion have been channelled through them, with great benefits going to many people. I have no grounds at all for arguing with that. I think it is probably very true, but I wonder how society can afford it.

The report outlines the relevance of casinos in today's society and whether in fact the Northern Territory could or should have a casino, particularly in relation to tourism. Mr Neilson refers to the review of the National Commission on Gambling which warns against the promotion of casino gambling as a tourism stimulant where there is no pre-existing demand for this type of thing. The commission emphasises that it does not view with favour the potential effect of casinos on the resident population even in resort areas. The possible benefits that could accrue to local economies might well be offset by social costs to the communities. There is no reference there to the fact that the state from which Mr Neilson comes, Tasmania, has built a casino as a part of its tourist industry and it complements its tourist industry very well. I believe that, in view of all the gaming that goes on in the Northern Territory, we would do well to look at the possibility of casinos being introduced here. Perhaps members from outlying areas might care to contribute some opinions about the establishment of casinos in the more remote areas.

It is possible, according to Mr Neilson, that the ordinance could provide that, notwithstanding these provisions, the authority recommended in this report could issue a permit for specified games to be played in locations approved by that authority. I think he is referring here to the illegal game of two-up, which is played regularly on Anzac Day every year. He

recommends that there should be a method by which the police can license such games from time to time, to fit in with social custom. I believe it is about time we had a broader outlook and adopted such an approach.

The report also makes reference to slot machines, cascade machines and other machines of this nature. I would also refer to the proliferation of pin-ball machines that we have throughout the community at 20 cents a throw and wonder whether some of these should not come within the control of the gambling legislation.

The report covers very comprehensively the place of the racing industry in society and in the Northern Territory. It first reflects on whether the racing industry is a sport or an industry. I believe it is many things to many people but, to me, it is both a sport and an industry. As a sport, it has a great deal of attraction for many people, both for the punting and interest in horses themselves and, as an industry, it provides a very important outlet for people interested in breeding to be able to improve their blood lines and race the horses. The racing industry in the Northern Territory has, I believe, a great need for more funding and this must come from the implementation of a tax in the industry so that it can continue to flourish.

Mr Neilson refers in depth - and I will not elaborate on it here - to the dog racing industry that has evolved in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, the dog racing industry has not yet received a great deal of encouragement from government or other authorities and has grown rather like topsy, almost by default. I believe it is an industry that plays an important part in the racing and gambling areas in other states and one that we should encourage as an integral part of our racing scene, rather than as an opposition to horse racing. It seems to me that the horse racing industry looks on dog racing the way it looks on quarter horse racing; it is not very favourably accepted.

Mr Neilson deals in some detail with aspects of the bookmaking system in the Northern Territory, some which are not quite desirable. I refer here to the fact that bookmakers take in partners on their licence, that they appear to make and control the rules to suit their own ends within the Northern Territory, that they are not properly controlled in the Northern Territory - and probably there is little argument with this. For the benefit of honourable members, I would just like to point out some of the history behind the off-course SP betting system that we have in the Northern Territory. Our original gaming ordinance was conceived in 1940. Over many years, it worked satisfactorily and, in the late 1950s, it became a source of social discontent in that, while people living next to race tracks could punt on any horse at the race track or interstate at the weekends, people living in isolated areas could not. As a result, we saw illegal SP operations in the smaller towns of the Territory. In the town that I come from, there was a great deal of discontent about the fact that people could not bet and an underground operation thrived. After a bill was introduced into the then Council three times, the government finally assented to it.

Because of the control that Canberra kept on the situation, we have in the legislation some unfortunate things to which Mr Neilson has referred. The situation whereby the Administrator or now the Executive Member can overrule the decision of the board in relation to a licence or an appeal results from the fact that, when the legislation was drawn up, the government kept control over the board by maintaining the powers of the Administrator over the board. On January 1 this year, we changed all the legislation and took out the word "Administrator" and put in "Executive Member". We now have a situation where the executive member has control over the board. I do not believe this is desirable. I believe the decision of the board in relation to granting and cancelling licences should be final. It is something that should be cleaned up in the new ordinance.

The formula that has been set for the granting of licences is not satisfactory. It is done on a per capita basis and it virtually means that every time 4000 or 5000 school children start school we have the grounds on which to grant another licence. I do not feel that is a proper basis for this. I believe the granting of a licence should be based on the number of wage earners in the community and the turnover that the bookmakers could attract. Mr Neilson also alludes pretty thoroughly to bookmaker partnerships and I would appreciate the comments of members on this particular aspect. Mr Neilson puts up a long and perhaps well-based case for the varying of the system. He says that the present system of off-course betting exists primarily to act as a link for either unlawful or undesirable betting interests elsewhere in Australia. He is referring to the fact that our bookmakers in the Northern Territory take quite a lot of the hot money from the states that should be going through the TABs there. I cannot see any fault in operating as a brokerage for hot punting money but I would be influenced by other members of the House if they could put up a good reason.

In Mr Neilson's opinion, the present system of off-course betting is so orientated to handling money which emanates from the sources referred to in a previous section of the report that reason enough exists in that fact alone to warrant substitution of the existing system by an off-course totalisator system. I think that is a pretty strong statement and I would seek the response of other members to it. I do not believe that, because we do a very good business in interstate punting, we should walk away from it because it upsets the TAB agencies in other states.

He also says that the number of bookmakers will have to be drastically reduced and those registered in Darwin and Alice Springs should be required to close their premises on race days and field at race meetings held on courses in those areas. In the early days, the legalising of off-course bookmakers was designed so that people who were not living anywhere near a race-course

could have a bet in a bookmaker's shop. It started in the smaller centres and then spread to the larger ones by default. Perhaps Mr Neilson has a very good point there.

He goes on to say that, if it is assumed that some \$51m is turned over in the Northern Territory, some \$21m is southern money. Throughout his statement, Mr Neilson goes on at length about the amount of money that may be moving around our bookmaking circuit. I think there seems to be a great deal of guesswork about just exactly what is going on in the bookmaking market. I believe there are methods of taking a more strict control over the whole scene to find out exactly what goes on.

However, I feel we should look very deeply into the question of controlling bookmaking as we know it or introducing TAB, because neither system will be perfect in its application. Even if we instituted TAB in the Northern Territory, the cost of establishing it would be great and we would automatically disqualify, in short term, several centres that could not come within the TAB circuit because of telecommunication disadvantages. In my submission to Mr Neilson, I asked whether he could give us some details on exactly what it would cost to set up TAB in the Northern Territory, given the fact that we have only a 100,000 people spread out over half a million square miles with a 1400-mile chain of communication and whether we could relate this in fact to the return that might come from the TAB. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any reference to these questions in his report. Before making a decision on TAB, we must make a very careful analysis of what is involved in setting up TAB in the Northern Territory as opposed to taking a firm control over the existing bookmaking situation.

I believe that Mr Neilson has given us an important report. I hope honourable members will look at it and contribute their ideas on any aspect of the lottery and gaming scene in the Northern Territory so that these contributions can be taken into consideration during formulation of the next move.

Debate adjourned.

DAYLIGHT SAVING

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I table a statement on daylight saving and move that it be noted.

I seek leave to have it incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Honourable members may be aware that the then government of the day introduced into the former Legislative Council on 18 August 1971 a bill seeking to introduce into the Northern Territory the system of what is known as "Daylight Saving". The records indicate that that bill was handsomely defeated and that the matter has, until today, not again been mentioned in this place.

The attitude of the Majority Party is not to immediately introduce legislation into the Assembly, but rather to seek an indication of the wish of its members in this regard. At the conclusion of the debate which will follow from a motion to note this statement, I would hope to see a member of the Assembly, by leave, move a definite motion in order that a final resolution of will might be known to the Assembly's Executive.

The question of the desirability or otherwise of the Northern Territory joining together with the greater part of Australia and accepting the principle of daylight saving is quite a serious matter indeed. It is not a trivial matter and I would hope that honourable members recognise its seriousness and contribute to this discussion.

The implementation of daylight saving would affect the daily lives of every person in the Northern Territory. Its rejection will continue to perpetrate upon a significant although not overwhelming proportion of Territory people the communications disability with which they now live every summer.

The disability to which I refer is of course most pronounced in Alice Springs with its daily business dealings with South Australia, its major commerce partner. Continuation of our reluctance to join in with the southern states would perpetuate an annual time shift such that Alice Springs business and professional firms would commence work an hour after, and close an hour after, their contacts in South Australia. The present concurrent lunch hours will also be forced out of kilter. The net result is, in theory, a loss of three hours of valuable communication time.

It might be argued that the answer for Alice Springs people is one of internal administration. But of course if they adjust their own hours unilaterally to match up with their southern compatriots then they would have solved one difficulty only to create another vis-a-vis the rest of the Northern Territory with whom they must also deal.

The principal objection to daylight saving must surely be that, in areas of low latitude such as Darwin, there is no actual daylight saving at all in real terms.

The Department of Transport Flight Service Division have been kind enough to provide me with sample first and last light projections for this summer.

For the purposes of examining the impact on the community of daylight saving I do not believe we need be too concerned with the actual time of last light. Clearly the system would result in more usable light than is the case with normal Central Standard Time. The tin of worms is created by the compression of the light time span between rising in the morning and commencing work. Indeed in the case of a city like Darwin with its low latitude we may well find that during the daylight saving period, the majority of residents will be rising while it is still dark and may well indeed be driving to work while it is still dark. The resultant traffic problems on, say, Bagot Road would be all too obvious.

For the information of honourable members, first light in Darwin will occur at 6.08 am on 1 October, 5.48 am on 1 December and 6.20 am on 1 February next year. That is at about 7 am under a system of daylight saving.

Honourable members will be well aware that there is considerable external pressure being applied to the Territory to come into line with the greater part of Australia's population.

I daresay the federal government would be anxious to see it come into line as I suppose might well the airlines have valid reasons for so wishing.

The stand we must take here in the Territory is that, whenever possible, we must decide what is in the best interest of the Territory and what is the wish of its people.

For that reason, I would not be pressing honourable members for their final decisions on this matter if they wish to return to their electorates for consultation. I do not believe we could introduce the system in good time this year anyway.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I anticipate that a member of the Opposition may wish to speak at this stage so I will not elaborate further on the statement. I will be very interested to hear what honourable members have to say today and at the next sittings of the Assembly. Depending on which way the mood of the House goes, we will probably see a substantive motion at that time.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): I wish to speak on the matter of daylight saving on behalf of the Opposition. The Opposition is opposed to the introduction of daylight saving in the Northern Territory. We also believe it is a minor matter which does not need to be considered at length now or later by this Assembly. I am surprised that the Executive Member for Community and Social Development should believe that members need to consult with their electorates

on this matter before proceeding to debate. Judging by our business today of which he is the manager, he does not think we need to refer back to our electors to proceed with debate on a matter of such importance as constitutional development. Perhaps, like his political colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, he believes that ordinary citizens should not make judgments on issues as complex as uranium, for example. This was stated by the Deputy Prime Minister earlier this week. I trust the honourable member does not intend to insult the intelligence of our electors by suggesting that we should discuss minor matters such as daylight saving with them but not important ones such as constitutional development and uranium.

The fact is that there has been little interest expressed by the public in the introduction of daylight saving. In most parts of the Northern Territory we achieve naturally the same benefits which other places introduced daylight saving to achieve. This results from our late sunrise due to the fact that the meridian on which our time is fixed runs some miles east of Mt Isa. Also, at least in the Top End, the early start for the working day is traditional in our public offices, schools, the construction industry and many other areas of work. I commend this practice to the business houses of Alice Springs, as a means of achieving the benefits of daylight saving as well as concurrence with the business hours in Darwin and South Australia in summer.

It is true that in the summer months we are out of step with some southern states, as the honourable member suggested in his tabled statement. This is something we simply have to learn to live with. Because of its size, there will always be time differences between one area of Australia and another. It is significant that the two states which most resemble the Northern Territory in climate have rejected daylight saving. Those few rarefield people who spend their days talking by STD to Adelaide or Sydney or Canberra may well be inconvenienced if we do not introduce daylight saving. However, if we do introduce it, we will be inconven-

encing the large numbers of ordinary citizens who, in order to get themselves to work and their children to school, may be forced to arise in the dark. Perhaps that is what this motion is all about - the last desperate attempt to turn on the lights.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Daylight saving is a manipulation of the clock to make people get up earlier in the morning. It does not in the slightest change the passage of the sun each day from east to west. The amount of daylight each day depends on the time the sun rises and sets and also on the amount of twilight prior to sunrise and after sunset. These are both affected by two factors: the time of year and the latitude we live in. Of the two factors, it is the variation of total daylight brought about by changes in latitude that we need to examine. I have been fortunate to obtain some figures on daylight hours from a flight manual put out by the Department of Transport for the use of pilots. These charts are accurate and must be used by pilots if they do not want to be in breach of air traffic regulations. In these tables, it can be seen that in mid-December daylight starts in Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra at 4.10 in the morning and ends at 7.50 in the evening. When we look at Darwin at the same time of the year, we find that daylight starts at 5.05 in the morning and ends at 6.50 in the evening. Certainly, from the figures, it is obvious that in Sydney there is light an hour earlier in the morning that can be moved to the end of the day. Looking at the Darwin figures, it would appear also that some saving could be made by changing the clock, although there would be no doubt more than a few grumbles by people having to get up and dress in the dark instead of being awakened by the sun shining through the window.

Let us now take this a step further because we must not forget that, if summer time is introduced, it is for a set period of time. I think it changes back in March. Let us look at the situation in mid-February. In Sydney and Canberra first light is 5.05 and last light is 7.25; in Darwin, first light is 5.37 and last light is 6.52 in

the evening, I think you can see that, if daylight saving were introduced at this time of the year in the Territory, there would be many people not only getting up in the dark but also driving to work in the dark. Let me emphasise again that the figures I have given are for the very first light that appears and not sunrise or sunset because at these times it is already broad daylight. I have taken account of twilight times.

Up to now all the times I have quoted are the local mean times, the actual time for the longitude of the place. As we need to know what this time is in central standard time, we must make adjustment because central standard time is based on the 140° 30' meridian which lies to the east of Adelaide and completely outside the Northern Territory and South Australia; it is near Broken Hill in New South Wales. The longitude for Darwin is about 130° so there is a time difference here already of 10° 30', or in actual time about 42 minutes. By using central standard time we already have inbuilt into our system three quarters of an hour of daylight saving.

To put the times I originally gave into central standard time: in December, first light in Darwin is now 5.50 and daylight saving would make this 6.50 in the morning; in February, first light is 6.20 so daylight saving would make first light nearly 7.30 with sunrise at 8.00 am. To me, it is obvious that there is little or no daylight to save in these latitudes and it would be ridiculous to introduce it here. Getting up in the dark and driving to work in the dark would probably be tolerated but, at the other end of the day, when we wait impatiently for the sun to go down and the heat to go out of the day, it would make life up here that much harder. Many of our social activities are timed for the cool of the evening and to adopt daylight saving for this area would be turning our face from reality. It is a system of time adjustment eminently suited for higher latitudes but of no earthly use to us living near the equator and will bring absolutely no benefits whatsoever.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, the tendencies to levity are almost irresistible in a debate of this nature. The honourable member for Tiwi said that daylight saving would make life that much harder. Well, I guess she has not heard that it was not meant to be easy.

The only way to see if daylight saving in the Territory would be advantageous or disadvantageous is to try it for one season and then, if you like, have a mini-poll or mini-referendum. Talking about it beforehand will just mean that you are going to have 50% of the people saying it is tremendous and 50% of the people saying it will fade the wallpaper and it is no good.

I was glad the honourable member who has charge of government business in the House said there is likely to be a substantive motion at the next session of the Assembly. Mr Speaker, one would assume that before bringing in a motion to actually introduce daylight saving, a member of the majority executive would consult with all the states of Australia to see what they are going to do in the coming season, maybe not this one but the following year. Because I do think it is important that, if the majority of Australians are going to have daylight saving, we should know about it and with that knowledge decide whether, because of some local convenience or inconvenience, we will go along with it.

At the moment my whole inclination is to say for God's sake let us try it once. That is what Queensland did. Certainly following that they voted against it but it was an informed vote. People said no, we do not like it. It has never been tried up here and good luck to the honourable member for Gillen for having the temerity to raise the subject. Now, Mr Speaker, if he is going to put up a motion that it be tried for one season I would vote for it. If he is not going to, why raise it in the first place? It is becoming clear that the Opposition are not in favour and it has been said in this paper that the Majority Party treated it as a free vote. Well, I will wait for the substantive motion to come forward.

Debate adjourned.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE - UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from the honourable member for Millner, the Opposition Leader, a letter proposing for discussion, in accordance with standing order 81, a definite matter of public importance, namely, the high unemployment rate in the Northern Territory. Is this proposal supported? The proposal is supported, I call the Opposition Leader.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the high unemployment rate in the Northern Territory gives very great concern to the Opposition. Apparently our colleagues opposite do not share this great concern. I suggest to them that they adopt that stance at their peril.

The high level of unemployment brought about by the federal government's lunatic economic policies towards the Territory is worrying everybody in the Northern Territory: the unemployed who see no job in sight and those who are employed but nervously await the decisions of their small-business employers. The South Australian election and to a lesser extent the Northern Territory election recently fought were fought on the issue of unemployment. The result in the South Australian election was a 6% swing to the Australian Labor Party; our own election has brought a 12% swing to the Labor Party.

The Majority Party in the last Assembly was eager to escape the problems posed by unemployment. Their tactic was to wish it away. I refer the House in particular to the comments of the then Executive Member for Education and Planning. Isn't it marvellous how one's own words keep coming back to one? I wonder if he can come out with the same sort of information today that he presented then. I refer honourable members to page 106 of Hansard No. 17 of the First Legislative Assembly and to the answer to a question he gave the then member for Gillen, question No. 2200 mentioned in Hansard No. 20 of the

First Assembly. I only hope that, as a potential treasurer, the member shows more humanity than displayed on that occasion. He may well be, in the terms of his former leader, the most improved player but heaven help the Majority Party if he is also in the running for the best and fairest award.

Mr Speaker, I turn to the statement made by the then honourable executive member in the adjournment debate of Tuesday 15 March when commenting on the unemployment figures. He took to task the figures as presented by the Commonwealth Employment Service as not truly reflecting what took place on the unemployment scene. The tenor of the argument he was putting was to down-grade those figures as being bloated figures which did not truly reflect the situation. In one aspect, Mr Speaker, he is correct; it certainly does not reflect the true situation. The Commonwealth Employment Service figures, in my submission and in the submission of other members of the party who will be speaking on the matter, severely understate the actual unemployment rate in the Northern Territory.

Let us look at the arguments which the then Executive Member for Education and Planning put to this Assembly. He said the figures were bloated because we had so many seasonal workers. He mentioned people like cane cutters. There are few of those around the Northern Territory, I suspect. He also mentioned meatworkers who only work for a short season but earn such a terrific amount of money. The only meatworkers who are out of work at the moment are those meatworkers who were rudely terminated at the MacArthur River meatworks. The point, of course, is that the figures show a trend and it is that trend which alarms the Opposition and causes us to bring up this matter of public importance for discussion. The executive member talked about people who may have registered one day and then found work the next day. Of course, that is not the point; those figures will take up in the next month. What I want to give to the House is the trends which are evidenced by the Commonwealth Employment Service figures.

The third area the executive member spoke about is the most insulting area. He referred to Aboriginal unemployment. He attempted to sweep Aboriginal unemployment under the carpet. That cannot be done. That should not be done. My deputy and also the member for Victoria River will be speaking, if they have time, in this debate on the matter of Aboriginal unemployment. But I can say this, that in some cases Aboriginals have been subjected to far more stringent tests to get an unemployment benefit than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

The other people that the executive member spoke about were married women. I am not quite sure whether he was suggesting that married women should not be in the workforce, but it is true that women do work and for a number of reasons - I suspect for the same reasons that other people wish to work. One is that some people like to work, and for that reason they ought to work. Some people are forced to work through their own domestic circumstances, and for that reason they ought to be able to work. There is no moral reason for women to be left off the figures supplied by the employment service. The fact is that because married women are ineligible to receive unemployment benefits, it does in some sense stop them from registering for employment. I have heard this said and I have met people who have told me this - they have their own experience - that they do not go to the employment service and register as unemployed because they know they are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits. The Majority Party is out of step with the whole of Australia in its attitude to unemployment.

Let us look at the position in the Northern Territory as the trends show. At this stage in August 1977 we have a staggering 4,002 people out of work in the Northern Territory. It is seasonally worse this year than it was last year. For the benefit of honourable members, I have a table which shows the adjustment of unemployment figures taken from the monthly digest of short-term economic indicators provided by the Department of Northern Territory. I have shown it to the Acting

Clerk and to the manager of government business, and I seek leave to have the document tabled and incorporated in Hansard.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES

Taken from monthly digest of Short-term Economic Indicators.

	1976	1977	Difference
January	1847	2452	+ 605
February	2292	2849	+ 557
March	2606	3504	+ 898
April	2293	3629	+ 1336
May	1834	3445	+ 1611
June	1738	3692	+ 1954
July	2067	3944	+ 1877
August	2150	4002	+ 1852

Honourable members will see from the document that at this time last year there were 2150 people out of work. There are now 4002 people out of work. This time last year there were 469 unfilled vacancies. Now there are 241 unfilled vacancies. The trend in this document shows that unemployment is getting worse and will get a lot worse. Figures traditionally increase at this time of the year. In August 1977 the employment service figures show there was an unemployment rate of 9.8% of the workforce in the Northern Territory, compared to an Australia-wide figure in August of 5.3%. In July 1976 4.4% of the Northern Territory workforce was out of work and the Australian figure was 4.4% also. In other words, although the situation Australia-wide has certainly got worse, the situation in the Northern Territory ...

Mr Robertson: When was that - what year?

Mr ISAACS: In July 1976, 4.4% of the Northern Territory workforce was out of work and 4.4% Australia-wide. In 1977 there are 9.8% of the workforce out of work, compared to an Australia-wide percentage of 5.3%. You cannot get away from those figures. If you doubt that the figures, the raw data, are correct, that is one thing; but one cannot run away from the trends indicated in the employment service figures.

It is not just the opposition party in the Northern Territory which finds unemployment a serious matter, reflecting on the dignity of people who desire to be in work. It is also the very great concern of people right around Australia of all political hues. It is so serious, Mr Speaker, that during the election campaign there was a meeting of all six state premiers who came to common agreement - I suppose it must be a record in the history of such meetings of state premiers - but all six state premiers, Labor and Liberal alike, urged the federal government to make a grant of \$200m to be given to the states for special works projects for the various states to alleviate the problem of unemployment - to give a boost to small industry and small businesses. Indeed some of the states went so far as to agree to put up a certain amount of money of their own to match federal government money. The Victorian government was one - a government not of the same political hue as the Opposition, more akin to the Majority Party - who said to the federal government: "We will put up \$2m if you will put up \$7m to assist the great unemployment problems which we have." But their problem is nowhere near the sort of problem that we have here in the Northern Territory.

When I made a similar request during the election campaign, it was brushed aside. It was pooh-poohed by the Majority Party as mere electioneering. Well, the election is over and I very earnestly and seriously put to the Majority Party that they consider the unemployed people and those people who are employed but may be worried about their jobs, because there is no doubt that unemployment is getting worse. Those figures show there is widespread unemployment throughout the Northern Territory and it is getting worse. I make a genuine and earnest request of the Majority Party to seek funds from the federal government to alleviate the problems which are being caused. It is causing great hardships to people who have been working in all the industries which have provided the great backbone for the Northern Territory: the pastoral industry which you, Mr

Speaker, know so well; the building and construction industry - all these are running down, and the documents supplied by the Department of the Northern Territory on economic indicators show this run-down in activity. It is bringing about a very serious problem here in the Northern Territory.

Now without pre-empting the uranium debate which we will have tomorrow, there is no doubt that uranium mining will do little to bring down the unemployment rate of the Northern Territory. The joint ventures in the Ranger proposal are seeking their employees from interstate. This is a pattern of mining establishments all over the Northern Territory except, of course, in the area of Tennant Creek, in the electorate of Barkly, where the tradition has always been to employ people coming through. But whatever the indirect effect of uranium mining on employment if they do go ahead, it will do nothing to ease the problems of unemployment we face now.

I urge people to consider the indignity of a person thrown out of work, and the suffering and insecurity which people face when they see their own employers totting up the sorts of costs which they have to accept and whether or not they can pass them on or whether or not they have got to go out of business. I put it to the Majority Party that the matter is serious; it is far more serious here than in the states. The states have seen fit to go to the Australian government seeking special money to finance certain programs such as the RED scheme. As a result of this debate whereby people will realise what a serious problem it is, the Majority Party might go to the Australian government with a plea similar to the states.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): The Majority Party is concerned with unemployment in the Northern Territory; we always have been and we continue to be. It is worthwhile to look at some of the causes of unemployment as it exists on the Australian and the Territory scene at the moment. I think the high rate of unemployment is a direct result of the high rate of inflation. It is

well known what sparked off inflation in Australia which, until 1972, was running at a fairly low rate. The big kick that caused inflation to run at terribly high levels was the massive unnatural wage rises given by the then Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, in his first year in office, to the Australian Public Service, which sparked off further rounds of high wage increases right around the country. If he could do it again, Mr Whitlam might take it a bit more gently. The Fraser government has to deal successfully with inflation before it has a hope of dealing with unemployment.

The cure suggested by the Opposition Leader is more public spending. I do not believe that that is the cure. As my authority for this, I cite the essay "The Failure of Social Democracy" by Peter Jay. Peter Jay is the son-in-law of the British Labor Prime Minister, "Sonny" Jim Callaghan. Peter Jay is the British ambassador in Washington and he is an expert on economic affairs. He says that "increasing public spending in the hope of curing unemployment will just keep inflation spiralling." Anyway, where is the money to come from in the public sector when we have a federal deficit of \$3 billion?

However, there is a light on the horizon which I hope will do much to cure unemployment in the Territory. We know the pastoral industry cannot do much to soak up unemployment and the public sector can be expanded very little. The transport industry, another large industry in the Territory, probably cannot take up any of the slack. Perhaps additional spending on defence in the Northern Territory by the basing here of an army task force or more RAAF planes could do something by the multiplier effect to create more employment but that would probably be limited to Darwin and Katherine only. However, the light on the horizon is the decision to establish the Kakadu National Park which should significantly boost tourism in the Top End and the Territory generally. It will be of interest to overseas tourists and it will give employment to Aboriginal people in the area as well as to other Australians. Of course, every dollar spent directly by a tourist is worth three dollars to the local economy.

Our unemployment statistics indicate that about 4,000 people are registered as unemployed in the Territory at the moment and the decision to develop uranium resources will immediately commence to soak up some of these unemployed even if, as the Opposition Leader says, some people are being recruited in the south. They cannot all be recruited in the south and anyway the construction phase of the uranium mining establishment will give a tremendous amount of work to local construction firms and the like. Certainly, I think the Territory, over the next two to three years, can look to almost full employment if there is not too great an influx of people from outside the Territory looking for work. I know the Australian Workers' Union supports the government's decision to mine and mill uranium; I think that union can see its members' real interests. I wonder whether honourable members opposite are prepared to support the decision. Do they want jobs created for Territorians or do they want the Territory to stagnate? My party's attitude is well known; the attitude of their party is clouded in obscurity. I wonder whether I might ask them to come clean.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I endorse the statement by the Opposition Leader concerning the high rate of unemployment in the Northern Territory. As an Aboriginal Australian in this Legislative Assembly, I would like to direct your attention towards the high rate of unemployment that exists amongst Aboriginal people here and in Australia at large. I believe it is a scandal of national proportion. It is a disgrace that the Fraser government and the Majority Party of the Northern Territory has allowed the very high rate of Aboriginal employment to continue without taking any real action to correct the problem.

Let us look at the facts: at the national level, the working party established by the Fraser government to inquire into Aboriginal unemployment problems found, among other things, that at the end of February this year there were up to 12,218 Aboriginal Australians registered as unemployed with the Commonwealth Employment Ser-

vice. This represents up to one-third of the estimated Aboriginal workforce. This is approximately ten times the unemployment rate of Australia as a whole. The working party also found that there were many Aboriginal Australians who are unable to register with the Commonwealth Employment Service. Therefore, it is estimated that the actual level of unemployment in the Aboriginal workforce could be up to 50%. In addition, the working party found that, despite the placement by the Commonwealth Employment Service of up to 6,600 Aboriginals in employment last year, the total registered as unemployed rose up to 1,800 in that period. This rather high rate of unemployment does not reveal the actual impact on Aboriginal Australians. Through its interrelationship with health, housing, education and community development, the high unemployment rate amongst Aboriginal people is undermining progress in Aboriginal affairs in general.

In the Northern Territory, there is a similar situation. The rate of Aboriginal unemployment continues to be rather high. It would appear that this high rate is tolerated by the Majority Party and the federal government. As of 2 September this year, it was found that the total number of Aboriginal Australians in the Northern Territory who were registered as unemployed was up to 1,311. In Darwin, 198 Aboriginals out of a total of 2,456 were registered as unemployed with the Commonwealth Employment Service. In Katherine, 242 Aboriginals were registered as unemployed out of a total of 386. In the Alice Springs area, 871 Aboriginals were registered as unemployed out of a total of 1,160. I put it to the Assembly that it is a disgrace that such a high rate of unemployment among Aboriginals is permitted in the Northern Territory.

It is important to note that the figures I have quoted do not really give a true indication of the rate of Aboriginal unemployment in the Northern Territory. I am sure members will agree that there are many Aboriginal people who are not actually registered as unemployed and who are unable to register because the various depart-

ments responsible have not provided adequate opportunities for Aboriginal people to be able to be registered for their entitlement to unemployment benefits or even to be registered as unemployed.

Like the Opposition Leader, I agree that what is needed in the Northern Territory, particularly in relation to Aboriginal unemployment, is a significant allocation of funds by the federal government in order to correct these problems. We hope the Majority Party will make every endeavour possible to convince the federal government that this kind of action needs to be taken. It is a critical problem in the Northern Territory, not just for Aboriginal people but for all the people.

It is important that, if the Majority Party and the federal government are really interested in doing something about the high unemployment rate amongst Aboriginal people and other Territorians, rather than trying to say the high rate of unemployment among Aboriginals is boosting those figures, they should be thinking about what to do about that problem and not trying to divert attention away from the real issues involved. It is important that they create employment projects which are of benefit to the communities concerned and, in particular, to the Aboriginal communities and that these projects are well based and planned in response to the expressed needs and wishes of Aboriginal groups. It is vital that increased funds be made available to Aboriginal organisations right throughout the Northern Territory in order to provide the employment and training opportunities which are needed.

I believe also that it is up to the federal government and the Majority Party of the Northern Territory to ensure that the government is able to increase the capacity and the ability of Aboriginal groups in order to utilise adequately the NEAT scheme. Unfortunately in the past, although there have been funds available under the NEAT scheme for employment and training projects, an adequate amount of these funds has not been available to Abori-

ginal organisations and communities in order to employ and train Aboriginal people. I believe these are critical issues for Aboriginal people, particularly in the electorate of MacDonnell. Other people right throughout the Northern Territory are also concerned about these things. I would hope that urgent action is taken by the Majority Party to remedy the situation overall.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): Mr Speaker, I can assure honourable members opposite that this party, as has been mentioned by the honourable Majority Leader, is indeed very, very concerned about the high level of unemployment in the Northern Territory. I might make an observation though, in reference to the honourable Opposition Leader's serve at my colleague, the Executive Member for Finance and Planning. What the honourable member for Finance and Planning was getting at, at the time he made his statement in answer to my question - and it would help if the honourable member opposite would have been good enough to indicate what that question really was; the question related to whether the figures were a true indication of the economic position of the Northern Territory, in terms of employment, growth and production. It was not in any way meant to denigrate the plight of people who are unemployed. I think it was quite scurrilous to place such an interpretation on it.

I can also assure the honourable member for MacDonnell that we share his concerns additionally in respect of the Aboriginal people. Their unemployment, their lack of motivation to improve their own lot simply because they cannot find work, I think is one of the greatest things working against that wonderful people. It is all very fine for the Opposition to draw attention to something that the whole community already is fully aware of. If they claim to represent people, to have as their interest the well-being and advancement of the Northern Territory, then we do not need repetitive restating of what is already known. We want constructive alternatives and constructive ideas that are going to produce the goodies.

And those ideas are not to fall back on the old socialist cliché, "let the federal government pay for it." Those days, I am afraid, are gone. What we have to do is get involved in developing this Territory, developing its industries, giving people the motivation to work, getting big government interference out of private enterprise so that employment can be provided for people of all ethnic groups.

Mr VALE (Stuart): I move that the business of the day be called on.

Motion agreed to.

ALICE SPRINGS ADMINISTRATION
REPEAL BILL

(Serial 12)

Continued from 21 September 1977 -

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, this is a simple bill. Its sole purpose is to remove a piece of outdated legislation from the statute book. The ordinance once served a useful purpose in providing for the administration of services in Alice Springs. A similar ordinance existed in Darwin, the Darwin Administration Ordinance. It was repealed after the introduction of local government in Darwin and the provision of rating in adjoining lands. The Alice Springs Administration Ordinance was not repealed immediately after the inception of local government in Alice Springs, because local government did not take over all activities immediately. However local government now operates fully and effectively in Alice Springs and there is no reason why this outdated legislation should remain.

I would foreshadow in the committee stages a formal amendment to correct the title of the bill. The word "ordinance" has been left out and in fact, if we let this go, we will repeal the entire administration of Alice Springs rather than a piece of outdated legislation.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): Mr Speaker, I would like to answer some questions I was asked this morning, if I may take this opportunity to do it.

This morning the honourable member for Stuart asked whether the executive member would review the shortage of dentists in Alice Springs and endeavour to have the waiting period of two years reduced. The advice I have received from the Department of Health is that the implications of the honourable member's questions are not precisely correct. Steps have been taken to fill the dentist vacancies existing at the Alice Springs Dental Clinic. It should also be appreciated that emergency dental treatment is available either immediately or within twenty-four to forty-eight hours; the longer waiting period mentioned relates to elective dentistry.

In the case of school children, routine examinations are proceeding all the time and up to the end of June 1977 the four dental therapists in the Alice Springs area had covered nearly 2,000 of the 3,000 children to be treated. The Department of Health is keen to reduce the waiting period for elective dentistry for adults but this will require a considerable increase in the staff and the provision of additional facilities.

The member for Nhulunbuy asked about the Darwin Dental Clinic and whether it will be replacing the orthodontist who has resigned. I answered - and I will reiterate as the official departmental reply - that the dental service has an establishment of three orthodontists but because of resignations there will be no government orthodontist in the service after 31 October unless the present recruiting efforts in the UK bear fruit. Certainly advertisements in Australia have produced no results. However, plans are in hand to complete

the treatment of the children already receiving orthodontal attention from government clinics. Orthodontics is a very specialist form of dentistry and the manpower available in Australia nowhere near approaches the demand. It will therefore not be possible to provide orthodontists for other than the two main centres.

This morning, Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Nightcliff stated that patients are admitted to the Darwin Hospital without being advised of their right to select a private doctor and asked if I would look into this and see that the Darwin Hospital complies with the requirements in this regard. With great respect to the honourable member, I believe she has been misled. On admission to the Darwin Hospital patients are required to complete and sign a form which is a declaration of their election either to be treated by the hospital or a private doctor. It is, of course, possible that the rule has not been followed in some cases because of the nature of their injuries and I would be glad to have the honourable member provide me with further specific information if she has any.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, this morning at question time I asked the Majority Leader when the trustees of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund last met and when it was likely that they would meet again. He advised that from memory they have not met since June or July but they would be meeting next Tuesday at 4.30 under the chairmanship of the mayor of Darwin, Dr Ella Stack.

Given that information, I wish to remind our representative, the Majority Leader, of the debate which took place on Thursday 5 May when I brought to his attention the fact that the Department of Social Security had terminated benefits being paid to thirty people who were victims of Cyclone Tracy because there was no legislative backing for such payments to continue. It was a decision of Senator Margaret Gilfoyle, the Minister for Social Security, and her cabinet colleagues. At that time I asked if the trustees, knowing this had happened, would make every conceivable effort to contact the thirty people so

affected to see if, in fact, they were in need of assistance from the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund - assistance they had not previously sought because they were in receipt of social security benefits. Tonight I want to remind the Majority Leader of my request, in view of the fact that the trust fund is to meet next Tuesday.

I also publicly advise the Majority Leader, if he does not know, that there are seventeen outstanding requests for assistance to the trust fund which have been forwarded by the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service in Darwin. I know they have made repeated efforts to get some confirmation that the trust will assist. The only information they have to hand is that it will be brought to the notice of the trustees at the next meeting. In a spirit of goodwill, I point out that these seventeen cases must be considered by the trustees, hopefully before the trust is wound up. I am aware of requests made from the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, on behalf of one of their clients, and I am quite happy to show privately these letters to the Majority Leader - the reason I do not publicly read them out is that I think it unnecessary to put in Hansard the names of these people who have requested assistance and have not as yet been able to get any firm undertaking from the trustees.

I am also quite happy to make available to the Majority Leader a letter I have received from a gentleman who, in fact, was one of the thirty people affected by the termination of the benefit under the Social Security Act. He has written several times to the trust fund and he has no idea if his claims will be sympathetically received or not. Now as the trustees have not met since June or July, I can understand why he is still in a quandry. I also acknowledge that the difficulty has in some part been caused by the fact that the Minister for the Northern Territory was to chair the meeting and, of course, the Minister for the Northern Territory is rarely here. His visits are short and swift, and I think it is a pity that he has not been able to convene a meeting of the trustees since June or July. The particular

person of whom I speak was advised by the Department of Social Security to make any further claim to the trust fund. This he did; he has authorised the Department of Social Security to give to the trustees any information they may see fit. The letters are in front of me and the honourable Majority Leader is welcome to peruse them.

I bring these matters up tonight in view of the impending meeting of the trustees. Of course the House and many people in the Territory and elsewhere in Australia are aware of my concern that article 17 of that trust be fully complied with before monies are distributed elsewhere. That is the article which says that the trustees have to satisfy themselves that there is not any person still in need of assistance or likely to be in need of assistance as a result of Cyclone Tracy, to whom they should distribute money before the trust is wound up. I believe I have indicated to the Majority Leader and to members of this House that there are indeed people seeking assistance and, on the information I have to hand, their bona fides would appear quite in order.

Some of these people seeking assistance are asking for help in the settlement of claims outstanding to Commonwealth Hostels. This matter has been raised by me before. The claims are still outstanding. They are fearful of court action. Some of these people are pensioners and have no hope of meeting the hostel dues. They were sent south just after the cyclone with good intention on everybody's part. They were not advised in some cases as to their liabilities for the costs incurred. Many of them have large families, I think it is relevant and proper for the trustees to consider these cases on their merits. The details have been sent to the administrative officer by the Department of Aboriginal Legal Aid.

I urge most sincerely the Majority Leader to take note of my remarks. If there is any other member of this House who has a particular interest in the claims being put forward by people for assistance from the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund, I will allow those

members to peruse these documents and I trust they will keep the names confidential. They have been given to me in good faith. I have had enquiries from all around Australia from people asking, please can you help. It turns out the reason they are still wondering what has happened to their application for relief is a simple one: the trustees have not met. I hope they will deliberate next Tuesday with the utmost sympathy and consideration for the people who are still deserving and in need.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Mr Acting Speaker, at the risk of being knuckled up by the other members of my party, I thought for my maiden speech it would be best for me to give the House an indication of my views towards people and some aspects of government. Doing this will help other members to understand my feelings and in this way I feel we will have a better understanding all round.

I was a little concerned with various remarks made in yesterday's adjournment debate, I feel we have a pretty good society, particularly in the Northern Territory. There are problem areas, but these are nothing compared to those which are created in other states and nothing that cannot be solved by the people of the Northern Territory. We are all here to work for the Northern Territory and its people. I don't give a damn which part of the Territory you come from, what colour you are, what your religion is or what party you belong to. I am interested in people and that is what we are here for.

Parliament is becoming too complicated and we tend to forget that people from all walks of life are entitled to contest elections. They may be gutter-sweepers or your local store-keeper or workmate, it doesn't really matter. They are all able to contest a seat. What we must not forget is that they are the ones who put us here in the first place. Every citizen should be involved with his government, not just living in a town or city but becoming part of it. We have a unique situation in the Northern Territory because our electorates are small and therefore we are able to have personal

contact with our people. In some cases, I admit this is difficult because of the distances involved. Nevertheless, we are still able to make that important contact. In other states this is impossible. As far as I am concerned, if you are not interested in all the people of the Northern Territory or the Northern Territory itself, you should not be here.

There are many great men and women who have contributed and are still contributing to the growth and the development of the Northern Territory. They would have been proud to have been here at these sittings today to witness the progress that has been made towards self-government. We have a proud pioneering heritage in the Northern Territory but what is more exciting is that we occupy a unique position in Australia in that we are still a pioneering people. We have a proud land and a proud people. Let us try, with a sound Opposition in the Assembly, to make our Territory a better place in which to live.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsey): I was very impressed by the words of the honourable member for Port Darwin; I do not think I have heard a better maiden speech.

My reason for getting up today is to contribute in some way to the unemployment debate which has just taken place and to point out the need for a strong pastoral industry in the Northern Territory. On Saturday in Katherine the initial meeting of the Cattlemen's Union of Australia will be held. The idea of a union for cattlemen is something new and is attracting wide support. I feel sure we have intruded on the Opposition ranks in doing this but what we are after is simply a fair price for our beef, in the same way that other people have a right to insist on a fair wage, a fair return for their work - even solicitors get a fair return for their services. What we are after is a fair return for our product.

As I see it, we will not get any help from the federal government that is worth having; they are out of touch with cattlemen in the Northern Territory. However, we do not produce very

much beef anyway in the Northern Territory. Our biggest turnoff in the last decade was about a quarter of a million head of cattle. If you killed them all and took the bones out, you would have about 30,000 tons of beef and, converted to pounds, that is about 60 million pounds. If you got 60 million people to eat a pound of beef a year, they would eat our beef. I was a bit disturbed yesterday to hear the Executive Member for Resources and Health say there are only 100 million people close to us. I have been saying for a few years that there are 200 million people closer to Darwin than Canberra is.

Mr Robertson: Only half of them eat beef.

Mr MacFARLANE: That is right. However, if you get one million people to eat 60 pounds of beef a year - and that is not much beef - the whole of the Northern Territory's glut of beef would be cleaned up.

Getting back to the question of a viable pastoral industry providing employment, the honourable member for MacDonnell will realise that the pastoral industry is the greatest employer of Aboriginal Australians in the Northern Territory. This is what I am coming to: we have to find employment. If we had a viable pastoral industry, we would have employment and we would reduce Aboriginal unemployment.

We have these 200 million people close to us and we do not have much beef to sell, but we do not seem to be doing much about it. We must go over there and sell this beef to them. But things stand in our way: first, we must have an intermediate export licence so that beef killed outside export abattoirs can be sent to these people and, second, there is the question of how they are going to buy it. We have a shortage of money. You have just heard the plaintive story from the Majority Leader about inflation. We have a shortage of money and a glut of beef; but the first thing we do is give away \$500m in overseas aid and keep the glut of beef. Why not give away - I could not care less about the rest of Australia - the surplus of Northern Terri-

tory beef to these people instead of money? Perhaps a full belly would mean more to them than the few railway lines and sleepers. It seems crazy that, with a glut of beef, we keep it and, with a shortage of money, we give it away. I cannot understand it but, of course, I am not a Canberra politician.

I am hoping we can do something about getting rid of this glut of beef because, once we get rid of it, we can start the economy moving again. In the Northern Territory, we do not have anything much apart from tourism and beef. We will have uranium but we do not have it yet. Let us concentrate on these viable industries and do something about them. Let us hope they do provide the employment which is badly needed.

Another thing that I did raise - and I am afraid it must have escaped the Opposition Leader's attention - was the need in these days, when cattlemen cannot afford the award wage for their stockmen, for unemployment benefits to be introduced into the stockmen's awards so that they could get these benefits and the cattlemen could possibly afford to make up the balance. That would help everyone because I do not think even the Labor Party these days thinks the cattlemen is having a real good go.

Getting back to unemployment, I notice on some of the Aboriginal settlements in my electorate that these people, by the wish of their council, are not accepting any unemployment benefits. They have another scheme, the name of which escapes me for the moment. They say that, if people want money, they work for it. The work is always there. If they do not want to work, there is no money. This is a novel approach but it is working very well on Roper River and also at Bamyili. I do not know whether it is working in other parts of Australia. This could be the NEAT scheme which the Majority Leader has given me a note about. I do not know very much about it; it is a new one to me. A viable pastoral industry will give us what we want: a lot of employment. It will take a lot of worry off the Opposition Leader's shoulders.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): I would like to draw to the attention of the three other honourable members who live in the Tiwi electorate some good news and some bad news. Firstly, I was asked yesterday what can be done to improve the road in Howard Springs in which the honourable member for Sander-son resides. This is bad news, I am afraid. The road is not on the new roads program for 1977-78. On the other hand, there is good news for the honourable member for Arnhem. His road will be part-sealed in 1977-78. Unfortunately, there is bad news for the honourable member for Port Darwin. The upgrading of the road past his place will not take place in 1977-78.

Mr OLIVER (Alice Springs): I rise to discuss an extremely delicate but important situation existing in the electorate of Alice Springs. The situation is delicate on two points. Firstly, if I do not choose my words carefully, I lay myself open to criticism from some sections of the community. However, I assure you that what I am about to say is not directed in a derogatory sense to any particular group of people but is intended for the health and welfare of the community as a whole. Secondly, the subject matter could perhaps be considered indelicate for all its importance.

In Alice Springs, we have a number of Aborigines living in the bed of the Todd River. This number fluctuates from a few dozen to upwards of perhaps several hundred people, depending probably on the group movements and what attractions are on in town at that time. I have no argument with the influx of Aborigines to sample town life whether it be for a day or a week or months or forever. They have the same rights as anybody to come and go without let or hindrance. I am concerned about the lack of suitable accommodation that doubtless forces these people to camp in the Todd River, and this concern is general. I hope at a later date to bring this matter more fully to the attention of honourable members but the situation is so complex that, at this stage, I feel I am not competent to say any more than simply to express that concern.

My immediate consideration is the intricate matter of the complete lack of toilet facilities for the dwellers in the Todd River. This is a most undesirable and unhealthy situation both for the Aborigines and the community as a whole. The erection of permanent toilet and ablution facilities for the transient dwellers is not desirable as each camp or group does not necessarily occupy the same permanent site on each visit. Anyway, I feel that camping in the Todd River, and the Charles River too for that matter, is an interim situation. My suggestion is that transportable pan-type toilets be provided so that each group could have toilet facilities available wherever it might camp. These units might well not add to the scenic attraction of the area but at least they would alleviate the grave risk of disease and illness possible where no such facility exists. This would only be an interim measure until such time as suitable alternative accommodation can be provided and the problem no longer exists.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Industry): Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the honourable Opposition Leader a question, but it is not intended that he should answer right now. My point of standing up this afternoon is that the honourable member made a remark during one of the debates this afternoon that, during the election campaign, the Majority Party made an appointment to the Port Authority ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You cannot refer to debates which have happened today.

Mr STEELE: Well, it was not a specified debate, Sir. It was in an interchange, debating that a statement be noted.

Mr SPEAKER: You can only comment on the honourable member's statement.

Mr STEELE: Mr Speaker, I draw the attention of the House to this particular matter only because, in the best interests of government in the Northern Territory, if there is anything going on as far as I am concerned I would like to know about it. I am the fellow who has to answer questions in the Assembly about the Port Authority and

if the honourable gentleman has a question, well, if I cannot answer it from the floor, I will write him a letter about it.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, this is the second adjournment debate I have been present at. I did not want to speak in the one yesterday and I do not particularly want to speak today, but I should inform the Executive Member for Transport and Industry what I was getting at.

It is true that by notice in the Government Gazette on 12 August, one day before the Legislative Assembly election took place, the Administrator announced that one Mr B. Wyatt was appointed to the Northern Territory Port Authority. I did not in any way, in my speech today, attempt to question the bona fides of Mr Wyatt; I am not making any comment whatsoever on his capacity to fill the position as a member of the Northern Territory Port Authority and I want to make that point perfectly clear. The point I was making though was that an appointment had been made by the Majority Party one day before the Assembly election in what I believe was a most improper way. It could have waited until after the election results were known so that perhaps the incoming executive might have been able to express its views on who should be appointed. So far as I know there was no need, or no urgent need, for the appointment to be made. As I understand it, Mr Wyatt would have replaced the retiring chairman, Mr Byron, and so far as I know, there was no urgent requirement so far as a quorum was concerned for the Port Authority. It was, in my view, an indecent appointment - not from the point of view of the person but from the point of view of the manner in which the appointment was made. If that clarifies the position for the honourable member, I am delighted to have been able to do so.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in this adjournment debate because I am somewhat concerned reading today's "Darwin Star" newspaper to see that the two national airline carriers have decided at this stage that they cannot agree to

the reduced fare arrangement which was announced recently by both of them to be extended to Territory people. I am most distressed with this announcement, I rather fancy, myself, that because they have the people of the Territory, and north Queensland ports I notice also, virtually a captive market - prisoners who are locked in and have to use the airlines, unlike people in the capital cities who have a choice of travel by bus or train in a much more speedy and efficient way than we do - I feel we are the victims of their greed and avarice.

Whilst in the past I have more or less supported the two-airline policy of the federal governments over the years, it seems to me that perhaps it is about time for a change. The fact of the matter is that the two-airline policy has always represented to me the Australian way of life. We have a government airline which competes satisfactorily and offers a reasonable service against a private enterprise carrier which competes, makes money and offers a reasonable service as well. We have that little bit of socialism and that little bit of free enterprise, and it works out well. But it seems to me now that socialism and free enterprise have got together in this situation to extract the last ounce of cash they can from the people of the Northern Territory. If that is not a cartel situation, a monopoly situation, then I do not know what is. I would ask both airlines to reconsider very seriously their decision, otherwise I think it would be in the interests of Territorians to make very strong representations to the federal government to see why Territorians could not once again use overseas carriers between Darwin and Sydney, Melbourne or other ports where they call.

In respect of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund I was pleased to note the remarks this afternoon of the honourable member for Nightcliff. I too have been very concerned about the people waiting on the decisions of the trustees. It is very difficult getting the trustees together for a meeting, I

must confess, and certainly I am probably as much to blame for that as any other trustee because, over the past couple of months, I have been as busy as most. I have now agreed with the minister, as I told the honourable member, that the mayor could chair a meeting next Tuesday afternoon. I believe there are quite a number of applications to be considered by the trustees. Although the trust at the moment is bogged down in a terrible legal bind - we have the Solicitor-General, Mr Barker QC and the Crown Law Officer all expressing opinions about how this trust should be wound up - I am hopeful that we will be able at least to make a sort of progress payment. I hope the trustees do not jump on me for foreshadowing what I am proposing to do but I will propose that these people get a progress payment on the monies that finally would be due to them. The decision of the Minister for Social Security came after the trust was finally wound up and it is only by sheer good fortune that these people are getting a go at all. Since that is the case, I know several cases personally that I think should be viewed very sympathetically.

There was also the subject of special applications by Aboriginal people through the North Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Office. At one stage, we did give a fairly large sum of money to Bernie Valladian to distribute amongst Aboriginals who had special needs. I do not know whether he has any of that money left anyway. He may well have paid back any money that he had left.

As for the Minister for the Northern Territory not visiting the Territory frequently, he has been here twice in the last two weeks. It is just that when he does come up, he always seems to have a great deal on his plate. It can truthfully be said that he has visited the Territory more times than any other minister responsible for it in the past, certainly when you consider his time in office.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Friday 23 September 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

APPOINTMENT OF
DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to the provisions of standing order 11, I hereby nominate Mr Ballantyne, Mrs Padgham-Purich and Ms D'Rozario to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees when requested to do so by the Chairman of Committees. I table the warrant.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent three bills relating to drugs being presented and read a first time together and one motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second readings, the committee's report stages and the third readings of the bills together, and the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

PROHIBITED DRUGS BILL

(Serial 1)

DANGEROUS DRUGS BILL

(Serial 2)

POISONS BILL

(Serial 3)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): I move that the bills be now read a second time.

The main purpose of these bills is to incorporate in Northern Territory legislation the requirements of the United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The Australian government is anxious to formally ratify that convention and, in fact, an act enabling such ratification was

passed by federal parliament in August last year. A necessary prerequisite to Australia's ratification of the convention, however, is that the laws in all Australian jurisdictions embody the terms of the convention. This is already the case with the relevant Commonwealth legislation relating to international trafficking in these substances and with the legislation in the various states relating to internal manufacture, distribution and use of the substances.

The laws of the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory do not, however, comply with the requirements of the convention and I am sure that honourable members will agree that this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs, not merely from the viewpoint that our legislation could debar Australia from becoming a party to the convention but from the fact that our controls over psychotropic substances are looser than in any Australian state. For that reason, trafficking of hallucinogens and other dangerous drugs could be encouraged because of inadequate laws and this, I believe, most people would deplore and regard as negligence.

The term "psychotropic substances" as used in the UN convention refers to substances which have the capacity to produce a state of dependence together with either stimulation or depression of the central nervous system resulting in hallucinations and/or disturbances in motor functions, thinking, behaviour, perception or mood and in respect of which there is a likelihood of abuse so as to constitute a public health and social problem. In brief, psychotropic substances can be stated as drugs that affect behaviour. In fact, many common drugs such as pain killers belong to this group.

A hallucinogenic substance is a drug capable of producing an abnormal awareness or distorted perception of things around us. Examples are LSD or cannabis. The effect of these drugs is that the capacity of a person to control his action and behaviour, for example to drive a motor vehicle or to work on scaffolding near water or in the vicinity of moving machines, is

severely impaired and may lead to accident with consequential death.

The particular substances covered by the convention are listed in the schedules to the convention and range from the relatively minor barbiturates, tranquillisers and sedatives to the highly dangerous hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD and mescaline. The convention provides for varying levels of control to be exercised according to the abuse potential of the respective substance.

As may be expected, the controls required under the terms of the convention in respect of the highly dangerous hallucinogenic drugs are very stringent. Provision is made for very restricted use of these substances for medical and scientific purposes. However, there are no foreseeable circumstances where any of these substances would need to be used for any legitimate purpose within the Northern Territory. The bills now before us, therefore, place all these substances, which are listed in schedule 1 to the convention, under the Prohibited Drugs Ordinance. The effect is to place a total ban on their manufacture, distribution, use or possession.

There are legitimate uses for the other substances covered by the convention and it is therefore necessary to introduce controls which conform to the requirements of the convention. Essentially, these substances may be grouped in two categories: one group including the amphetamines and other substances with a similar abuse potential and the second group made up of the barbiturates and other tranquillisers and sedatives. There are some common control measures which need to be applied to both groups with additional measures to be applied to the amphetamine group only. For convenience, the bills provide for all of these substances to be controlled under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance.

Turning now to the individual bills, I refer honourable members firstly to the Poisons Bill. At present, a number of the substances covered by the UN convention are included in the first schedule to the Poisons Ordinance and

thereby subject to the general controls provided in that ordinance. As I indicated earlier, it is proposed that all substances covered by the convention be controlled under either the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance or the Prohibited Drugs Ordinance. The Poisons Bill therefore simply deletes all such substances from the first schedule to the Poisons Ordinance.

The Prohibited Drugs Bill is intended to replace in its entirety the existing Prohibited Drugs Ordinance. Apart from extending the number of substances subjected to a total ban - which I mentioned earlier - the bill includes a number of measures relating to offences and police powers which are not included in the existing ordinance. Separate offences are created for trafficking or supplying as opposed to simple possession or use. The bill also provides that persons in possession of drugs in excess of prescribed quantities are to be deemed to be trafficking in these drugs. The penalties provided have, generally, been substantially increased, particularly in relation to trafficking offences. However, the penalties provided for possession and use of cannabis are substantially lower than those applied to similar offences involving the other drugs covered by this legislation.

There are essentially two reasons for the higher penalties provided. Firstly, the UN convention requires that parties to the convention ensure that serious offences are liable to adequate punishment, particularly by imprisonment or other penalty involving deprivation of liberty. Second, and more important, is the fact that the misuse of drugs in the Northern Territory is a serious problem and existing penalties are not acting as an effective deterrent. We, as a legislature, need to indicate to the courts and to the community generally that we are determined to do everything we can to stop illicit trafficking in drugs.

The lower penalties for cannabis have been included in the proposed legislation because the Majority Party is mindful of the two royal commissions currently being conducted by the states

and the Commonwealth. Rather than to pre-empt the findings of the royal commissions, the Majority Party would prefer to wait until the commissions' reports have been finalised. I would like to point out to honourable members that the reports of the royal commissions could well recommend reductions or increases in penalties in relation to the use of cannabis but, at this stage, it would appear more appropriate to await the recommendations of the reports.

The existing ordinance does not include any specific police powers and the police involved in investigations into drug offences must rely on powers incorporated into other legislation, for example, the Police and Police Offences Ordinance and the Commonwealth Crimes Act. In many respects, those powers are inadequate or inappropriate. Of particular concern are the powers relating to search of both premises and persons and, consequently, these have been set out in some detail in the bill now before us. I draw honourable members' attention to clauses 11 to 14 of the bill and, in particular, to the provisions for issue of search warrants by telephone, telex or radio. This provision is in accordance with the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission's report on the criminal justice system and represents a significant step forward in matching the opposing needs to allow effective police action and to retain the reasonable right of the individual to privacy.

The Dangerous Drugs Bill is also intended to replace the existing ordinance. The principal changes incorporated in the bill are to remove the existing provisions relating to hallucinogenic drugs and to insert new provisions relating to another group of drugs defined in the bill as "psychotropic substances". The hallucinogenic drugs are now to be controlled under the Prohibited Drugs Ordinance and the psychotropic substances as defined are, in fact, the substances covered by the UN convention, other than the hallucinogens. The bill sets out various controls to be exercised over psychotropic substances, including registration of manufacturers and distri-

bution, security requirements, maintenance of records, restrictions on supply and restrictions on use. These measures are in accordance with the requirements of the UN convention and would provide an effective system of control over the manufacture, distribution and use of the drugs concerned. New provisions have also been included in this bill relating to offences and police powers. In effect, these are the same as the corresponding provisions in the Prohibited Drugs Bill and I do not think any further comment is needed other than to point out that fact.

In concluding these remarks, I would like to mention briefly a couple of relevant points which will be of interest to honourable members. Firstly, I would like to refer to the police powers and associated provisions incorporated in both the Prohibited Drugs Bill and Dangerous Drugs Bill. Honourable members who were also members of the previous Assembly will recall that there was considerable debate on the corresponding provisions included in bills of the same name which were considered during the life of that Assembly. As a result of that debate and representations subsequently made by community groups, the provisions in the current bills have been substantially modified and, I believe, the objections previously raised can no longer be applied.

It must be acknowledged that these bills do not remedy all of the defects in our legislation relating to poisons and dangerous drugs. Although the bills enable the UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances to be complied with and also rationalise the penal provisions and police powers, the need for a comprehensive review of the legislation is recognised and, in fact, is being undertaken. This is necessarily, however, a long-term project and the immediate requirements cannot be deferred until that major review is completed.

Finally, it has been brought to my attention that some minor amendments will be required to the forms prescribed in schedules 4 and 5 to the Dangerous Drugs Bill and I foreshadow the introduction of those amendments

during the committee stage. The amendments involve the introduction of psychotropic substances in schedules 4 and 5 and the correction of a numbering error in clause 5.

I would further add that it is the intention of the Majority Party to make this law as sensible as possible and the constructive comments of all members of this House would be greatly appreciated. In the earlier carriage of the bills, I made myself readily available to any community group that wished to express a view about the bills or any part of the bills and I will make myself available again on the same basis. The Majority Party is most anxious that the new ordinances will be of the best possible nature.

I seek leave to table a copy of the UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances and 20 copies of the notices referred to in clause 3(2) of the Dangerous Drugs Bill which outlines the drugs involved. I commend the bills to the honourable members.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned.

OMBUDSMAN (NORTHERN TERRITORY) BILL

(Serial 8)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill seeks to remedy an undesirable situation that has existed in the Northern Territory for many years. The lack of any legislation whatsoever on this topic has meant that citizens of the Northern Territory have been deprived of an avenue of protection against the intrusions of the bureaucracy which is available to citizens in most other places of Australia.

Mr Speaker, you will recall when the Legislative Council on a number of occasions sought the passage of legislation to rectify just this deficiency in our law. Regrettably those efforts were to no avail. In fact, one ordin-

ance passed by the Legislative Council entitled the Administrative Actions (Investigation) Ordinance 1972 was reserved for the Governor-General's pleasure, but to this day no action has been taken to bring that ordinance into operation. On another occasion the Legislative Council sought to establish by resolution a committee to investigate administrative actions, only to have this action declared beyond its power by the Supreme Court.

It is to the credit of the Commonwealth government that it has seen fit to pursue the concept of an ombudsman within the Commonwealth sphere of action. The act for that purpose entitled the Ombudsman Act 1977 has only recently come into force - and I might mention that Mr Kevin Crotty, who was formerly attached to the Attorney-General's Department in the Northern Territory, has now become a deputy or assistant ombudsman, I understand, under the provisions of that act but he, of course, is now based in Canberra.

Whilst I applaud the general concept behind that act, it is to be regretted that it has been enacted in a form that enables it to have an operation in relation to administrative actions taken within the new Northern Territory Public Service. This seems to me to be clearly inconsistent with the movement towards local autonomy. It should not be necessary for a Territory citizen with a grievance that relates purely to a matter of local administration to have to take his complaint to some officer in Canberra. It is also undesirable that an officer based in Canberra, appointed under a federal act and responsible to the Commonwealth parliament, should have any role to play in investigating administrative actions taken with respect to matters that have been transferred to local Territory control.

I am confident that the Commonwealth will accept my argument that the Ombudsman Act should be amended to restrict its area of operation, insofar as it relates to the Northern Territory. At the same time the object of this bill is to provide for the appointment of a Northern Territory

ombudsman under a Territory ordinance, the appointee being responsible to this House. This will fill any gap left by the withdrawal of the Commonwealth from purely Territory administrative matters where the ombudsman may be concerned. Hopefully both events could be co-ordinated so as not to leave the citizens of the Northern Territory without a remedy.

The bill has been drafted having regard more to the various state acts than to the Commonwealth act. There has not been a great deal of time to consider in detail the form the bill should take, having regard to the many other priorities and, accordingly, I would be happy to discuss with any member any suggestions for improvement.

I seek, Mr Speaker, the support of all members for this bill. It is a measure designed to provide a real benefit to the ordinary citizen against the unjustifiable actions or defaults of Territory administrators. It is now widely accepted in many countries of the world that an officer in the nature of an ombudsman has a valuable role to play in checking excesses and delays in modern government. He also has a valuable role to play in achieving harmony between citizens and the administration, and in improving the quality and consistency of the administration. His role is complementary to and not in substitution for the roles of courts and of members of the legislature. At the same time, the ombudsman remains responsible to the legislature from which his appointment stems.

I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

TOWN PLANNING BILL

(Serial 10)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to provide for the situation which will exist

in Darwin when the Darwin Reconstruction Commission ceases operation on 31 December. Under its sweeping powers, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission was able to impose its own pattern of development on the Darwin area, and the Darwin Town Plan under the Town Planning Ordinance did not apply. However, when the DRC ceases operation, the Darwin Town Plan will again be in force in the Darwin area and any development which took place could be in conflict and subject to the sanctions applying under the Town Planning Ordinance.

The first point of particular concern is the use made of any building being constructed in accordance with approval from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. While the provisions of the act are such that the building may remain as built even after the demise of the DRC, the use to which buildings may be put is closely regulated under the Darwin Town Plan and the Town Planning Ordinance and there would be no future authority for the continuation of a use that does not conform with the Darwin Town Plan after the DRC ceases operation. For example, pursuant to DRC approval, a person may have constructed flats in an area which is zoned under the Darwin Town Plan as suitable for use only for single residential units. After the DRC ceases to operate, the building may remain but its use as flats or for any purpose other than single residential units would be illegal. Similar examples could be multiplied for all types of buildings and the results would be chaotic.

Secondly, the planning scheme adopted by the DRC varies in a number of respects from the Darwin Town Plan declared under the Town Planning Ordinance. Yet that scheme has set the pattern of building and development in Darwin since the cyclone. Even if it were desirable, it is not now possible to revert to the situation existing in Darwin on Christmas Eve 1974. It is a fact that Darwin has been rebuilt and developed in accordance with planning proposals of the DRC. There are differences between those proposals and the provisions of the Darwin Town Plan. It is a fact that the DRC approved

buildings for purposes that would conflict with permitted uses under the Darwin Town Plan. It is also a fact that the Darwin of today is quite different to the one existing on 24 December 1974 and the Darwin Town Plan, as it applied then, is in some respects inappropriate for today. The purpose of this bill is to enable the planning and development of Darwin to proceed without major disruption and to enable the continuation of uses approved by the DRC after the demise of that commission.

In broad terms, the bill provides in clause 8, proposed new section 47, that where the DRC approved the construction of a building for a particular purpose, the continuing use of that building for that purpose is not illegal. The construction must comply with starting and finishing times approved by the commission and conform with any conditions specified in the commission's approval. Because of the difficult conditions existing after the cyclone, it may be difficult for a person to prove specific commission approval. Provision is made for the Administrator to issue a memorandum of approval on request after considering all the probabilities in a particular case, and that memorandum will be evidence of approval.

Clause 12 inserts a new part in the principal ordinance for development control. It empowers the Town Planning Board, with the approval of the Administrator-in-council, to make development control orders to ensure the proper planning and development of an area of land. Such an order when made over an area which is subject to a town plan revokes that town plan. Thus, a development control order made over the Darwin area would revoke and replace the pre-cyclone Darwin Town Plan.

Most members will recall that town planning proposals for Darwin were exhibited by the DRC in 1975. Many objections, comments and criticisms were received; those have been considered and the proposals reviewed and improved since that time. It will be recalled that the commission has announced its intention again to exhibit the planning proposals for Darwin

in October. These plans will be available for public objection and criticism. The proposal is that the DRC will amend the plan in the light of objections received if the objections are valid and will formally adopt a plan as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission plan. This will provide the Town Planning Board with the material necessary to prepare and declare a development control order for Darwin to be effective when the DRC ceases to operate.

I have not dealt in precise detail with all aspects of the continuation of DRC approvals or the application of development control orders. These are spelt out in the bill. I have attempted, however, to explain to all honourable members the reasons why this bill is necessary and the way in which it will overcome the difficulties that would otherwise arise when the commission ceases to operate.

I wish to assure all members that these are only interim measures. The need for extensive changes in town planning legislation has long been recognised and work towards such change is well under way. Modern town planning legislation should not only operate by means of closely detailed town plans and zoning schemes but should provide forward planning to enable ordered development and expansion of towns and reasonable flexibility in land administration and use within an accepted pattern. During 1978, I hope to introduce into this Assembly legislation incorporating these modern principles of town planning. The protections and continuity of development offered by this bill will be taken up in that legislation and I hope all members will find it to be acceptable legislation to provide for future planning and development in the Northern Territory.

Until that legislation is available, I propose the provisions incorporated in this bill to ensure the protection of people who have built and used land since the cyclone in accordance with DRC approval and to enable the development of Darwin to continue without major disruption or confusion. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

TRANSFER OF POWERS
(FURTHER PROVISIONS) BILL

(Serial 11)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This is similar to a bill introduced last November to give effect to the transfer of powers from the Commonwealth to the Territory. The Commonwealth has agreed to the transfer to the Territory of the powers in some 15 further ordinances and this bill makes the necessary changes to enable those powers to be exercised by the Territory executive. The substantive changes are made in the schedules which transfer powers from the Commonwealth to Territory authorities. Savings provisions are made in respect of actions taken by the earlier authority.

The bill also takes note of the transfer to the Territory in January 1978 of the functions of the Attorney-General's Department, except for the Supreme Court functions. There is a considerable body of legislation associated with those functions. The concerned ordinances are amended by the second schedule to this bill. Members will note that those amendments are not to come into operation until 1 January.

Bills of this nature will be necessary to give effect to every transfer of powers. I am pleased to be able to present a bill that reflects this considerable advance in those transfers and I look forward to the day when all transfers are completed and the total responsibility of Territory affairs lies, as it should, in the hands of the people of the Territory. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

BUILDING BILL

(Serial 9)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Mr Speaker, this is a small bill and its only effect is to extend the regulation-making powers of the principal ordinance. As honourable members will note, the bill provides clear powers for the making of regulations prescribing building standards and associated health and amenity codes.

The importance of the bill lies not in the additional regulation-making powers but in the use that will be made of those powers. In the exercise of its powers under the Darwin Reconstruction Act, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission prepared and published a Darwin area building manual, and all building in the Darwin area - that is, the area within 40 km from the Darwin Post Office - has been required to comply with the requirements of that manual. Essentially the manual provided a cyclone code, requiring more secure and effective construction than the pre-cyclone building requirements. Most houses in the Darwin area are now constructed in accordance with that manual and should be much more capable of withstanding the effects of any future cyclone.

It has already been promulgated that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission will cease operations at the end of this year. From 1 January 1978, therefore, the Darwin Reconstruction Act will cease to apply. The effect of the Darwin Reconstruction Act was to set aside other laws related to building in the Darwin area while the act was in operation. When it ceases to operate the normal legislation comes into force immediately. Effectively, therefore, if no action is taken on 1 January 1978, the commission's building manual would cease to operate in the Darwin area and the effective building manual would be the pre-cyclone building manual made by the Building Board under this ordinance.

I do not believe any member would support such an action. Darwin has been rebuilt in accordance with the requirements of the commission's manual. It has meant considerable expense to

business, government and to individual householders to comply with the requirements of the manual. But it has resulted in a generally well-built city, more capable of withstanding the effects of future cyclones. If the old manual were to be revived as a building standard, it would permit the construction in Darwin of houses with the potential to fly apart during cyclonic winds and cause major damage to surrounding buildings which are, in fact, now built in accordance with the cyclone code in the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's manual. Such a proposition is clearly unacceptable.

It is proposed, therefore, to use the new regulation-making powers in this bill to adopt as building standards the Darwin Reconstruction Commission building manual. Some modifications to the manual are necessary and these will be incorporated in the regulations. The regulations will also repeal the existing manual under the Building Ordinance so that the new manual may provide current building standards for future construction in the Territory. The cyclone code will be applied only to areas of cyclone risk but the manual which conforms in general with the Australian Uniform Building Code will be used to ensure proper Territory-wide building standards.

I foreshadow the action to be taken so that honourable members will fully understand the importance of this bill. That action will be taken to be effective on the demise of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Copies of the new manual will be immediately available and, of course, builders, architects and engineers in the Darwin area presently possess and have been working from that manual for some time now.

When the Building Ordinance was examined to ascertain the actions necessary to ensure the continuance of the commission's manual a number of defects were discovered. Because of the limited time available, this bill is restricted to the immediate needs. I foreshadow, however, my intention at an early stage in the life of this Assembly to introduce more comprehensive amendments to the legis-

lation to ensure that the Building Board has adequate powers and that determined building standards can be maintained and enforced. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that during the present session of the Assembly, notwithstanding any previous resolution of the Assembly, Mr Speaker may, at his discretion, appoint a time for holding a sittings of the Assembly, which time shall be notified to each member by letter or telegram.

By way of brief explanation to honourable members, they will no doubt be appreciative of the fact that it will at times be necessary for you to call the Assembly together for an extraordinary session or an urgency session, and a mechanism must be established satisfactory to the Assembly for that purpose. Also it will be found, Mr Speaker, as you know from your experience, that at times and for administrative reasons, it is impossible for a special adjournment motion to indicate to honourable members precisely when the next sittings will be. Indeed I believe we are in that position at the moment due to certain contingency matters in another place affecting sittings in this place where a special adjournment motion will not be possible for the purpose of advising honourable members when we are next going to meet. This motion, if passed by the Assembly, will allow you, Mr Speaker, to call the House together by letter or telegram.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, we do not oppose the motion but I simply put to the Majority Party the need to have a timetable drawn up for sittings so that all members can organise their electoral matters. I think it is most important that we do have some timetable set over, say, the next six months, nine months or some appropriate period so that we can organise ourselves.

Mr ROBERTSON: By way of reply, it has, as you know, Sir, been standard

practice to do precisely this. It will be the practice of the Majority Party to attempt to do this wherever it is practicable to do so.

Motion agreed to.

INTERPRETATION BILL (NO. 2)

(Serial-6)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This is a small but important bill, Mr Speaker, and provides a statutory means of continuing the effectiveness of legislative or legal instruments when executive officers or departmental arrangements are changed.

As all members are aware, the organisation of departments and the titles and functions of executive members were changed with the creation of the present executive to reflect the functions and responsibilities vested in its members. Many members will recall the many amendments that had to be made to Territory legislation to reflect re-organisation of Commonwealth departments. The Commonwealth has rectified that position by an amendment of the Acts Interpretation Act. Similar action is necessary in the Territory to remove the need for amendment to each relevant piece of Territory legislation when the departmental structure is rearranged.

It also removes the need for statutory validation of references and instruments. The bill merely empowers the Administrator-in-Council to direct that a reference to a previous department or executive member shall be read as a reference to a specified department or executive member. The rearrangements of departments and offices of executive members that recently occurred will require action as proposed by this ordinance. It is necessary action for the proper legal administration of government in the Territory and for that reason I will be seeking the passage of this bill through all stages at this sittings.

I commend the bill.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members I have received a request from the honourable Majority Leader, seeking urgency for this bill. I am satisfied that urgency is required and that inconvenience and hardship could result if standing orders are not suspended to permit the passage of this bill. Therefore I grant urgency to the bill.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): We are in a position where we have not even seen the bill. I wonder if it is possible to move that the debate be adjourned for a later hour of the day.

Debate adjourned.

URANIUM MINING AND
KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

Continued from 22 September 1977.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): I wish to move an amendment to this motion.

I move that all words after "statement" be omitted and the following words inserted in their stead:

"but this Assembly condemns the Australian government's decision on uranium mining for the following reasons:

- (a) the government's abandonment of the Fox report's recommendation on the sequential mining of uranium;
- (b) the government's refusal to allow a full and proper public debate to take place; and
- (c) the government's deliberately misleading statements regarding the safe disposal of nuclear wastes."

We heard a speech yesterday from ...

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): A point of order! I am in some difficulty, Mr Speaker. It would seem to me from what I heard that the amendment is quite inconsistent with the motion, if we are to tack on the word "but" following the motion. I think it would be only fair and reason-

able in the circumstances if you could vacate the Chair for ten minutes until we have a chance to look at this.

Sitting suspended.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): I wish to thank the honourable member for Gillen for getting my maiden speech off to such a flying start.

The Majority Leader made a speech yesterday in which he repeated the government's assurance on the safety of uranium mining and the benefits that uranium mining will bring to the people of the Northern Territory. I would like to briefly sketch a very quick history of uranium mining in Australia and the Territory. It had its beginnings in 1944. At that time, the British government requested the Australian government to explore for uranium and supply uranium to Great Britain for weapons-grade material for their atomic bombs. Uranium was very quickly discovered in three places: Radium Hill, Mary Kathleen and the Territory's own Rum Jungle. In the 20 years after that discovery, 7,000 tonnes of uranium oxide were exported overseas. Following the international test ban treaty in 1963, the world demand for uranium dropped very dramatically and uranium mines closed down all over the world, including Australia.

The Territory's last connection with uranium mining finished in 1971 following the closure of Rum Jungle. At that time, the Australian Atomic Energy Commission issued a report which indicated that the Rum Jungle mine would continue to pollute the environment of the Finnis River catchment area, an area of at least 100 square miles, for at least the next 100 years. Nobody seems particularly interested in doing anything about it. I raise this point because there have been more than ten years of complaints from very high levels, from people in the Territory including senior officials of the Northern Territory Administration, about the pollution that was occurring at Rum Jungle. Those ten years of very bitter complaint culminated in 1965 with a meeting which was held of all the interested parties. At that meeting the Australian Atomic Energy

Commission assured the people of the Territory that the pollution that was being complained about would be controlled. I would just like to quote from a submission that was made in 1971, to give some indication of how effective the Territory's voice was at that time. The submission was made by Mr R.F. Felgenner, a senior official of the Northern Territory Administration, to his minister:

Early in 1962 the Minister for Territories informed the Minister for National Development that, while the source of pollution had been established beyond doubt and constituted an offence against the provisions of the Control of Waters Ordinance, he was reluctant to proceed against the companies for reasons of their association with the Commonwealth in the venture. The Minister for National Development replied that the Australian Atomic Energy Commission would minimise the possibility of pollution but, unfortunately, any attempt to overcome the pollution hazard would involve quite unreasonable operating costs,

That submission was made in 1971 - only six years ago. It has been well said that people who forget their history are condemned to relive it.

I am frightened as a Territorian that the assurances and the promises that are being made today by the government will be treated in exactly the same way. Once a \$500m project has got off the ground, any screams and whimpers that people in the Northern Territory might make about its operation will be ignored in the same way that the complaints of Territorians about Rum Jungle were ignored for ten years. It is all very well to put these things down on paper; it is a question of looking at the record and the record is not very good as far as listening to Territorians is concerned.

The political history of uranium mining in Australia deserves a little comment too. Until 1972, relations between mining companies and the government of this country were very friendly indeed. That friendliness disappeared in 1972 with the election of

the Labor government with Gough Whitlam at its head. There were two reasons why the Labor government stopped the development of uranium mining at that time and neither of them had anything to do with safety. I find this quite interesting. One of the reasons was Aboriginal land rights and the other was economics. The then Minister for Mining, Mr Connor, wanted uranium not to be developed in the Northern Territory so that he could wait for the international price to go up.

Those attitudes persisted through 1973 and 1974 but in 1975 there were the beginnings of a great deal of concern within the Labor Party about the emerging problems associated with waste disposal and the problems of the inefficiency of nuclear reactors, something which is becoming even more apparent today. This caused many people to be very concerned and culminated in Mr Justice Fox being commissioned to conduct that now very famous inquiry. That inquiry was interrupted briefly with the summary dismissal from office of the Labor government on 11 November 1975. That was one of the very first things, in fact, that the incoming government did; they were not at all interested in holding back the development of uranium any longer. Justice Fox was told that he had to terminate the inquiry and deliver his findings to the government by June 1976. It is a matter of public record that he refused to comply with the government's demand and in fact proceeded with the inquiry.

The two reports are now public documents and, as the Majority Party has seen fit to endorse the government's attitude towards uranium mining, I am sure that both the first and second Fox report have been read thoroughly by all members of this House. I make that comment because the previous debate in this Assembly on 15 and 16 June this year certainly gave the impression that everybody in the Northern Territory was in favour of uranium mining. Nothing could be further from the truth. To anyone following that particular debate, it was quite obvious that few members had had the opportunity to study the second Fox report in any detail. In fact, most members at the

time complained that they had experienced difficulty in obtaining copies of the report. Only one member, my predecessor Mr Kentish, at least had the honesty to admit that he did not know what he was talking about but that did not stop him from debating the issue anyway. Mr Justice Fox made it quite clear in the first report that both reports had to be read in conjunction. Most of the speakers did not appear to heed this advice.

The misgivings which the commission had in the first report, including nuclear proliferation, dangers of theft and sabotage and the problem of waste disposal were simply ignored by all speakers in the debate. Territorians cannot simply shrug off these problems of a nuclear age because mining uranium will help intensify them. It is rather like peddling drugs and then refusing to show any concern at all about the fate of drug addicts. There were also some remarkable statements made at that time, such as the one by the honourable Member for Barkly who claimed: "There is no alternative to oil other than uranium". This is, in fact, flatly contradicted on page 164 of the first Fox report. The whole tone of the debate was how much can we get out of mining and how soon. I would say from the tenor of the speeches made yesterday that the same attitude still persists. There was no concern in the debate about what damage might be done or how much it will cost the taxpayer to keep an eye on how things will go out there, let alone the taking of any adequate preventative measures. By contrast, the concern of the whole of the second Fox report was with all that would have to be done before mining could even be contemplated, yet no one in the previous debate was in the slightest bit concerned about it.

One of the great deficiencies pointed out in the Fox report is that we lack any kind of background information at all about the environment in that area. I speak from experience; there is little baseline data available to compare changes that will happen in that environment. Surely it is the first duty of this Assembly to ensure that we have this baseline data before mining proceeds so that we are in a position

to speak to the miners in no uncertain terms if they have transgressed and if their activities are going to cause undue damage. If we do not have this information, they will be in a position to claim that their activities had no effect and it would be almost impossible to disprove this under the existing circumstances.

The existing wildlife authorities are grossly understaffed and poorly equipped; they cannot control even a relatively small area and the small number of visitors coming there now. I would like to know what provisions the Majority Party has made for bringing the park authorities up to the required standard. I would like to know what representations have been made to Canberra to see that there is the necessary massive inflow of funds to improve these facilities to take on the vastly increased responsibilities should mining get under way. What arrangements are being made to train Aboriginal rangers for Kakadu as proposed in the Fox report? How much money and what resources are being earmarked for this purpose? The participants in the previous debate were so obsessed by the dollar signs in their eyes that they clean forgot to ask these and many other highly pertinent and important questions of their Canberra colleagues.

Contrary to the claims of the Commonwealth government, two of the most important recommendations of the Fox report have been rejected by the government. This is glossed over. However, since the government has failed to give any convincing reasons for departing from these recommendations, this Assembly should insist on those recommendations being implemented. I refer firstly to the fact that the development of the Noranda mine is still favoured. The Fox commission opposed this because it would cause pollution in the South Alligator River system. The Fox commission felt that damage to one system in the East Alligator was enough. Secondly, in typical disregard of Aboriginals, the government came out against sequential development. Fox specifically wanted this restriction to avoid large numbers of Europeans in the area at any one time to prevent the excessive cultural

shock which will now take place.

People can talk all they like but I know the days of the people of Oenpelli are numbered. Many people talk about it and the last one to talk was the honourable member for the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives, Mr Calder, who went on at great length to describe the great benefits that will accrue to Aboriginals from uranium mining. It is interesting to note that these opinions about these benefits are all from our side and not from theirs. I would just like to read you a quote from the Fox report as to what Aboriginals think about all the millions of dollars they are going to get:

While royalties and other payments are not unimportant to the Aboriginal people, they see this aspect as incidental, as a material recognition of their rights. The material benefits they visualise as likely are things like motor vehicles, four-wheel drives, hunting rifles, fishing gear and the like. Our impression is that they would happily forgo the lot in exchange for an assurance that mining would not proceed.

It is interesting also to have a look at the relationship between Queensland Mines and the people of Oenpelli. That is a pretty shocking record. They started off by direct confrontation with the Aboriginals. The Aboriginals said they did not want them to go into the dreaming area but they totally overrode that decision and went in and dug holes anyway. As a result of legal representations in 1970, the mining company made an absolutely contemptuous offer of \$5,000 for the privilege of mining in the area. That offer increased from \$5,000 in 1970 to \$3m in 1974. It is not a very good record of negotiations between the mining company and Aboriginal people.

We are constantly being told of the so-called benefits mining will bring us. Mining is not a labor intensive industry; it will never provide anywhere near the 10,000 jobs that are being talked about. The mention of 500,000 jobs yesterday is pure fantasy.

Furthermore according to the Fox report on page 77, many of these jobs will go to southerners anyway. The Territorians will not get the full benefit of the employment opportunities in any case. I would also like to know how much of the multi-million dollar profits which will be made by that handful of people will go overseas. Some people seem to think that Territorians generally are going to get rich because of uranium mining in the Northern Territory. I would like to see some kind of investigation into how much richer Territorians are generally because of the activities at Gove.

Speaking of Gove, the environmental pollution there has been on a massive scale and the offender has not been reprimanded or told to clean up the mess, in the same way the offenders were not at Batchelor. What confidence can Territorians have that history is not going to be repeated? The pollution at Gove is a matter of public record.

Mr Fraser and his friends across the Chamber have arrogantly said that they know what is best for us. I call to mind that most famous statement of the president of the Country Liberal Party in the Northern Territory, Mr Jettner, some years ago. Mr Jettner was talking about the mining policy of the Country Liberal Party and he said that anyone in the Northern Territory who had the temerity to disagree with the Country Liberal Party's policy on uranium mining could leave. It does not take too much stretch of the imagination to put the same kind of philosophy to everything the Country Liberal Party does in the Northern Territory. I know Mr Jettner's first name is Rex, but he is not king of the Northern Territory yet.

The government of Australia has refused to allow a reasonable public debate. The same nonsense was repeated yesterday in this Chamber by the honourable Majority Leader that has been said by the federal government, and that is that a public debate in this country has been going on since 1974. This is absolute rot. I would draw your attention to the fact that the first Fox report was not released until 1976 and public interest in

uranium mining generally - and I am sure it is a matter that every reasonable-minded person would agree with - the public in Australia had not become aware of the dangers of uranium mining until that Fox report was published. All of the facts had not been presented before the people of Australia until May this year when the second report was published, and Fox himself says that to make any sense out of it at all, both reports have to be read together. People in Australia have only had the opportunity of being in possession of the full facts since May this year and I would suggest that any public debate or any debate at all, anywhere, on any subject whatever, is completely pointless if people are not in possession of the facts. You would get the same kind of debate, the same kind of ill-informed and ignorant debate that took place in this Chamber in June of this year. We must allow people to have time to debate the problems associated with uranium mining before it is allowed to proceed.

It has also been said before that one of the first casualties in this war on uranium has been the truth. There is no two ways about that. These bland statements, that the problems associated with waste disposal have been cured - that, again, is absolute rot. In support of my arguments on that score, I draw attention to the fact, as the Majority Leader yesterday made it very clear - in fact, emphasised it in his speech - that Australia is not going to be responsible for accepting nuclear wastes. Now I say, why not? If the Prime Minister of this country has given us such a good assurance that the problems of nuclear waste disposal have been solved and we possess one of the most geologically stable places on earth, why cannot we accept other people's nuclear rubbish? Why cannot we be prepared to reap what the Australian government is only too prepared to sow? Why cannot we be prepared to at least accept the atomic waste from uranium which we ship overseas? I will tell you why, because nobody really is convinced that the disposal of nuclear waste has in fact been solved. It is a long way from being that.

I would suggest that when a referendum is put to the people of this country on the question of uranium mining, it will be completely pointless simply to put the question, are you in favour of mining and milling uranium? If we are going to be moral about this - and morality certainly has a place in this argument, not just pure economics - if we are so certain and we are basing our whole mining strategy on the fact that problems of waste disposal have been solved, then let us not equivocate. Let us agree to take back the highly toxic and highly dangerous rubbish that is produced as a result of our shipping the stuff overseas.

The process, of course, that Malcolm Fraser is referring to is the process of vitrification - putting the uranium waste into glass blocks, into stainless steel canisters and then either putting them in salt mines or burying them in holes beneath the seas. I would point also to a recent United States congressional report, only a matter of weeks ago, which points out that in fact the costs of disposing of wastes are probably going to be so great that nuclear energy could very well become uneconomical. I direct your attention to the fact that in the vitrification process which Mr Fraser is talking about one of the methods used is burying these things in holes drilled in the sea bed. Twenty of these holes would be required every year and the cost of each hole is conservatively estimated at \$10m. The cost of that, of course, has to be fed back to the consumer eventually.

Hundreds of thousands of gallons of nuclear wastes are at this present moment stored above ground, because nobody knows what to do with them. With the problems of proliferation, the promises the Fraser government has made about the safeguards that are going to be put on what other countries do with our uranium are not worth the paper they are written on. That is something which, again, any reasonable person would know. Australia will, in fact, have absolutely no control over what other countries do with our uranium once it goes overseas.

I direct your attention again to the Indian case, where Canada built a nuclear reactor in India on the promise from India that they were not going to do anything with the plutonium that it produced. The United States shipped heavy water to India with the same kind of guarantee, and India then proceeded to build a hydrogen bomb from the results of those two things. If the governments of Canada and the United States of America cannot ensure compliance with their requests, how is the government of Australia going to accomplish the same thing?

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

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the honourable member's time be extended so as to allow him to complete his speech.

Motion agreed to.

Mr COLLINS (Arnhem): Thank you very much, honourable member for Gillen. I would also point to the very serious problem of what are we going to do with nuclear reactors after they have outlived their useful life. A nuclear reactor, depending on the efficiency with which it is operated, has a useful life of somewhere between 20 and 50 years. After that time, the actual protective shielding, that massive dome they build around the reactor, and the equipment inside the reactor become so polluted with radiation that the reactor can no longer be safely operated. Now there are proposed methods of disposing of nuclear reactors, and some of them boggle the mind.

In the United States of America the nuclear energy program seems to have proceeded faster than anywhere else, mostly because of the fact that it is controlled by such a small number of very, very wealthy companies - General Electric and Westinghouse and various others that have more money than you could poke a stick at. I will just quote to you from this book, which I might add is written by supporters of nuclear energy:

The first decommissioned reactors can hardly be left standing. Are they to be dismantled by robots and their materials dispersed or will they be buried where they stand? The current idea is to bury them where they stand. The first method of disposal by dismantling is going to be too difficult and again expensive.

Money always comes into this, of course.

One commercial company in the United States has announced its intention of carrying out in-place entombment on one of its nuclear power plants. This is the reactor at Oyster Creek in New Jersey. It was the first commercial nuclear power station licensed in the United States and has a licence to operate until the year 2003. Its owners, the New Jersey Central Power Light Company, have applied to the state board of public utility commission for permission to increase power charges slightly in order to raise \$1.35m per year over the next 26 years. The money is going to be put in a special trust fund account and by the year 2003 will amount, with interest, to \$100m. This money will then be used to seal the entire power plant in a monstrous tomb of concrete and cover it with earth.

The most telling point in this is the last one they make.

It will then be necessary to guard this tomb for at least 100 years.

I consider it to be highly immoral that we are committing generations of people for years to come, if you like to talk about economics, to the economic expense of looking after waste which we produced. Because of the energy we are consuming, they are going to have to pay through the nose for generations of people long since dead. Nobody seems to be too worried about that either.

The other question that seems to have been glossed over is the industrial safety aspect of the mining. On Fox's own figures, figures from the Fox report, workers at the uranium mine are

going to be exposed to radiation. The maximum permissible exposure is 5 rems per year. The evidence given to the Fox commission suggests that workers in parts of the Ranger mill will be exposed to 3 millirems per hour, and 1 to 2 millirems per hour at the mine face and in the cabins of ore-haul trucks. Now according to my mathematics anyway, a large number of mine workers in the mine will have received their maximum dosage of radiation after 28 weeks of work. That is going to involve a fair old turn-over of staff.

I would also point to the fact - as those of you who were fortunate enough to see that Four Corners program on the problems some of the nuclear reactors are facing in the United States would know - when it is necessary to carry out even a minor repair job in the centre of the reactor, literally hundreds of people have to be employed to carry out a very small job, because they can only stay in there for a minute or so at a time before they receive their maximum dosage of radiation.

The nuclear energy industry is full of problems and full of unanswered questions. It is certainly not up to this country to help to propagate it by exporting our uranium overseas.

I would commend to this House, the ALP's policy statement on uranium mining that was drawn up at Perth this year, and I would ask leave of the Speaker to have this included in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Recognising that the provision of Australian uranium to the world nuclear fuel cycle creates problems relevant to Australian sovereignty, the environment, the economic welfare of our people, and the rights and well-being of the Aboriginal people;

believing that (having regard to the present unresolved economic, social, biological, genetic, environmental, and technical problems associated with the mining of uranium and the development of nuclear power and in particular -

* to the proven contribution of the nuclear power industry to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the increased risk of nuclear war; and

* the absence of procedures for the storage and disposal of radioactive wastes to ensure that any danger posed by such wastes to human life and the environment is eliminated,

it is imperative that no commitment of Australia's uranium deposits to the world's nuclear fuel cycle should be made until -

* a reasonable time has elapsed for full public debate on, and consideration of, the issues;

* the Australian Labor Party is satisfied that the abovementioned problems have been solved, and

* the Australian Government endorses Recommendation 6 of the First Fox Report which states: "a decision to mine and sell uranium should not be made unless the Commonwealth can at any time ... immediately terminate those activities permanently, indefinitely or for a specific period",

a Labor Government will -

(a) declare a moratorium on uranium mining and treatment in Australia;

(b) repudiate any commitment of a non-Labor Government to the mining, processing or export of Australia's uranium;

(c) not permit the mining, processing or export of uranium pursuant to agreements entered into contrary to Labor's policy.

I say again that a moratorium on uranium mining as recommended by that conference is absolutely essential. I say a referendum is essential, and that referendum should not just include the question of whether or not we are prepared to export our uranium. It should also contain the question of whether we are prepared to accept back in this

country the waste products that our uranium is going to make,

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): In speaking to the amendment proposed by the Opposition, I feel I should take some time to try to clarify some of the points the honourable member has alluded to or insinuated or treated, I think, with a little disdain. It is the old story of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing. I think the honourable member for Arnhem has demonstrated amply this morning just how a little knowledge can be abused and misused and distorted for political gain.

The honourable member opened up this morning with a serve on pollution in the Finnis River and I too would like to reflect back a little on the history of the Finnis River situation. Honourable members will remember that the Rum Jungle mining operation was conducted under the auspices of the Atomic Energy Commission and operated by TEP. It was run as a pretty closed shop and in the years this operation was carried on, probably two thirds of the people of this nation could not tell you what the word "environment" meant, or "protection of the environment", and there would have been very few people in Australia who would have given you two bob for saving any part of the Northern Territory, let alone protecting the environment here or anywhere else. Community attitudes have changed drastically. Everybody admits that. As somebody who has lived here since my early years, I am the first one to admit that some of the practices that were carried out by many industries in the early days were not in the best interests of the environment and I am only too pleased to see any action taken to protect what environment we have left.

In the Finnis River, pollution was caused as a result of the uranium mining. It might have also been caused as a result of any other mining. The pollution was not caused by the uranium; it was caused by other elements that were left in the tailings and pumped into the river - the sulphates and the sulphides of the copper that remained in the tailings. These were not required or extracted

from the ore because the uranium was the only element that anybody wanted. These elements had no value and were treated as such.

This is not something extraordinary. You can see in Tennant Creek bismuth that has not been extracted from the ore because of its lack of commercial value. It has remained in the tailings and has left a scar on the tailings dams. It has also scarred the countryside. If people go to Tennant Creek, they can go to the old Eldorado mine and they can see where the tailings resulting from the amalgam and cyanidation process in the early days, relatively harmless in themselves, were washed into the countryside by abnormal rains and have caused a great deal of damage to the environment. Some of it has been regenerated but other parts will take many, many years to come back.

These things all happened in an era when there was no consideration of the environment. Today, we accept it as an important aspect of mining and of life and everybody who is involved in industry of any sort is working very hard to ensure that we cause as little pollution as possible. I do not think it is fair and reasonable for the honourable member to have suggested that, because the Felgenner report of 1962 and other statements were not acted upon, there was nothing but contempt and neglect of the people and the Northern Territory region as a whole. It was known in the early 1960s that the uranium industry was about to wind up. There was no secret about that. It was also forecast in the early 1960s that it would not come back until 1980. There was no point therefore in an operation that had been in production for nearly 15 years to stop everything it was doing and reorganise its process in its dying stages. In hindsight, perhaps all of us would take another view but, in the times on which I am reflecting, that would not have been an adequate consideration.

The honourable member alluded to the reason for the ALP stopping mining in 1972 and he has his own reasons for that. Honourable members would remember that further uranium discoveries took

place in the Northern Territory in 1967-69 and development, exploration work and proving-up work went on until 1972. At this period, the change of government came and the ALP had a different attitude towards the mining and production of uranium than the then Liberal government. The minister of the day could also see, as has been proved, that uranium was going to be the most important energy base for the next 40 years. In view of that and in view of his party's attitude towards uranium mining, he was only too pleased to see mining stopped and an opportunity given for the government to be involved in it and take its share of the cake. Normally, the government would take it in the form of tax but, in view of the socialist attitude that the minister had, he was inclined to see the government take a 50% share for putting up 75% of the equity. He was not interested in stopping it for any period of time but just long enough to get a slice of the action. If anybody else tries that caper, they are immoral rip-off capitalists.

The ALP also initiated the Fox inquiry and, in hindsight, I do not think anybody argues terribly with that. However, it was not because of a great concern over uranium and the environment. The ALP had already introduced into the federal parliament an environmental impact bill and it would have been folly and negligence and perhaps cutting off their own noses to allow uranium mining to go ahead without first having an environmental impact study which they in fact had proposed.

The honourable member inferred that, when the Liberal government came to power in 1975, the minister of the day tried to terminate Justice Fox's inquiry as a matter of expediency. An element of truth here may have been that all inquiries and studies that were being undertaken by the Australian government at that time were given a time limit on which to finish. Most of them did that but there were some that ran to their conclusion, including the Fox inquiry. I do not think there was anything devious in this. It was reflected in the attitude of the government that it was prepared to accept

Justice Fox's assertion that he was going to finish his inquiry in his own good time.

The honourable member went on to say that the people of the Northern Territory do not support uranium mining. It is pretty obvious to me that the members on this side of House were quite prepared to fight the election on the issue of uranium mining. The honourable members on the other side of the House took no stance on it whatsoever and were quite happy to defuse the election issue of uranium mining. The one man, Mr Speaker, who stood on a platform of banning uranium mining completely gained ten votes in the electorate of Tiwi. Let us not have any misunderstanding about who wants to see uranium mining go ahead.

The honourable member also alluded to remarks made by myself in the former uranium debate in this House. I will reiterate what I said then and I stand by it: oil in this age is fast becoming a thing of the past; the only energy source that the people of this earth can move to in the next 20 years is uranium. If honourable members on that side of the House do not wish to believe that, that is fine but they will have a lot of trouble in convincing the 26 countries which are about to construct 400 atomic reactors throughout the world. These people need the energy to live and to keep warm; they cannot convince them that there is another alternative source of energy because they do not know about it and they would like to hear about it.

The honourable member went on to state that baseline data had not been collected and that it was totally immoral of us to abandon our heritage and go ahead to rape the environment. That is a lot of claptrap. The baseline data that comes out of that area was originally started to be collected in 1969. As soon as the companies realised that they had a uranium find of significance, the collection of data started. The data relates to river flows, flood levels, wind bearings, temperatures, soil contamination, wildlife etc. While much of this information may not have been collected by departments and may have come from the

private sector, it does not mean that it is not worth anything and it does not mean that it is not to be considered. The reference made by the honourable member concerning baseline data was a most unfortunate one; it was erroneous and it was contemptible. It also cuts across evidence given by such departments as the Water Resources Branch to the Fox inquiry. In turn, they used such data to compare flood levels and river flows of yesteryear to those as recently as 1975.

The honourable member went on to make reference to the poor state of the wildlife section of the Department of Resources and Health and how it should be upgraded. There is no doubt that there is a staff shortage in this area and, for the total uranium region to go ahead, I imagine we would need another 100 rangers to satisfactorily provide services and protection for the region. Consideration of this has not been neglected. As early as 18 months ago, I had discussions with the Department of National Resources in Canberra who were interested in promoting the concept of increasing the ranger force and they asked what they could do to help see that the need was met at the right time, and not two years after the influx had started. I believe the government will measure up to the need for providing rangers for the area.

I also take exception to the remarks by the honourable member relating to Aboriginal rangers. Members on this side of the House would remember that, in the debate on the establishment of the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service, the former Majority Leader went into some detail about the desire and the capacity of the Northern Territory to provide Aboriginal wildlife rangers. As recently as this week, statements have been made by federal ministers relating to the concept of the Aboriginal wildlife officers being brought into reality as soon as possible. There is a period of education and preparation involved and this matter has not been abandoned. It was only last Monday that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs made such a statement and I received a further document in the mail this morning from the Department of Environment, Housing

and Community Development outlining the way that it could help Aborigines in this very task. The Reserves Board has also entered into this field and, within the last two weeks, has had a training session for Aborigines. I do not believe this is a concept that will materialise overnight out of the soil like a mushroom. It will take time to develop and, when it does develop, it will be to the benefit of all of us, particularly the Aborigines,

The honourable member went on to suggest that the Noranda deposit should not go ahead because Mr Justice Fox said it should not go ahead. I do not recall Mr Justice Fox making an edict to the effect that the Noranda prospect should not go ahead. I believe he outlined the very definite problems that will be involved in the possibility of such a mining development going ahead in the national park. In the National Parks Ordinance that was introduced into this House by the former Majority Leader, there was specific provision made for a plan of management by which mining could take place inside national parks. The provisions under which this could happen were pretty clearly spelt out and there was not much grey area at all,

The honourable member for Arnhem said the government had abandoned the Fox recommendation on sequential mining on uranium. I believe that is not really a very honest statement and does reflect the honourable member's lack of understanding of the introduction of mining projects on stream. Whether we like it or not, the development of mining operations in the uranium province is going to be sequential. There is a development and an exploration period. We have a period now for the study of environmental issues under the Environmental Impact Act. We have a construction and planning period, and then we have the period of production. Each one of these periods could involve between 12 and 18 months, for each phase for each mine.

To my knowledge the environmental impact study on the Ranger project is complete. It would now be in a period of planning and construction, given the government's go ahead and the final

agreements on finance. It would be in that period, I would believe, for two to three years before it comes into production. To my knowledge, Noranda is still in the exploration stage where it will be for some time to come and it cannot move into the next stage until the exploration has been done. The next stage is the environmental impact study and then it moves into the construction phase. Pancontinental, I believe, is still in the exploration stage. They have done a lot of work towards the compilation of their environmental impact study but it will be some time before they could get into construction. For the honourable member to infer that the government has abandoned the recommendations of sequential mining shows a total lack of understanding, and really complete ignorance of the total situation in the development of mining projects.

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

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I move that the honourable member be given an extension of time,

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): The honourable member also made some suggestive inference that the job opportunity for people in the Northern Territory would be nothing like the job opportunity that has been inferred by the Fox report. It would seem to me that he is quite prepared to accept some aspects of the Fox report and not others.

Anybody who has had anything to do with mining operations - and I would take the Opposition Leader as a man who has been involved in the scene, and myself and the honourable member for Nhulunbuy - would have no doubt in his mind about the opportunity for employment available to all members of the community and the way the spin-off reflects throughout the whole community. It is not just a figure plucked from the air. There is a calculation for the number of jobs that will be involved, and for the spin-off to the community in the back-up of supply services that such a community as Gove and Tennant Creek needs from everywhere else. But while there might be some bone of dis-

content over the actual final number of jobs available, there can be no doubt that the job impact on the Territory will be significant. It cannot be anything else.

The honourable member made some spurious reference to overseas investment - alluding, I believe, to the fact that most of the benefits of this operation were going to flow from the Arnhem Land province to the overseas capitalist dogs that are raping the peoples of the world. Perhaps I could reflect on the government's statement of early days where they have handed down a very firm attitude towards the amount of capital that overseas companies may have in energy projects in Australia. I believe the figure of 25% was the figure that the government has put on the possible overseas content in Australian energy projects. For companies like Noranda and Pancontinental to bring their Australian holding up to 75% is a matter for themselves. How they do it is entirely up to them. For companies such as Peko-EZ, who are the principals of Ranger, there is no problem. These companies would probably be 90% Australian. I think the reference was most unfortunate.

The honourable member also went on to refer to the pollution at Gove and how it had been neglected. I would just like to bring to the attention of the Chamber that one of the very first jobs I was involved in when I was given an executive portfolio in the Assembly was an involvement over the pollution at Gove, both in the sea and with the fact that the company could not contain the sands that were coming out of the mill because the government had not granted it additional leases. The company was absolutely beside itself as to where to pump the stuff because it had no legal leases on which to put it, despite the fact that the government of the day that allowed the project to go ahead guaranteed the company leases at their request for the storage of the tailings out of the process and the milling plant. The minister of the day was tardy in meeting his obligations and any unfortunate pollution that has arisen at Gove, I believe, can be traced back to the people who were tardy in handing over the leases and

providing the mechanisms by which the company could dispose of its problems.

The honourable member has raised again the issue of public debate. Public debate has been going on since 1972. Whether he was a party to it or listening to it, or not, is not particularly relevant. But for the rest of the community the debate on whether we should continue mining uranium or get back into the business of mining uranium has been going on. It has been brought to a head by the Justice Fox report and it has been debated up and down this countryside by Apex clubs, Country Women's Associations, church organisations, TDT - anybody you like to name. The public debate could go on for another 20 years. It depends on what your ideas of a public debate are and how long you want it to go on. I believe we have had plenty of public debate, and that we should stop the debating and get on with some work.

The honourable member has referred to the possibility of disposing of waste in Australia. The honourable member is quite right. There is no reason why the waste cannot be disposed anywhere in the world that has a stable geological area. But I have the same feelings as other members of the House, that the disposal of nuclear waste is the responsibility of the people who use the material. That has been the situation since 1947, since we went into the business of nuclear generation. It is still the name of the game, Mr Speaker, and there do not seem to be any suggestions as to why that situation has changed. We are not in the business of nuclear generation. We have no need for it at this time and it is unlikely that we will before the year 2000. But we are not advocating that the waste be dumped in Australia or any such thing. If the honourable member has any information or evidence to suggest this, then I think he should trot it out and table it because it would be an interesting part of this debate.

He goes on to say that the storage of the waste is too expensive and the cost will be passed on to the consumer, and that 20 holes drilled in the sea bed at \$10m a year would be an enormous ex-

pense of \$200m, Mr Speaker, \$200m as a part of the total cost of supplying power generation to everybody in the world who is getting his power from nuclear reactors is chicken feed. It is a petty cash figure. We are talking about 164 reactors churning out more electricity in any one of them than we generate in Australia altogether. The honourable member has not the slightest understanding of what it is all about.

The honourable member went on to make certain reflections on industrial safety. I would like to propose to the House that if we were to abandon nuclear power generation and return, if we could, to the concept of total coal generation, given the ratio of accidents in the nuclear industry and in the coal mining industry, and if the coal mining industry were to take over and totally replace nuclear generation, we would kill 60,000 coal miners before the end of this century. And we have not had a death yet in nuclear power generation. No one has proven that...

Mr Collins: Rubbish!

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member says "Rubbish". Who died and where was it and when was it? And did he die from a direct result of contamination?

I would also like to bring to the attention of honourable members the fact that we have been mining uranium in the Northern Territory since 1954. We went into construction in 1951, started mining in 1954. There are many people in the Pine Creek region or living in Darwin or still mining in Tennant Creek who worked at Moline, Rum Jungle, Mary Kathleen and they worked not in open-cut mines, but in the underground mines at Pine Creek where the exposure would be worse than it would be in an open-cut mine. These people are still fine healthy members of our community. They have had no regrets about ever having worked in the mining of uranium and would be more than happy to go back to places like Moline tomorrow, should the mine reopen. I think the statement that the member threw up was nothing but a scare tactic to try and frighten people.

The honourable member went on to compare the pollution and possible contamination to humans who were working in an open-cut mining operation and in a reactor situation. It is an accepted fact that there is an element of contamination risk for people who work in open-cut mining situations, just as there is an element of contamination risk for the man who sits in front of his television. It is there, whether you want it or you do not. But it cannot be compared to the situation of a man working in a reactor because, for the majority of persons working in the reactor situation, there is no possibility of contamination and that is the reality.

The honourable member went on to reflect on the impossibility of storing these enormous amounts of plutonium wastes in the world today. The storage of plutonium has been going on for 40 years and the methods of containing and storing the plutonium now in the glass process, putting it in a stable geological area, an area where it can be retrieved if there are any problems - these processes are well on the way to being made more formal and put into practice in the nuclear generation industry.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member's extension of time has expired.

Mr PERKINS (MacDonnell): I rise in support of the amendment and also the speech made by the member for Arnhem. I must say at the outset that I endorse all his observations in regard to the issue of the mining of uranium and also the conclusions which he made on that particular matter. Unlike the Executive Member for Resources and Health, the member for Arnhem was able to give an honest and direct account of the important issues which concern the whole matter of the mining of uranium in the Northern Territory. It is important that members opposite should realise that the issues which surround the mining of uranium in the Northern Territory are critical. They should be understanding enough to realise that there are some matters of concern to the whole of the Northern Territory and

that there are Territorians who are completely opposed to the mining and development of uranium, in a large part for the reasons which have been outlined by the member for Arnhem.

As the Opposition spokesman on Aboriginal affairs, it is my intention to draw the attention of members to the actual problems which the Aboriginal people face in the Northern Territory in relation to the decision of the Fraser government to mine uranium. I believe the issues about which I will talk are important and critical. I hope all the members opposite will be able to listen with interest and to show some concern about what Aboriginal people feel in relation to the whole question of uranium mining and the related question of Aboriginal land rights.

The second Fox report and the Fraser government's reaction to it highlight the serious difficulties which are faced by Aboriginal people in the Territory in having our rights appreciated adequately in a society which regards us as having insignificant economic and political muscle to even bother a free enterprise government. I heard with interest yesterday the Majority Leader present his speech on uranium mining and the establishment of the Kakadu National Park. I noted that he made only a cursory reference to the part of Aboriginal Australians in the federal government's decision to allow mining in spite of the expressed Aboriginal opposition, indicated on page 9 of the second Fox report:

We have given careful attention to all that has been put before us by them or on their behalf. In the end, we form the conclusion that their opposition should not be allowed to prevail.

This conclusion and the attitude of the Fraser government and the Majority Party is really unacceptable. It is one of the negative aspects of the second Fox report and it does not augur well for those Aboriginal people of the Territory who wish to preserve their sacred lands and culture without any sacrifice to mining and other developmental projects. Does it mean that

might is always right in this kind of conclusion? It may be said that the only losers in the uranium province are likely to be the Aboriginal people. I can assure you that already Aboriginal people are used to losing.

With a degree of what I would call "tokenism", the Fox commission hoped that the mining safeguards and the monetary compensation would provide some reduction of the detriment that Aboriginals would suffer. At the same time, Mr Justice Fox also recognised that, if handled badly, mining could have some disastrous effects. He said to the "New Scientist" in London in June of this year: "Forgoing those millions would be a small price to pay to stave off racial conflict".

It is the potential effects of mining that I now wish to draw to the attention of honourable members. One of the greatest concerns of Aboriginal people is the inevitable influx of thousands of European people to the Ranger area when the mining actually commences and the consequences of this influx. This concern has been expressed to the Ranger inquiry by the former chairman of the Northern Land Council, Mr Silas Roberts, in the following terms:

We are worried that the results of this inquiry will open the doors to other companies who want to dig up uranium on our sacred land. We think that, if they all get in there and they start digging, then we will have towns all over the place and we will be pushed into the sea. We want a fair go to develop. We are human beings. We want to live properly and to grow strong.

In addition, concern has also been expressed by the chairman of the Central Land Council, Mr Wenten Rubuntja, who alludes to the fact that Aboriginal people in Central Australia have not been adequately and properly consulted on the question of mining, including the mining of uranium. I seek leave to have this document incorporated in the Hansard.

Leave granted.

Statement by Wenten Rubutja, Chairman of Central Land Council, Alice Springs, to the Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Ian Viner and the people of Australia.

I heard a lot about this uranium mining and that we gotta wait for this uranium mining. I'm working for the Aboriginal people in Central Australia. I never hear one thing come to me from the Minister in Central Australia. Never hear one news or letter or come up to Centre and see me. Never tell me all about what's going to happen in Australia. I'm in the Centre here. We didn't hear anything. Central Land Council is in the middle. Northern Land Council in the north. Well the Minister never come up to me.

I heard the news about this uranium mining on the radio and I got the Minister's and Prime Minister's words sent to me. That was after. They didn't talk to people in the Centre before they decided.

In Land Council everything that comes out from the government we've all got to hear what's going to happen. Who is going to administrate the Aboriginal people? Who is going to be responsible when the uranium mining starts for the Aboriginal people? People still not know plenty about legal rights yet. Government wants to go ahead for the uranium mining. We all still myall (ignorant) about this yet. We only know about traditional country. How is it going to work?

Why I'm worrying about the Aboriginal people up the Top End is because we're all connected from our separate countries but the dreamtime spiritual life been going through from one end to the other end of the country. I saw them when I was up in Darwin. I saw people were not properly right yet so I'm worrying about all the people, all the way from Alice Springs to Darwin and all over.

If this is going to start I think our spiritual life is going to be dragged away from us cause we can't

follow any more culture because everything is going to be controlled by the destroying. Who's gonna stand for the sacred sites, for the wildlife, for the land and the people. All the things about the country for the Aboriginal people are going to be lost.

The government wants to know the traditional country. We're going to lose the ceremonies if the government carries on. It's going to be lost forever. If government wants to know about Aboriginal culture and Europeans want to know, well we know every site. Some old people know it all but before everything goes down because of mining we want to hear all about Aboriginals land and uranium.

We haven't even got our land claims yet for us to settle on the land. We can't stay where we are. People took the land but we did a good job for these people still: fencing, making bores, yards, droving, cattle mustering. The Aboriginal people worked for the stations and then went to the settlements. The government send Woodward and promised we could have the land. But we want to get the land and settle down. We don't want the mining yet. We want to settle down and then we can think about the mining.

We've got the power now. We've got the vote. We vote to win or lose our land. We got to still go for education but for what? What will the kids get? We want the kids to know the culture.

The royalty's been promised. But the land is the main thing. The Aboriginal people aren't deciding now. Prospecting is still going on. Promises, promises from the Prime Minister. I saw him on TV. He said everything would be good and safe for Aboriginal people and we would get the royalties. But there's no use in promises if you don't know what they're doing. People are living on the wild country. It will be wrecked if the exploring and mining goes ahead. The government can't go ahead with both sides. Are we going to have land claim or mining on the land? We

don't like both happening at once. The Aboriginal people want to talk to Viner before the government goes ahead with this prospecting because we don't really know what's going to happen to us.

It's no use the Prime Minister saying he's doing the right thing by Aboriginal people. We've got no news, no idea about the mining.

*Wenten Rubuntja
1st September 1977
Alice Springs N.T.*

Mr PERKINS: I also wish to draw to the attention of members that concern has been expressed by the chairman of the Central Land Council about the fact that Aboriginal people in Central Australia have not had adequate time and opportunity to consider the full implications of the whole question of uranium mining or other kinds of mining development. I draw your attention also to the statements made earlier by the honourable member for Arnhem when he raised this point. I completely endorse his comments.

The Fox commission also recognises the detrimental impact. The report states:

... a European community within or adjacent to an Aboriginal traditional society has always caused the breakdown of the traditional culture and the generation of intense social and psychological stresses within the Aboriginals.

I would say that minimising European-Aboriginal contact would require some proper controls on both sides but more particularly amongst the Europeans. To be realistic, I think that no government would undertake any such action even if it were willing to do so, or even on Aboriginal request, for fear of reprisals from European groups. Usually the restrictions are enacted on Aboriginal people as in the case of controls on alcohol usage. However, the Europeans who are expected to enter the area must be made to understand and accept the different ethic of Aboriginal social organisation. They have to recognise that Aboriginals do

not want to adopt a European work ethic and that there are many groups who feel that they do not want to be incorporated into a European society which is not really willing and prepared to take account of their needs and desires.

Not only is the proposed uranium development and the establishment of mining town sites of deep concern to Aboriginal people, but also tourism is a question which concerns them. The Majority Leader yesterday referred to tourism as an economic benefit from the establishment of the Kakadu National Park, yet the second Fox report states, on page 213:

It is quite vital that a large or sudden influx of tourists be prevented. Tourist accommodation should, for the time being, be found outside the park or at one or two carefully selected places within it; the choice should remain with the Aboriginals and the park authority.

The federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, in his statement on uranium development and its impact on Aboriginal society to the federal parliament, said that Aboriginal people will be consulted on the plan of management of the national park and the proposed mining town sites in the Kakadu National Park in order that Aboriginal interests will be protected. However, this can never be effective unless Aboriginal people are able to make the final decision rather than being involved only at the consultation level. This should apply to all areas of concern to Aboriginal groups. I believe it is the responsibility of the Majority Party to ensure that the federal government implements its commitment in this regard to the Territory's Aboriginal community.

I believe the control of the European contact is not the only problem that faces Aboriginal people. I believe that what is worse is that Aboriginal people would appear to be less aware of the possible effects of pollution. I refer to the pollution of water and of the air. Aboriginal people in the area are more closely involved in the food chain, and are therefore more highly

susceptible to contamination from this source in addition to air-borne contaminants,

I say to you, honourable members of this Assembly, that I believe one of the serious problems which faces Aboriginal people at the moment is the pressure which is being placed on them to make and supply some quick decisions on some tremendously complex issues which really could determine the future well-being of these communities and other communities right around Australia for generations to come. The attitude of the Fraser government, to rush to mine uranium before adequate and proper public discussion of all the issues involved, is particularly serious for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory where debate on this issue is virtually non-existent among the white community let alone within Aboriginal communities which are basically handicapped by isolation, illiteracy and a lack of understanding of the complexities and implications of mining, including the mining of uranium. There are communities of a few hundred Aboriginal people who are now being required to consider an influx of thousands of Europeans into their midst with the proposed establishment of this new mining development when the impact of even a single European is already catastrophic.

Mr Justice Woodward in his report on Aboriginal land rights assumed that the freeze on mining activity in Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory, which incidentally was to last until 1 January this year, would be a two year breathing space for Aboriginals to consider the ramifications of mining and to establish the support organisations such as the Aboriginal land councils of the Northern Territory. In fact, the land councils really only came into existence on a formal basis on 26 January this year with some limited staff, having spent the last two years in interminable debate over the content of the federal Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

Now Aboriginal communities affected by mining development are under further pressure in view of the Fraser government's decision to mine uranium and

there is a serious risk that their rights and interests will be overridden, despite any objections which they may have to any kind of mining development whatsoever on their sacred lands or on their traditional lands. A situation of this kind amongst Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory is unprecedented. It reflects the real lack of concern of the Fraser government, and in fact also the Majority Party of the Northern Territory, for Aboriginal rights and interests to be adequately recognised and accepted. The decision to mine uranium could well have disastrous consequences for those traditional Aboriginal communities who are directly affected by the uranium mining in the Territory, let alone the rest of the Territory community and the Australian community at large. It could lead to the wholesale destruction and rape of Aboriginal traditional lands and culture, which have survived for tens of thousands of years.

In view of this imminent risk the traditional Aboriginal communities, especially in the uranium province, have opposed the mining of uranium despite the royalty payments and other material benefits which they may gain. Already the honourable member for Arnhem has alluded to this particular matter and has also drawn the attention of the Assembly to the quote in the second report of the Fox commission. There is no need for me at this stage to reiterate that quote. Having found this fact, that the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Ranger area actually oppose the mining, the Fox commission agreed that mining is incompatible with Aboriginal interests. I believe this is one of the key findings of the Fox commission in the second report which has been almost ignored by the Fraser government and other people who support the decision to go ahead and mine uranium. Therefore it is totally immoral and unacceptable that the Fraser government and the Majority Party should ignore these facts and proceed to endanger the whole way of life of Aboriginal communities.

Now that the decision to mine uranium has been taken, Aboriginal communities are being forced to accept token

royalty payments and land rights as full compensation for acceptance of a decision which will threaten the very basis of their existence, as well as the very survival of our millions of other Australians. The decision of the Fraser government, I believe, has now really put us on a course of potential and perhaps unavoidable racial confrontation of significant proportions, a fear which has been expressed also by Mr Justice Fox on a recent visit to London in June of this year, when he made the comment to the "New Scientist" that I have already mentioned.

In our opinion, there are certain steps which are essential before any mining proposal ought to proceed on Aboriginal land. Firstly, the Aboriginal community affected has to be given as much time as they require to examine the mining proposals in full detail and these proposals ought to be properly translated into their own language and in terms which are understandable to the whole of the community. They should be provided with the funds to send representatives to existing mines so that they may see at first hand the consequences of mining development.

Secondly, we believe there must be research by, for example, such groups as the CSIRO into other potential but less destructive economic projects which could be adopted as alternatives on this land and, in particular, in areas which are near Aboriginal sacred and traditional lands. Only then can Aboriginals really be said to have a free choice about the mining of uranium in the uranium province.

Thirdly, any mining on Aboriginal land, whether it be exploration or actual development, ought to be subject to Aboriginal veto. It can no longer be good enough for Australians to accept that Aboriginal interests are secondary to mining development.

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): Mr Speaker, the subject of uranium and the points raised in the amendment before the House at the moment are very broad and there have been many thousands of publications produced on the subject on both sides of the fence. It is a

matter, perhaps, of individuals having to wade through them all, trying to pick out the most biased aspects, dismissing them and boiling it down to what seem to be reasonable statements and assumptions in forming their own opinions.

I will not speak very long this afternoon on the amendment. My major debate on uranium was delivered to this House some months back in the previous Assembly. But in the amendment before the House, the honourable member for Arnhem brings to the House's attention the subject of public debate; in fact, he claims there has not been enough of it. It is difficult really to determine when there has been enough debate. What sort of gauge do we use to say there has been enough public debate or that the public are informed sufficiently to have made up their minds? Perhaps one of the only ways you could do it would be to hand-deliver a copy of the Fox report to every Australian and then ensure that he reads every word, and then ask him for his opinion. That is rather an impractical suggestion even if it is perhaps a good one. The honourable member for Arnhem mentioned that the people of Australia have not been told of the dangers of uranium mining. He did not go forward to say that the people have also not been told of the implications of not mining uranium or the benefits that can be achieved from mining and using uranium. He only mentioned that the people have not been told of the dangers.

The subject of disruption to the lives of people as a result of mining in the uranium province in the Northern Territory was touched on at length by the honourable member for MacDonnell. It is unfortunately true that mining in the area will disrupt somewhat the lives of Aboriginals there. That cannot be denied. No matter where mining takes place, if there are indigenous people in the area, it must play some role in disrupting their lives whether they be Aboriginals or otherwise. I am quite sure that, if the uranium finds were found under Darwin and they were 20% of the world's reserves and 99% of Australia's reserves, there would be quite a lot of disruption to peoples' lives. It would not be left in the

ground solely because we had to pull down churches and schools and hospitals. You can bet your life that it would be done.

We should also consider the disruption to peoples' lives if we do not use uranium. That is one of the key issues in the whole question of whether morally we should or should not mine it and sell it. There would be disruption to the lives of millions of people on the earth today who could possibly face starvation or freezing to death if they do not have a satisfactory alternative energy source. It seems we are just discarding the question of disruption to those peoples' lives; after all, they are a few thousand miles away so perhaps they do not really matter.

I turn to the question of wastes which is mentioned in the amendment. The problem of disposing of nuclear wastes is with us. We cannot just hope it will go away if we do not mine our uranium. Even if the rest of the world's uranium reserves were left in the ground, there are millions of cubic feet of high-level uranium wastes in existence which have to be disposed of in a satisfactory manner. The United States alone in its defence projects has produced enormous quantities of waste. At the moment, they are being stored until suitable long-term storage methods are fully investigated. We have no idea what high-level waste Russia might have because a country like that probably would not allow Fox-type inquiries into their mining and disposal of uranium. We do not know how they look after the environment there. I do not say we should go ahead because perhaps they are not looking after the environment; I am saying that the problem is with us. We cannot just turn our backs on the disposal of uranium waste by saying: "Do not dig any more of it up."

The fanatical opponents of uranium mining - and I would be quick to admit that there would be many genuine people opposed to uranium mining - who seem to lead the anti-uranium movement would not rest if the decision was taken that Australia should leave it all in the ground or that the world should fold up its existing nuclear generation plants.

They would turn again to other things and question the massive destruction to the environment through the oil and coal which would have to be used and which is used today. It would have to be used in far greater amounts than it is today if we folded up the uranium industry. The comparison between nuclear damage to the environment and coal and oil damage could be debated all afternoon. However, the fact is that in terms of physical scars to the earth, coal mining certainly is far more devastating than uranium could ever be. We are told that virtually the whole of the eastern side of Australia is made up of coal. We have enough for 1,000 years if we wanted to dig it up. I wonder how Australians would react to strip mining the whole of the eastern coast of Australia. Surely we do not condone that sort of activity as an alternative to using nuclear power.

Although it is running out, we still have a small quantity of oil left. If we are going to dig up every last drop of it, we will be spilling thousands of tons every year into the sea as is done now through accidental spillages and otherwise. We have massive disruption to the environment through the chemicals that are spewed from chimneys and factories, from generating electricity or from turning the wheels of industry generally by the burning of these fossil fuels. Leaving uranium in the ground will not touch the whole problem of despoiling the world. I stated in my speech earlier in the year that I believe uranium is the cleanest form of energy we could possibly turn to and it could in fact be the saviour of the world's environment.

These greenies - the fanatical ones - would have us live in caves if they had their way. They seem to oppose all forms of advancements in civilisation and standards of living because all forms of civilisation destroy the environment in one way or another. We have to cut down trees, clear land, dig holes and generally despoil some of the environment if we want to advance our living standards. The fanatical greenies seem to go so far as to even question the very basis of our society as being one that should continually grow and develop. However, I do respect

the rights of those Australians who do genuinely feel reservations about the mining of uranium, who feel it is wrong: I respect their right to lawful protest.

The Fox report can be read many ways and certainly is read in many ways. You can ponder through the thing and pick out little statements here and there that suit your argument. I think it is most unfortunate that Mr Fox has written his very expensive document in this way. However, turning to the recommendations, we see that he made a couple that seem to be a bit difficult to dispute:

The hazards of mining and milling uranium, if those activities are properly regulated and controlled, are not such as to justify a decision not to develop Australian uranium mines.

The inquiry was a very detailed study: it consulted probably most of the world's top experts on all aspects of uranium. The commissioners travelled very widely and no doubt pondered very deeply and, after weighing all that evidence, they make that statement. They stated that the hazards involved in the ordinary operation of nuclear power reactors, if those operations are properly regulated and controlled, are not such as to justify a decision not to mine and sell Australian uranium.

It seems to me that Mr Justice Fox indicated fairly clearly that, providing the proper safeguards were undertaken and everything he recommended was carried out or there were viable alternatives, then we could, with reasonable safety, mine and sell Australian uranium. I believe that is what the Australian government is doing. It is not taking a black and white, overnight decision to sell it because there is money in it. It is taking a decision which will cost an astronomical sum to implement. The sum will be spent on the environmental protection procedures and generally monitoring the Australian side of the operation and also having some regard and control over the operations in countries to whom we sell our uranium.

In conclusion, the honourable member for MacDonnell mentioned that the Aboriginal people did not want uranium mined in the Alligator River region. They did want a fair go but they did not want the place to have towns spring up all over it; they would be pushed into the sea, I think were the words he used.

Mr Perkins: No, they were not my words.

Mr PERRON: Well, those were the words used by the Aboriginals from the area or their representative. There have never been any proposals, of course, to put towns all over the area. One wonders just what motives the people who tell the Aboriginals these things really have. Someone obviously planted these ideas in their minds, some story of horrible things which would happen in the Alligator River region. I wonder if they also told them about the hospitals that will be built out there if there are mining towns, and the schools and airports, and the roads and the job opportunities that will be there. I wonder if they were told these things by the people who obviously spread these stories among the Aboriginal people of the terrible things that would happen to them if a uranium mine or several uranium mines were developed in the area.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Yes, Mr Speaker, the people who live in the area have been told about those terrible things, such as roads and hospitals, and have also been told about the hotels and the destruction of their own culture. That is why they are frightened about uranium mining.

This is the first proper debate in the Legislative Assembly on the uranium mining industry. It is true that a debate took place earlier this year but, as everybody who took part in that debate recognises, it was a debate at perhaps a premature stage because not everybody had had a chance to read the second Fox report. I must say that the level of debate on this occasion, I think all would agree, has been of an extremely high standard. It is a very

good thing that we are able to rationally discuss the merits and dangers of the uranium mining industry. It is a shame that the Executive Member for Finance and Planning introduced such intemperate words as "fanatics" and chose to denigrate people who for their own reasons oppose the mining of uranium. It does him and his argument no good to caricature people as "greenies" and so on. In fact, his own leader gave the lie to those sorts of intemperate remarks.

The Majority Leader in his statement sought from this side of the House an acceptance of the idea of a watchdog committee on the question of the environment. I am happy to say, in line with our policy on the question of uranium mining, we would agree to the establishment of such a committee. The Opposition spokesman on mining and environment, the honourable member for Arnhem, will represent the opposition on that committee and I understand the honourable member for Nightcliff will also be on that committee.

There has been much discussion on the question of how much public debate there ought to be. The Executive Member for Finance and Planning raised the question correctly. When has there been enough discussion on the question of mining of uranium? It is not true to say that the uranium debate has been going on since 1972. Matters concerning uranium have been discussed by individual people for many, many years. That is true, but there is no doubt that the real debate commenced with the issuing of the second Fox report and there is no doubt that that discussion is going on and that the people of Australia require more discussion on it. It seems to me, however, that it is appropriate and proper to put some kind of a limit on the length of public discussion. It is quite true I suppose that it could go on and on, in the words of the Executive Member for Resources and Health, for 20 years or so. There is eminent sense in having a moratorium on the mining of uranium to allow a public debate to take place but to place some sort of time limit on it so that it does put a finality to it. Secondly and I think most importantly - and I think a matter which has not been

touched on by anybody to date - it would give those people who say there is the technology available for the storage of waste products time to come forward with the goods. It is quite incorrect for people to say that we now have the technology. That just is not so. The Majority Leader in his statement said it is there, it just has not been used. It most certainly has not been used and certainly it is not clear to anybody, so far as the Fox commission is concerned, that these safeguards are there. But nonetheless, if we were to have a moratorium, say for 12 months, to allow public discussion on the matter of uranium mining that would put a lever on those people who say the technology exists to produce the goods.

It seems to be quite extraordinary that people should pooh-pooh the idea of a referendum. In fact it seems to be very much in line with the thoughts of my colleagues, the members opposite, who try to treat uranium as some other mineral substance. They try to brush it under the carpet as anything else that you find in the ground. The Executive Member for Resources and Health said the Fox commission was just one of those thousands of commissions which the Labor government had set up. Well, it is my belief and it is my party's belief that that just is not so. Uranium happens to be a highly radioactive substance, and for that reason and because of the dangers it presents to humanity, it is well to treat it separately and individually to give it very great thought as to just what you are going to do with it.

Such a delay would not really affect the economies of the uranium mining industry. I refer to the second Fox report, page 180, where the commission discusses the question of a two year and a 5 year delay and the economic impact that would have on the uranium mining industry:

A two year delay, with sales lost in those two years being made up at the end of the century and with sales in all other years unchanged, would result in only a small reduction (about 4%) in net present worth.

Above that he says:

These losses would be substantially reduced if the delay in the start of uranium development were followed by higher rates of production in later years, or if higher average real prices were received for uranium exports as a result of the delay.

So far as the economics of the proposition are concerned a delay of some two years, according to Fox, would not mean such a great economic hardship at all, and think of the pluses which that delay would bring.

It is my belief that there is no sense in attempting to divide the Australian community on the question of uranium mining and, in fact, the actual mining itself is not at issue. It is what happens with the waste, how one can reconcile the seeming problems which are thrown up about storage of the waste from the processing plants. If it can only do that, if a moratorium could produce the answer to that, in my opinion such a delay would be well justified, especially given the statement in the report that it will not make a very great economic difference on the whole operation.

Despite the fine words which are written in the glossy document which the Australian government produced, at very great cost to ourselves - I do not argue with that cost - the document "Uranium - Australia's Decision" which the Majority Leader attempted to spend money, apparently around \$4,000 according to the Speaker, this morning by having the whole document incorporated in Hansard - we on this side of the House just do not trust the Fraser government to put into effect what it says.

Let us look at a number of reasons for us coming to that sort of conclusion. It is true, as the Executive Member for Finance and Planning said, that one of the recommendations of the Fox report was that if uranium mining was properly regulated and controlled, there was no reason that it should not continue. It is those very words, the "proper regulation and control" which we worry about. Just recently the

federal government made an interim appointment of a scientist to have the oversight of the problems thrown up by uranium mining. They appointed no one other than a previous employee of the Atomic Energy Commission, a Mr Fry. Certainly I have never met him and I do not wish to denigrate him, but he is a person who has indicated that he supports uranium mining. It would seem to me that it would be appropriate that such an appointment should perhaps consist of three people who have an interest in ensuring that the environment is properly protected. The honourable member for Arnhem correctly raised the problem of the manning of the various authorities which have been set up to oversee the environment and other problems thrown up by uranium mining. He properly raised it because we wonder, with the federal government's current economic policy, just how many people they are going to make available to perform these very important tasks. Certainly the honourable Executive Member for Resources and Health could not give an undertaking on this. In all honesty he was saying, well, we will certainly do what we can. But that is not good enough. What is good enough is that the manpower is provided. We do not know if there is going to be adequate funding for the national park, for example. We need those sorts of guarantees before anyone can say, "Yes, let it go ahead."

There has been much play made on the question of sequential development. The Fox report, if I am correct, pursued the question of sequential development to a very high degree. It staggers me that people can just override these points and say, "Oh well, it will be developed sequentially anyway." I do not know who one is meant to believe in these cases but, if one believes the miners themselves and, in particular, Mr Grey from Pancontinental, they are ready to go ahead just as soon as they get the nod. It was spelt out in unmistakable terms in the Fox report that both because of the impact on the Aboriginal community and also because, by having construction work in uranium areas completed all at once, one would have a very great surplus of workers out of work in the Northern Territory, the Fox commission demanded that, if

the operation was to go ahead, it was to go ahead sequentially.

The Majority Leader spoke briefly about the trade union movement and what its attitude was towards the mining of uranium. As a person who has had some influence within the trade union movement and some experience of that movement, I can say to him that there is not a great deal of sense in encouraging conflicts within union organisations. He made the remark that the AWU has said it will mine it, so why cannot everybody else wake up to himself. I think the point to be made is this: one is encouraging all kinds of dog fights if one seeks to import into the Northern Territory organisations which have no interest whatever in the Northern Territory. It is far better, in my opinion, and I suppose I have some interest in the matter, to look to organisations - and this does not just apply to trade unions - which have an entire apparatus working within the Northern Territory, which know it and which are prepared to have some empathy with it.

Mr Robertson: And shares your views.

Mr ISAACS: The honourable executive member may be somewhat surprised about some of my views. I do not know whether he knows all of them at all.

It is my opinion that the trade union movement took a responsible attitude at the ACTU congress in attempting to find some unity within Australia on the question of uranium mining. Let us not forget this point. It is not so much the union which is going to mine it; if it is mined, it will be mined by workers. What has to be looked at is which organisation can best look after the interests of those workers in the Northern Territory. I commend those remarks concerning indigenous organisations to the Assembly.

I turn very briefly to the remarks made by the honourable Executive Member for Resources and Health. He spoke about the export licences granted in 1972. I say this to him, and again it reflects on the manner in which the licences were granted: not all but some of these licences were granted in the

period between the issuing of the writs for the 1972 federal election and the election day itself. The federal government which took office in late 1972 was saddled with those licences. In my opinion, those licences were granted in a most improper manner, but they were granted. I do not think that that justifies it but it is as well to be aware that that is the case.

The Executive Member for Resources and Health said that we defused the issue of uranium during the election campaign. He said he was prepared to fight on the issue, but we were not. I think it is true to say that, in some areas, the issue of uranium mining did have some prominence in the last election with varying results. Without going into detail, it is my opinion that, in one seat, uranium mining played a very important part in electing a Labor candidate and, in one of the other seats, uranium mining played an important part in electing a Country Liberal Party candidate. I do not think it is true to say that one can paint a broad brush. I believe that people are prepared to wait some time - be it 12 months or some appropriate time - during which some of the problems which are gnawing at them will be solved.

It is quite clear, as one of the honourable members opposite said, that uranium mining will have an impact on the employment and on the economy of the Northern Territory. That is indisputable. Any industry which establishes itself will do that. What is at issue is just how much of an impact that industry will have. It is very easy to take figures selectively as the Majority Leader did, from the report by W.D. Scott & Co. which was commissioned by the Ranger people. Although it is true, as mentioned in the Majority Leader's speech, that uranium mining may increase earnings in the Northern Territory between 16% and 26%, he would well know that that was an outside figure taken by them. The more acceptable figure in the Scott report - and this is backed up by the Fox report - is somewhere in the area of 3.5% to 5% or, according to the Scott report, a maximum of 7%.

Much has also been said in the Scott report about uranium mining being able to lessen the burden to the Australian taxpayer of the cost of the Northern Territory. Indeed, the burden will be lessened, again according to the Scott report figures, only by an amount of 7%. This is nowhere near the amount that the Majority Leader was suggesting in his statement. The picture painted by the people who support uranium mining is always much rosier than it actually is. It does not do anybody any good to exaggerate those figures.

For the Executive Member for Resources and Health's benefit, the honourable member for Arnhem was perfectly correct when he talked about the Fox report's suggestion that Noranda should not go ahead. I refer him to page 335 of the second report. In the conclusions to his recommendations, chapter 20, item 3:

That the Noranda mine not be developed, at least for the time being.

If that is not what the member for Arnhem was saying, then I do not know what he was saying. It certainly gives the lie to the statements of the executive member.

I will refer now to pollution at Gove and the question of the storage of plutonium waste. These are things which frighten people and we must find the answers to them. As far as the pollution at Gove is concerned, the answer given by the executive member was most illuminating; it was certainly one that I had not heard before. The Fox report was highly critical of the role played by the Australian government departments in that area. The departments were criticised and I am sure the executive member is not suggesting that the minister himself should have been overseeing it.

Another matter is the storage of plutonium waste and this is the frightening aspect of the uranium mining industry. Just recently we had a report that from one of the nuclear power plants in America there is some unaccounted waste. If that is not enough to send a chill through your

bones, I do not know what is. Here we have these many cubic feet, as the Executive Member for Finance and Planning said, of nuclear waste from nuclear power plants and we find that they have lost some. Where are they? If that is not enough to frighten you, I do not know what is. I was interested to hear the Majority Leader say there is no intention of Australia's storing other countries' radio-active wastes. I must admit that I have not heard that from any spokesman of the Australian government and I wonder whether there is a great deal of backing to what he is saying. Certainly, during the election campaign members of his own party were saying slightly different things.

If I can sum up, what I am saying to the Assembly is that a great deal can be gained by a moratorium on uranium mining to ensure that the public is properly advised and properly debates the question of uranium mining. A period should be fixed at the end of which a referendum should be held and this will give the mining companies and their advisers time to produce the goods to satisfy the people about those very important matters which are worrying them. I take great pleasure in supporting the amendment moved by the member for Arnhem.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): I can tell you what will be gained by a moratorium on the mining, milling and export of uranium - more unemployment, more stagnation, more regression and just about everything that is going to send the Northern Territory backwards instead of forwards, as the Majority Party wants to see it progress into the 1980s. Our opponents want the Northern Territory to be totally dependent on government handouts; they want to see no backbone to the Northern Territory, no infrastructure of industry which will follow on from this decision; they want to see us the beggars of the Australian Treasury, going down there cap-in-hand every time, every year, every August, "more money, please, Mr Treasurer; just give it to us because we have not got anything up there. We have opposed every constructive decision you have ever taken but we just want another handout. Here we are once again".

I find the Opposition Leader's statements totally hypocritical when I compare them with what he said to the press during the last election campaign. I quote from the "Northern Territory News" of 20 July 1977 "Mr Isaacs: if the federal government decides to go ahead with the mining of uranium in the Northern Territory, a Labor controlled Legislative Assembly would help it mine it". And what have we got here? We have an amendment to our motion commending the decision to mine uranium and set up the Kakadu National Park - and I emphasise that, to set up the Kakadu National Park - we have this amendment condemning the Australian government's decision on these three bases. What hypocrisy is that! What resiling! What this man, what this political harlot was prepared to say during the election campaign to gain power ...

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker! I am pretty thick-skinned but those words are totally offensive to me.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I will withdraw the word "harlot", and replace it with the word "poltroon", if I may.

Mr SPEAKER: You will have to withdraw the word "poltroon", too.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Very well, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you withdraw the word?

Mr EVERINGHAM: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Now, let us look at the basis of this amendment to our motion which was supported by the Opposition Leader as recently as 20 July. Of course, a lot of changes have taken place in the Australian Labor Party since then. I think they have shifted their ground at least three, perhaps four, even five times. It is something like a maze, trying to keep contact with what they are doing on uranium. Even the federal Opposition Leader, I think, is in trouble. At the moment Mr Whitlam does not know what his party's decisions are. Some of his members are thinking of unseating him, I believe, because he seems to have said the wrong thing last weekend.

But let us look at these three bases for this proposed amendment which I totally reject. The first is: "the government's abandonment of the Fox report's recommendations on the sequential mining of uranium". If I may say so, I think we have been debating our motion through most of this supposed debate on the amendment. We have not heard too much really in support of these three particular so-called thrusts by the Opposition. But let me quote this, the Prime Minister's statement - and I think I can rely on this as a rational explanation; I would seek to go little further:

Sequential development - With respect to the Alligator River Region, the Inquiry envisaged a planned sequence of development of uranium deposits. The Government has decided that in view of the complexity of the further development of each of the projects, it would be impossible properly to specify the sequence of mining, either as to order or timing.

And it is a fact, Mr Speaker, that at the present time an environmental impact statement has been filed, I understand, by the Jabiluka concern, Pancontinental, and who is to say how long that will take to be processed by the federal government before the Jabiluka project can get off the ground? I should think it would certainly be some time.

The Government notes, however, that the requirements it has set down and the processes of negotiation which must be carried on between the mining companies and Aboriginal land owners will in fact lead to any development being of a sequential nature.

Of course it will be, because we know the nature of the long drawn-out negotiations with the Aboriginal land owners that must take place. Ranger might be getting off the ground next year but who is to say that Pancontinental will? Noranda is merely a gleam in someone's eye at this stage and Queensland Mines may never take place.

The Inquiry was not concerned to examine uranium development outside

the Region. The Government sees no reason at this time to specify the sequence of uranium projects elsewhere in Australia. But it would consider any advice on this aspect given to it by the Uranium Advisory Council and other appropriate bodies.

And so well it might, as the government, whilst it says that sequential development will take place as a matter of practice, is apparently prepared to listen to further argument on the matter, I do not think you could find a more reasonable decision in all the circumstances.

Now we turn to point (b) "the government's refusal to allow a full and proper public debate to take place". Well, quite honestly, I find this the most nauseating of all three of the grounds, because I cannot honestly remember a time when I have not had questions about uranium mining in the Northern Territory being rammed into this ear and that ear.

I think I represent the views of a lot of Australians when I say I am sick of this debate. I am fed up. I want a government that is going to take a decision, not a government that is going to talk, set up more inquiries, wishy-wash, not prepared to accept any political responsibility, walks away from the onus - that is the Whitlam government's style, not the Fraser government's style. The Fraser government puts its money where its mouth is. When it finds a hard political problem, where it knows the practical realities of Australia's position, it does not walk away from the decision in the light of selfish opinionated views by a minority of the population. It says: "We will take a decision; we have met all the criteria of that wishy-washy mob that were there for three years. We have met them all and we now take a decision".

It is three months or more since the second Fox report was handed down and all that talking has taken place; the government has listened to it; there was a debate in the federal House and the government has made its decision. I support that decision and I know any person who is interested in the future

of the Northern Territory supports it, because he knows he might as well pack up his bags and head south if something does not happen in this Territory soon. And what is happening in this Territory is supported by all the evidence contained in the Fox report.

We have heard the worry about the Aboriginal decision-making process from the honourable member for MacDonnell. But I quote to you the words of Mr Silas Roberts, the then chairman of the interim Northern Land Council and who became the first chairman of the actual council. This will take a little time and I hope it will not cost \$4,000 or anything like that to incorporate it in the public records of the Northern Territory which I seem to regard as rather important in an area where the lives of everyone in the Northern Territory is concerned, though some people are worried about small expenses.

It is true that the people who are belonging to a particular area are really part of that area and if that area is destroyed they are also destroyed. In my travels throughout Australia, I have met many Aborigines from other parts who have lost their culture. They have always lost their land and by losing their land they have lost part of themselves. By way of example, they are like Christians who have lost their soul and don't know where they are - just wandering. We in the Northern Territory seem to be the only ones who have kept our culture.

And as part of this decision, the government has said, "We recommend the acquisition of Mudginbarry and Munmarlary pastoral leases; we grant in accordance with the recommendations of the Fox commission those areas of land for these various plans". Now, hasn't the government met, in every respect in its decision, that statement of Mr Silas Roberts?

Mr Collins: Read all of it.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Yes, I will read all of it, unlike some who read the line and then leave out the paragraph.

We are worried that we are losing a little bit, a little bit, all of the time. We keep our ceremony, our culture, but we are always worried. We still perform our ceremonies.

Obviously, now that they have their land back, they will have greater incentive to perform their ceremonies. Furthermore they will get their young men's interest again - the young men who have been moving away from the tribal situation.

We are very worried that the results of this Inquiry will open the doors to other companies who also want to dig up uranium on our sacred land. There are so many I find it hard to remember them all but I can remember Ormac, Queensland Mines, Union Carbide, Reynolds Mining, BHP and Pancontinental.

Now, I do not know about that but quite honestly, it seems to conflict with Mr Roberts' presumed agreement of some months ago when he was then chairman of the Northern Land Council and they entered into an agreement with Ormac, I believe it is called, to go into further prospecting rights in Arnhem Land, so ...

Mr Collins: Not true, that's a lie.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member cannot call people liars.

Mr Collins: I withdraw the remark.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I just find that rather strange.

We think if they all get in there and start digging we'll have towns all over the place and we'll be pushed into the sea. We want a fair go to develop. We are human beings, we want to live properly and grow strong.

And what is this decision? This decision is that there is to be one town. It is to be a closed town of 3,500 people. So in that respect, the government has honoured Mr Silas Roberts' views.

We see white men as always pushing. We know white men think differently from us, and they are not all bad. But even this Commission is pushing in its own way. I must explain this because it is very important that our difficulty in this is understood. The trouble is the Aborigines did not run their business the same as the white men. We did not and do not reach decisions in the same way. Our people are not as free to make decisions and give evidence as white men seem to be. If you add to this that most Aborigines are very frightened of white men, you will have a lot of trouble getting much straight talk from Aboriginal people and you will have a lot of trouble getting them to come back to give evidence more than once. These problems are always faced by our field officers. Let me explain a little bit more. We have got to make decisions in respect to land our own way.

Of course, which government passed the Aboriginal Land Rights Act? Was that the Whitlam government? When did it get towards even introducing that sort of legislation? In the very death throes. Which government took it up as soon as it was elected? The Fraser government. Which government pushed it through? Which government passed that legislation? No government but the Fraser government - the government which the Opposition Leader and his cohorts seek to condemn at every stage. Mr Roberts said:

It is a long hard road to final answer. Sometimes a person or group will say "yes" then talk a little bit more and then say "no". Then more talk may take place after a few months and still no final answer. Then all the people who really belong to that country will go over it all again until everyone is sure of his answer and then the answer is given. That may be years after the first talks if the question is a hard one.

We heard from the Opposition Leader that the first talks on these particular matters took place back in 1972 when someone offered them \$5,000. Cer-

tainly, I think that was a very immoral act on behalf of whichever mining company made that offer if it knew the implications of the offer and if it knew what was in the ground. The Opposition Leader said the offer has already come up to \$3m and, in those five years, the Aboriginal people have had a great deal of assistance from the interim land council, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and others in their negotiations with the mining companies. I think the Aboriginal people's criteria in respect of this decision have been complied with.

That takes us to leg (c): "the government's deliberately misleading statements regarding the safe disposal of nuclear wastes". I am a politician, like the Opposition Leader: he will say I am misleading and I will say he is misleading. Let me read to you the Hansard of the House of Representatives of 14 September last, page 1078. It is a question without notice to the Minister for Environment, Mr Newman:

Has the Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development seen or heard a statement which claims that uranium and nuclear power is the most violent source of energy known to humanity. Can the Minister say whether the statement is correct?

Mr Newman: I welcome the question asked by the honourable member for Brisbane. It raises issues which are important in this Chamber and for Australians as a whole. I have seen statements by members of the Opposition, particularly the one by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There have been others including those by the Leader of the Opposition. There is no doubt that the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have embarked on a wilful campaign to misrepresent, mislead, confuse and cause fear amongst the people of Australia. They are harsh words but I shall give some examples.

In the last two days, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made the statement referred to by the honourable member for Brisbane. It is quite false. In fact, the operations of the

nuclear industry around the world have a proven record which is such that all the advice to this Government shows that no member of the public has ever been injured through the operations of a nuclear generator and, of the technicians involved, only a handful have ever been involved in an accident. This compares with thousands killed on the roads and hundreds killed by pollution from coal burning generators.

Two Sundays ago, the Leader of the Opposition made an address to the nation. The Prime Minister has already shown the dishonesty of some of the things he has said. I shall point out a few other dishonest statements. The Leader of the Opposition misquoted the Ranger Report in relation to waste. He misrepresented the true state of technology concerning the disposal of waste.

Mr Whitlam: I did not.

Mr Newman: I am willing to give the honourable member the examples. The Leader of the Opposition queries the statements about what the Ranger Commission said. He claimed in his address to the nation that Mr Justice Fox recommended that no mining or export of uranium should take place until the safe disposal of waste had been solved. This is untrue. What Mr Justice Fox and his fellow commissioners said was that the present situation with waste was such that it did not justify a decision by Australia not to export uranium. If the Leader of the Opposition wants the references, they are page 178 of the first report and page two of the second.

The second misrepresentation he made in his address was that there is no technology for the safe handling of waste. That is also untrue. The technology for the handling of high-level radioactive waste exists; it is proven. The technology for the solidification and vitrification of waste which will lead to ultimate disposal does not exist and is being developed on a commercial scale. The vitrification and solidification process will use boro-silicate material

like that which I hold in my hand. It will be encapsulated in containers which, of course, will be many times bigger than this cube which I now show to the House.

We heard something about the cost of that. My friend, the Executive Member for Health and Resources, dealt with that and he described the cost as chicken feed. I second that. We are told that the cost of coal-powered electricity generation will be less than nuclear-powered electricity generation. My friend, the Executive Member for Finance and Planning, indicated the strip mining that would have to take place right along the east coast of Australia if we dig out all these theoretical coal reserves that we have. We would have to transport it to Europe, Japan and every country of Asia. How much do you think that would cost? Isn't it simpler to dig out the uranium which takes very little transportation and then dispose of it through this process of waste disposal which might cost \$200m a year? How many millions of dollars would it cost for transport, for compensation to the people displaced by all the strip mining in areas like Wollongong, Port Kembla, Newcastle, Ipswich, and the massive social disruption? Mr Neville Wran said that we have all these massive coal reserves. He did not say they are right under the long established cities of New South Wales. What hypocrisy!

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

Mr Everingham: I have said enough.

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER: Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr ISAACS: I do. The Majority Leader made a statement attributing to me some words quoted in the "Northern Territory News" of some date in July. There were four journalists at that meeting, only one of whom thought that the words I used were the words he wrote in the

newspaper. I just quote very briefly from the N.T. branch of the Australian Labor Party's policy on minerals and energy what I did say:

If the federal government approves the mining of uranium, we will legislate for strict industrial environmental standards. At the same time, we will resist any moves to use the Northern Territory as a dumping ground for atomic waste.

That is what I said.

Mr SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 7

Noes 12

Mr Collins	Mr Ballantyne
Mr Doolan	Mr Dondas
Ms D'Rozario	Mr Everingham
Mr Isaacs	Mr Harris
Mrs Lawrie	Mr MacFarlane
Mrs O'Neil	Mr Oliver
Mr Perkins	Mrs Padgham-Purich
	Mr Perron
	Mr Robertson
	Mr Steele
	Mr Tuxworth
	Mr Vale

Amendment negatived.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Tiwi): Mr Speaker, as with many other Australians the question of mining and use of uranium is of great interest to me. It is now of particular interest to me as the major deposits are in my electorate and I feel this gives me a special right to comment in this debate. No doubt later on we will also be hearing from the honourable member for Arnhem because the very rich Nabarlek deposit is in that electorate and I am given to understand many of his Aboriginal constituents are much frustrated because it is not being mined. They want it mined and nobody will get on with the job.

I suppose we will also hear from the honourable member for Victoria River in whose electorate is the old Rum Jungle mine and no doubt he will tell us a tale of woe about the problems that

occurred there but, very probably, carefully leaving out the benefits that have occurred there such as the creation of the Batchelor township, one of the most delightful little towns in the Top End and now catering, among other things, for the needs of Aboriginal education. When the Batchelor township was brought into being as a result of the Rum Jungle uranium mine, it was at a time shortly after the last world war when other development in the Top End was non-existent. If this uranium mine had not gone ahead, Darwin today would still have a population nearer 10,000 rather than the 45,000 it now has, after having been given the fillip of a local primary industry at that time.

The subject of uranium is an extremely broad one ranging from the problems of mining the ore to the moral issues of nuclear proliferation. Time does not allow the whole subject to be discussed in detail so it is essential that I confine my remarks to the matters that are of closest concern to my electorate and to the Northern Territory - that is, the matter of mining the uranium in the Alligator Rivers area, the effect this will have on the local people, the environment, the Territory's economy and therefore, ultimately, on all people in the Territory.

Therefore, let us first look at the possible effect the mining is going to have on the local Aboriginals. In doing this, we must first of all examine what the government's intentions are in this regard. For those of you who have followed the Ranger inquiry and have read the second Fox report, you will have seen the main recommendations of the Ranger inquiry relating to the interests of Aboriginals in the Alligator Rivers region. I will not quote them now but they appear on page 2 of the statement by Mr Viner, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

We now know that the Australian government's decision included the decision to accept all these recommendations and they will in due course be implemented to the greater benefit of these people. For once, these people will be given a purpose in life. To

start with, they will be given ownership of their land, and this is the first and most important government decision. I know personally the bitter heartache and frustration of losing one's land. Further, they will be given the opportunity of engaging in satisfying and worthwhile pursuits which will give them a purpose in life and a feeling of being wanted and appreciated. Too many people tend to forget the Aboriginals are the same as everybody else and have the same basic philosophical expectations. It is not through choice that they often lead lives of idleness with the daily routine of trekking to the border store for their white or green cans. It is because they have often not been given opportunities for the workable alternatives. The whole development of the Alligator Rivers area, including the park development, will provide them with these alternatives.

We now turn to the effect on the environment and here there can be no beating about the bush. Mining does create major changes; you cannot dig thousands of tons of ore without changing the landscape and making a bit of noise. However, it can be said that, in this particular case, never has a land system or region been under such careful and detailed scrutiny. The Ranger inquiry would have been one of the most exhaustive investigations into all the possible environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the mining operation. The government has recognised the findings and recommendations of the Ranger inquiry and nearly all these have been accepted by the government in arriving at its decision to proceed with mining.

The decision to accept these recommendations will mean that the most stringent set of controls will be introduced and policed by advisory bodies, supervising authorities and no doubt half a dozen other government agencies all working to ensure that there will be total protection for the water systems, aquatic life, vegetation, residential areas, people working in the area and at the mine, the wildlife and the archaeological heritage. I am satisfied this can be done and should be done.

So often we hear the knockers say, "Look at Rum Jungle". It is one of the most ridiculous comparisons that could be made. Rum Jungle started up after the last war in an atmosphere of couldn't-care-less attitude which was a lingering effect of the destructive nature of wars. There was no study made of environmental needs because there was at the time no awareness of the need to protect our environment. I think this awareness and concern for the environment is the quality that has been lacking in our society and civilisation for far too long and we are fortunate that there have been far-sighted people who have made us aware. I do think that, at times, it is being overplayed to the extent that we are afraid to do simple repairable things for our comfort and well-being.

To get back to Rum Jungle, there was not the awareness in those days and the people in charge did things that would never be countenanced today. I am sorry to say the people in charge were government people and as such were like Caesar's wife. The most damaging thing they did was in the initial years of the operations when they discharged the tailings straight onto the ground so they drained unchecked into the Finnis River. Of course, this damaged the aquatic life of the river and it will take years to recover. Waste heaps are also a problem at Rum Jungle as no provision was made in those days for collecting drainage from the leaching of these heaps - it went straight down the river. Some work has already been done to repair the effects of past neglect but still much more needs to be done and I think it is timely that the federal government has agreed to allocate \$300,000 for the rehabilitation of the Rum Jungle mine.

I think I have dwelt a little long on Rum Jungle but the comparison needed to be brought into perspective. In the Ranger operation, no such methods will ever be used. All tailings will be stored behind a massive and substantial dam. All water from waste heaps will be collected and diverted into collection ponds. Dust will be constantly suppressed. Fumes will be collected and all phases of the operations will be continuously monitored and recorded,

not only at the site but around the site - in the bush, in the waterways and in the air. Modern methods of chemical analysis are now extremely rapid, precise and much more selective and sensitive, enabling down to one part per billion to be measured. This means that slight changes to the required standards will be speedily and accurately detected and the necessary remedial action can be taken at very short notice. I do not think it is readily recognised how important these new methods of chemical analysis really are. In years past, when the chemist was labouring over his bunsen burner to produce the result, enough time could pass for whatever had happened to cause considerable damage. This is not so today. The results are almost immediate and this will play a most important part in ensuring that all the environmental standards are maintained. I feel everything that can be done will be done and I have confidence in the mine-operating staff and the supervising authorities to ensure that full environmental protection will be maintained.

We finally come to the question of the economic benefits that will arise from the development of the mine and, we should also add, the creation of the national park because these two projects are to be developed in harmony. The initial and obvious benefits will become noticeable when the construction of the mill works and the new regional centre is commenced. Many jobs will be created and cash will flow into the Darwin economic scene. One does not need to be an economist to realise that, if \$200m are being spent only 250 kilometres from Darwin, a lot of this money will come into circulation. The air charter companies will benefit; the hotels and motels will be fuller; service industries will be in demand; food and other provisions will be required; the demand for consumer goods will jump and the currently depressed building industry will get its much-needed boost. I do not know what the multiplier effect will be but I would guess it will be quite considerable.

It is all very well for people to talk about the Darwin way of life. We

who have been in Darwin a long time and are fond of the place with all its deficiencies but, at the same time, we have recognised that there must be an economic base to support its continued existence. It cannot live on government spending all the time. The growth of public service institutions should be subservient to the economic needs of the area. They should not be provided only to serve themselves which is, of course, the "taking in each other's washing" syndrome.

Over the years, we have searched for this economic base. This can be created by a number of things such as a free port and trading community, a gambling and tourist mecca, a commercial and finance centre; it can depend on secondary and tertiary manufacturing industries or it can develop its natural resources from the hinterland, be they forestry, agriculture, pastoral or mining. When we look at the list of possibilities, we can remember when one or another has been put forward by different advocates and entrepreneurs but so far we have only a minor tourist industry and some tertiary manufacturing industries which are mainly serving government projects. When we look at our natural resources, we find the nearest we have ever come to developing a forestry industry was when consideration was being given to wood chipping but this did not even get off the ground. Agriculture is practically non-existent and the cattle industry is still in deep recession.

The only viable and economic development is in the mining industry. Over many years, it has supported the towns of Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Alyangula and produces annually close to \$1,000m of minerals. The development of the uranium province will double this in a few years with a consequent financial benefit to everybody. For once, Darwin's existence will be justified on purely economic grounds. No longer will critics argue that it should not be here; we will have grown up and we will be standing on our own two feet. No longer will it be a town of government officers because the private sector will grow and dilute their numbers. I am not decrying the government officers. I recognise that they

are necessary for orderly government and it is not their fault that they form the major part of our population. I am sure they themselves would welcome the change and the variety of population would make for a more livable community.

I think that, without doubt, if the development of the uranium province were not to proceed, it would not have the slightest effect on the continued overseas nuclear energy development. Even the Fox commission recognised this when they pointed out that, if Australia were to stop uranium mining and exports, further low-cost supplies would become available for higher-grade ores in other countries to meet any deficiency by Australia not exporting uranium. I think it is time we stopped talking and started digging.

Mr DONDAS (Casuarina): Mr Speaker, the question "to mine or not to mine" uranium has been the subject of discussion for a considerable time. Vast sums of money have been spent by the government and other organisations in promoting the concept of the mining of uranium on a grand scale. Previous speakers have elaborated on this subject. However, I feel that any member who is prepared to stand by his conviction and support the proposal to mine uranium can still contribute something of value to this debate, no matter how repetitious it seems to others.

As we have heard on many occasions, the former Whitlam government re-activated the uranium question. At that time there was no hue and cry from the unions or the Friends of the Earth. Mr Speaker, I prefer to think of the latter group not as friends but as foe - as their initials imply - foes of Australia. However, it is immaterial. But the fact remains there was no problem regarding the mining of uranium when the ALP were in power. So why this sudden concern? The same dangers were present then as they are now.

The honourable Majority Leader has asked us to examine the history of nuclear power and to evaluate the findings of the Fox report in coming to a judgment. Before doing it, let us

briefly examine our own uranium history first. Were we not the first to mine this terrifying substance in the early 50s at Rum Jungle? Have there been any long-term effects on our residents by radiation? I have not heard of any reported cases of radiation in this area through uranium mining and I am sure the old-time residents of the Territory are in a position to evaluate for themselves, without reading the Fox report, whether uranium mining is dangerous or not.

The old-time residents remember the advantages - employment for Territorians, vast sums of money being circulated by the mining companies in operating their venture in the Northern Territory, providing uranium to the world powers to ensure peace, providing uranium for energy requirements.

Mr Speaker, the only disadvantage that comes to mind in the whole of the Rum Jungle project was environmental control. There was none to speak of. However, Mr Fox certainly took this environmental abuse of Rum Jungle into consideration when framing his report and it is very unlikely that this environmental abuse will take place again anywhere in Australia. I accept the offer of the Majority Leader to establish a five-member sessional committee of this Assembly to watchdog the environment in the uranium province.

Mr Speaker, from a present-day point of view history is a thing of the past. The uranium debate which has been conducted in this Chamber today is a thing of the future. History is not going to provide energy for the future; history has used up all its own energy and now we must make a decision for our future and for future generations. History is not going to fulfil the energy needs of tomorrow; uranium is - with, of course, the necessary safeguards.

We are informed that Australia's reserves in the reasonably assured category are at present in the vicinity of 330,000 short tonnes of uranium oxide U_3O_8 , selling for about US\$30 per pound. That would give Australia an income of \$21,780m, or at an annual production rate of 15,000 short tonnes

of U_3O_8 would generate income at an annual rate of \$990m for the next 22 years. If Australia was to embark on its own nuclear energy program some time in the next 20 or 30 years, some 80,000 short tonnes of U_3O_8 may be required to fuel the reactors over their economic lifetime.

The Australian Atomic Energy Commission estimates the cumulative requirement for the western world by 1985 would be about 740,000 short tonnes of U_3O_8 and by the year 2000 the requirement could be as high as 5 million short tonnes of U_3O_8 . The western world's reserves of U_3O_8 are estimated to be at present nearly 3 million short tonnes, recoverable at the rate of US\$15 per pound and nearly 5 million short tonnes recoverable at a cost of up to US\$30 per pound. Overall there seems to be an unlikely shortage of uranium. Australia is fortunate in one respect that the recovery cost of our known reserves, of 330,000 short tonnes, is about US\$15 per pound.

We are further advised by the experts that the demand for uranium is only estimated to the year 2000 because by then the more efficient breeder reactors will be in operation and in addition, other sources of energy, such as nuclear fusion, solar energy and others may be feasible by that date.

Mr Speaker, uranium reserves are meaningless if the industry is not capable of bringing them into production at the required rate. At the moment, it would appear that there is going to be a shortage by the 1980s and, in view of the fact that the Northern Territory uranium deposits are of a grade and type which will allow relatively low-cost development, unless production can commence by 1979 we in the Northern Territory, thanks to the ALP and ACTU, are likely to miss the uranium boat.

The Majority Leader has stated he is not out to score political points by highlighting political differences. However, I feel the situation has gone to where political points are of no value in this debate - something obviously has to give. The Fraser government has made a proper restrained

decision on uranium, even to accepting Labor's letter of intent to the Ranger partners and they have implemented stringent safeguards. The conduct of the ALP and ACTU in promoting confrontation within our community is shameful, especially when it was the Whitlam government who favoured the export of uranium when it was their decision.

Mr Speaker, I feel those who oppose the mining and export of uranium ignore the basic real dangers: that if Australia does not supply the uranium market, other countries will. It is a simple fact of economics: supply for demand. Political differences are of no importance. We in the Northern Territory and Australia need this revenue from uranium to extract us out of the dark and deep economic hole that the Whitlam government put us all in.

Mr Speaker, the Majority Leader believes there are people of goodwill on both sides of the argument and hopes we are not all dollar-happy. I share his beliefs. However, the government has spent vast sums of money to obtain the best advice available before making a decision to mine and export uranium, And when the government made this decision, taking the Fox report into consideration, all we end up with is confrontation. "Please give our marbles back", or "Let us have a referendum", or "Let us have a moratorium". Why, Mr Speaker? The intention of the ALP and the ACTU is to reject this subject, so why bother looking for goodwill? There is none there.

I admit there are potential hazards associated with the mining and milling of uranium: radon gas 222 being one of them. However, at the moment we are not faced with this problem because our mines are to be open-cut initially and hence will be naturally ventilated. Nevertheless, according to the "Code of Practice on Radiation Protection in the Mining and Milling of Radioactive Ores", continuous monitoring will ensure that permissible standards are not exceeded in inhaling radioactive dust and radon gas. Plant design and the wearing of dust respirators will eliminate any dangers from this source. I believe the maximum exposure levels set out under this code by the Depart-

ment of Health will be as stringent as those operating anywhere else in the world. At these levels there have been no known cases of radiation-induced illness.

The question of nuclear power plant accidents is often raised. However, the chance of an accident which could cause a detectable increase in radiation-induced illness is, I believe, less than one chance in a million. In a highly industrialised society such as the United States, with over 100 reactors operating, the chances of a person being killed by a reactor accident is less than one in 16 million per year. This is far less than the other risks accepted by society - for example, death by motor vehicle accident is 1 in 3,000; by drowning, 1 in 30,000; by air travel, 1 in 100,000; and by lightning, 1 in a million. The possibility of a large number of deaths being caused by a dam failure in a hydro-electric scheme is also conceivable.

Mr Speaker, the facts and the information as presented are inescapable; uranium mining is as safe as, if not safer than, any other form of mining. The nuclear power industry has a safety record that it can be proud of. The problems of waste disposal are being solved the same way scientists have solved other problems of modern technology. It is true that risks already exist in nuclear development; they will continue to exist regardless of our attitude but they will be coped with, as now, with the best technology available. By refusing to mine and export uranium, we can sit back and watch the world go by. The pessimists in our society will find dangers in any of man's activities. Those of us who wish to increase the benefits of modern society wish that all the foes of Australia would realise that the world's reserves of fossil fuels are drying up, and they should dry up too.

The energy crisis can so dramatically affect the very basis of our present industrial society that it is worthwhile to consider briefly our history in terms of our energy demands. Over a period of about one million years man has progressed from the primitive com-

forts in the food-gathering stage to those of his present-day mature and affluent, technological communities. The most gigantic steps were made in the short span of the past 200 years. The price he has paid for these comforts is firstly his independence; but more importantly, we are now becoming more fearfully aware of the weakest link in the chain of progress. Energy-wise we are living far beyond our means. It is clear, that by the turn of the century there will be very little oil left to be discovered, if any. Of course, this applies not only to oil; there are other examples of decrease in natural wealth which we have been exploiting at such a rapid rate for the last 200 years. Energy has been abundantly available but there are clearly limitations to the world's fuel supplies and this means inevitably a slowing down of or perhaps even a negative economic growth. This will cause considerable hardships in the future and it will become the cause of friction on a national and international scale as the world scrambles for the energy left-overs. Without the guarantee of adequate energy supplies, the industrial structure of western civilisation will disintegrate. The cause of current economic upheavals is not fully recognised. But with the current global economic crisis, it is evident that this process of disintegration has started. Geographically, Australia is one of the outposts of the industrial civilisation. Because of its modest holdings of fossil fuel, this country is one of the wealthiest in the world - not because of our economic and industrial wizards but because it is one of the few nations left with some considerable mineral wealth. Yet the comforts of our affluence and our isolation encourage political immaturity and extremism which have been evident for some time.

I would like to say a few words about liquid petroleum which in Australia is one of the most sensitive shortages. The statistics of person/kilometre and ton/kilometre are almost as high as in the United States which, as we all know, is the most affluent of the industrialised nations. We have encouraged comforts and status which impose the need for several motor

vehicles in each family. More than half of the nation's petroleum energy consumption is for this type of transport. Industrial viability of this country depends vitally on efficient transport because the average distance between the capital cities is about 1000 km.

Furthermore, the defence of our nation is a very sensitive point. It depends strongly on mechanised mobility in air, on sea and on land. There is an increasing trend towards the employment of evermore sophisticated defence hardware and centralisation of defence. All require the most vulnerable of all energy sources - liquid petroleum. Resources can only partly satisfy demand and within ten years we will be substantially dependent on imports. By 1990 we shall have joined the international queue in the Middle East unless new deposits are found. Australia's strong affiliation with western nations makes reliance on imported petroleum for defence, transport and industry a questionable policy.

Energy in modern society is even more fundamental than the defence of a nation. The rapid depletion of fossil fuels, particularly petroleum, requires the development of energy alternatives, the choice of which is different in each global region. Australia will be different from the United States, Fiji, Europe or Japan. I hope we shall be allowed to take up the challenge and play our part and develop our uranium.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): This afternoon's debate has caused me to stand up and make a few remarks about the proposed development of the uranium province because it seems that the main tenor of the debate has been the need to develop the energy source for the betterment of the world and for the betterment of the Northern Territory commercially,

What has not been mentioned, other than by the honourable member for MacDonnell in one particular sense, is the social effects of mining uranium in that particular area. It surprises me that so little attention has been paid to this particular aspect of the question to mine or not. One of the reasons for my support for the amend-

ment which censured the way in which the government has made the announcement is because they have made the bland statement that mining will go ahead. I must say I believe it is the prerogative of the Australian government to make such a statement, and we have these various supports all of which lead us to believe that the problems are minimal and there is nothing but good to come from the mining of uranium in that very fragile area.

I must take issue with the Majority Leader when he defends the government's decision to ignore the Fox report and not go for sequential mining. The impact upon the population there, instead of being minimised, will be accentuated. Honourable members spoke about Pancontinental being geared up and ready to go. They are, in fact. It is quite true that they were preparing their environmental impact statement whilst Ranger were doing theirs. They were quite obviously hoping that they would not have to go to the same amount of time and effort and we have had no assurance from the Majority Leader that their environmental impact statement will be the subject of public debate. It is these issues which should be considered most carefully. An assurance should be given by the Prime Minister of Australia, when making such an announcement, that there will be public debate on these other areas if the mining is not to be truly sequential as was recommended by the Fox commission. I raise this because it is too easy to lump in all the deposits and say that one environmental impact statement will cover the lot. The difference in the fragility of the country and the water-table is quite extensive; one cannot compare the Ranger deposits with the Jabiluka deposits. It is my fear that the present Prime Minister of Australia will attempt to lump them all in and say that, because one has been given the go-ahead, they are all okay. They are not, as anyone who has been to the area will recognise.

What about the people who will live in the area and work there? Another matter to which I draw attention is the decision taken by the Prime Minister that the mining town will be a closed town. I was hoping that the honourable

member for Nhulunbuy would get to his feet and explain to the House the effects that that town has on the people living there. I have been to Nhulunbuy and many Europeans there feel as though they are under seige. Nhulunbuy is isolated; they cannot get out without permission; they cannot leave the actual lease which the town holds and they suffer greatly. The honourable member for MacDonnell will probably say that that is certainly of assistance to the Aboriginal people in the area in preserving their own culture and tradition. However, he would also be one of the first to agree that, because of the special restrictions, it is particularly difficult for Europeans living and working in that area to cope with such a position.

How does the Fraser government intend to implement its closed town policy in the Ranger area? They have put a ceiling of 3,500 people on the population of the town. That area is very accessible. It is quite different from Nhulunbuy. One does not have to fly in; one can drive there or even push a pushbike there. We must assume then that they are going to make some physical barrier to entry to that town which at the moment does not exist. It is these issues which will have to be debated separately in this House because they will have such a tremendous effect on the people in that area and those who wish to visit.

The inquiry made particular reference to the evidence given by the Department of Health. If anybody really wants to worry and have sleepless nights, he can read the evidence given by the Assistant Director of Health in his cross-examination. Tropical diseases are likely to cause havoc in that area if particular measures are not taken against them. I would imagine that there will be fast and furious debate in the future because departments will recommend massive aerial spraying to stop mosquitoes carrying the various diseases in that area and that massive aerial spraying itself will have side effects which, to many people, are totally unacceptable. These things have to be debated and acknowledged, but no one as yet has referred to them.

It is too simple to encapsulate this debate in a simple "mine uranium or not" formula. The method of mining and the impact that it has on the people has not received the attention it deserves.

This area is in close proximity to what is to become a declared national park. Under the management of such a national park, feral animals are not allowed and those which exist are to be culled out. The people who are going to live in that uranium town will not be allowed to have pets. If they are allowed a dog, one would imagine that the utmost restrictions would be put upon their ownership. The dogs will have to be castrated or spayed. It is so simple to debate only one issue - the actual effect upon the world of nuclear power and that is certainly deserving of intense debate - but I am on the side of the people who have said that we have not had time to debate it properly throughout this country. I am on the side of those who stood up today and said the debate did not really get under way until 1977. It could not start because people were waiting on the expert evidence from both sides, available from the two reports of the Fox inquiry. I have said all along that it is the prerogative of a federal government to make decisions in this area and it is the prerogative of the federal government to have control of truly national parks such as Kakadu which are of international significance. However, in making decisions, the government must give much more background to this Assembly and to the people of Australia on all the ramifications, particularly the social ones.

There was a public meeting in Darwin not so long ago under the auspices of the Northern Territory branch of the Australian Crime Prevention Council. It was definitely non-political. One of the issues raised there was the effect on the people already living in the area of a forced meeting with Europeans. It was felt by the people at the meeting that, if a lot of attention is not paid to this, it will lead to social upheaval and a consequent rise in the crime rate. At that meeting, there were various recommendations

accepted in toto. They asked me to put these to the Assembly. One is of relevance to this debate:

That the attention of the authorities be drawn to a potential situation for an increase in crime with the development of the uranium province and that immediate steps be taken to formulate a program involving the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of the Northern Territory and those sections of the Northern Territory Public Service which have a responsibility in this area to the immediate requirements to plan for an organisational unit to be available as soon as development starts.

These were a group of citizens who were not expressing a view on the mining of uranium per se but expressing extreme interest in the problems which, of necessity, will arise in that province as a result of an influx of 3,500 people. I hope the Majority Leader at the next session of this Assembly will be able to put to this House some of the contingency plans which he must have, and which his Prime Minister surely must have, to minimise the social upheaval which we all know will follow the decision to move large numbers of people into that area. In particular, I ask him to pay due regard to the recommendations of this group of citizens, most of whom are interested in the prevention of crime rather than the treatment of offenders. I ask him to advise this House what particular steps the Australian government and his government will take to implement this decision to have a closed town. How will it be managed? What particular steps are to be taken so that the people living and working there will not be grossly disadvantaged by this decision. Unless there is a lot of thought paid to this, they too may start to feel isolated. And what of the people of Darwin who cannot travel freely in that area?

I have spoken of some aspects of the social implications of this particular decision because I think that not enough attention has been paid to them by the Prime Minister. If he has paid attention to them, it is not evident

from the papers presented. I look for better things from the Majority Leader. I am not criticising him; it was not his decision. I am criticising the fact that these issues have not been put before us in a proper manner from an Australian government which has gone ahead very quickly and taken the decision without regard to social consequences.

Mr MacFARLANE (Elsley): I do not have much to say but what I have to say has not been said here before. I am particularly worried about the defence of this area. As you know, the population of the Northern Territory is about 100,000 and the population of Australia about 14 million. Within 100 miles of our undefended northern coast lies this immense prize, which is coveted by at least 26 nations. We cannot even control illegal fishing boats. We have immigrants coming from Vietnam sailing right into Darwin harbour before we even know they are here. I have said this before: we have no alternative but to mine uranium because of its proximity to our undefended, neglected northern coastline.

We heard the member for MacDonnell say various things which prompted me to bring up this question of defence. He asked whether might is always right. If there are 100,000 people here and 70 million in the horde of islands called Indonesia plus another 100 million in an arc closer to Darwin than Canberra is, might could very well be right and we could find this out. The honourable member for MacDonnell is worried about how to minimise the European contact. I wonder if he would like to minimise the European contact and maximise the Asian contact because there are a lot more people possibly with ulterior motives close to this undefended area. I wonder what would have happened in the last war if we had neglected atomic power and if we did not have the atomic bomb to drop on the Japanese. I wonder how the Aboriginal people would be getting on now under the Japanese yoke? These things bear thinking about. Less than 400 miles from here, we have a civil war in East Timor; and less than 200 miles from Nhulunbuy, that little town where my friend comes from, there are several uprisings. This is not right on

Canberra's doorstep but on our doorstep. Can we afford not to develop this uranium province. What is the alternative? Racial conflict in the Northern Territory or conflict unlimited? We know there have been landings by foreign fishing vessels on this northern coastline. I know, and this has not been officially contradicted, that base camps have been set up by foreign fishing vessels on Australian soil where they have cultivated fresh vegetables and run poultry. This is what our defence is - not Canberra's defence but our defence. We know there were base camps set up in Sukarno's time between here and Maningrida and between here and Port Keats.

Mrs Lawrie: I am learning some things today.

Mr MacFARLANE: I think these things bear examination. Are we living in a fool's paradise with this uranium province? Is that the wish of everyone? I do not know whether the recent familiarisation visit by the defence chiefs has anything to do with this proposed stiffening of our defence - of our non-existent defences. This Standing Committee on Off-shore Surveillance is a new one on me but it does not seem to be achieving very much. If Vietnamese refugees can sail into Darwin harbour, it would appear that our defences are not very good. Indeed, I have said before - I think last year - that I see the greatest threat to the north of Australia by an unarmed invasion of refugees from somewhere up north. That is where the people are with a lower standard of living than we have and what is to stop them? Can we say, "There are millions and millions of acres here, undeveloped and nobody wants it. But you cannot come in". I say we cannot say this. We could not shoot these people; how would we keep them out?

A member: I don't think they'd own a compass.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr MacFARLANE: Sure, they might not own a compass but we see every wet season where these people are blown in and they cause our quarantine officials

great distress, great concern.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, I say we cannot afford not to develop our uranium for the reasons I have given.

Mr BALLANTYNE (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Majority Leader has outlined most of the things which brought about the debate from the Opposition and we have had some good speeches on this debate.

We also had the views of the Prime Minister and his cabinet ministers, right through all the important portfolios which concern the people of the Territory and of Australia. Before Australia, each of those ministers has stated his views and policies on mining of uranium and specifically said that "every consideration has been given to the Ranger inquiry recommendations and its findings". The Prime Minister has even seen fit to bring out that publication which we have all read. I do not know how many publications have been sent out but I should imagine there would be thousands. That, in itself, would give people an indication that the government is interested in telling people about the uranium issue. They have not hid behind the cloak of anybody. I am sure the government has delved into all the aspects of uranium mining and its safeguards, and moreover the social and economic future of Australia and the Northern Territory.

However, it has occurred to me, Mr Deputy Speaker, that most of the objections relating to uranium mining in Australia and its effect on the environment have now taken second place for those people who have produced another argument at the other end of the scale, the tail-end of the scale. I refer to the question of radioactive wastes from nuclear power reactors producing electric energy. In Australia we do not have nuclear power stations nor will we have them for some time - perhaps not at all. The main argument, of course, is coming from the so-called experts who say there are no safeguards and that little is known about the disposal of radioactive waste. May I say that is the greatest lot of propaganda I have ever heard in my life.

The fact is that we live every day in an environment of what scientists call "background radiation" which comes from cosmic rays: in the air we breathe, even in our food and water. It is there. You cannot see it but it is there; yet it is relatively harmless to us all. I suppose the air pilots who fly at high altitudes could be subjected to quite a number of millirems from these cosmic rays each day of their lives when they travel and they could be getting quite reasonable doses, up to about 40 millirems or thereabouts.

We have man-made radiation from watch dials - the watches that we wear - aircraft instruments, TV sets, radios, x-ray machines, and other sources which exist in industrial instrumentation and in some of the most sophisticated medical equipment used on cancer and in other research fields. In many cases that equipment is lethal. In fact, it is just as lethal as nuclear waste but it is harnessed and has every safeguard known to protect human beings that we can possibly have. And not only that, but in many cases it assists human beings in medical fields. In some areas of medical science, it helps people to live longer. Yet people say, "We have no knowledge of radiation and its long-term effects". Everyone knows that nuclear power stations have been existing for over 25 years. They have not been just built yesterday; they have been built for over 25 years. And they have a record unequalled in safety. To my knowledge there has been no death or injury resulting from the operation of any commercial nuclear power plant. All right, it may be said, "What about the waste product? Where will it be stored?" That is a matter of concern to all the peoples of the world. In past years most people did not concern themselves with it; but it has been stored and, as I just said, no one has ever died from radioactivity.

Mr Collins: What about Hiroshima?

Mr BALLANTYNE: Even the case of Hiroshima has been examined over years; there were thousands of them and they have not in any way lost their lives through organic damage from the radiation; it has been proven. I just

told you, we live in radiation every day of our lives. It is a low density radiation, we know. But today, through the minority groups, the propaganda has spread.

If we look seriously at the types of nuclear waste from power plants that have been stored safely, we find that we have three types: there is high-level waste of long-lived isotopes which requires long-term isolation from the environment; we have transuranic waste containing long-lived ultra-emitter particles such as plutonium, which needs long-term isolation; and the third is low-level waste which makes up the bulk of the waste material and can be disposed of in what are known as licensed commercial burial sites. The high-level waste can be placed underground out of harm's way and from statistics, in the year 2000, the total land required for storing all high-level waste produced by commercial nuclear power plants in the United States, for instance, would be an overall area of 50 acres or 20 hectares. This assumption is made on plants producing 1,000 megawatts by that time.

I feel, as many other people do, that the present safeguards will satisfy most countries who are or will be operating nuclear power stations and I believe further research will make the waste disposal safer. Moreover, by the turn of the century in the year 2000, greater strides will be made in fusion techniques that could even outdo the fission techniques of today which use uranium in the nuclear power stations. In time more energy sources will be developed from solar, tidal, wind and geothermal principles but most of these techniques are limited and very costly and depend on geographic location. Certainly these will add to our resources; we are using these techniques today but they have not got the sophistication of the nuclear power stations.

There is much research work going on this very day, looking at ways and means to overcome a future world crisis. Perhaps we can help as individuals by spreading the word to economise: conserve our electricity, cut back on our illumination, cut back on the power that we use - in other

words, conserve the watts and go back to the candle, the pedal radio, battery lighting and even the coolgardie safe. Would anyone be prepared to do that? I say, let us take this thing seriously and start mining uranium tomorrow. You can have your referendum but, if you recall, there was a referendum in the United States which proved to be just a waste of time and public money. I agree with the Majority Leader and other speakers in what they have said and stand for about our future and uranium mining in the Territory, for the betterment of the Territory and the people of Australia generally. I believe the Labor Party has gone against their word. They are confused and yet, on the other hand, they know in all sincerity what the government is doing to fulfil promises of the past, to work with our trading partners overseas and to prevent an energy crisis which will consolidate the future of the leading nations of the world.

Motion agreed to.

INTERPRETATION BILL (NO. 2)

(Serial 6)

Ms D'ROZARIO (Sanderson): Mr Speaker, I support the bill and commend the honourable Majority Leader for having brought this matter on with such alacrity. After this afternoon's division I daresay it will be a rare occasion when a matter so lacking in contention, as this bill is, will come before this House. Members of the Opposition do not offer any objection to this bill. The effect of it will be to aid the efficiency of administration in the Northern Territory and this will ultimately benefit all who have to deal with the Northern Territory Public Service. We offer no objection.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr PERRON (Finance and Planning): The honourable member for Tiwi asked whether the Assistant Secretary for Urban Development and Town Planning was

returning to Darwin and, if not, why not. The answer, as supplied to me, is that the most recent occupant of the position of Assistant Secretary for Urban Development and Town Planning has decided for private reasons not to return to Darwin. He has been transferred to the list of unattached officers and the approval of the Public Service Board has been sought to advertise and fill the vacancy. Meanwhile, the former occupant will be performing the duties of the position in an acting capacity on his return from recreation leave.

Mr TUXWORTH (Resources and Health): Yesterday, the honourable member for Arnhem asked whether it is true that Pancontinental has begun bulldozing in the Jabiluka area and, if so, who gave them permission. The reply is that work involving bulldozing in connection with exploration and evaluation of the area has been carried out for several years as a part of an approved program. Should the questioner have any knowledge of bulldozing work other than the approved work, I would appreciate specific details from him. Another part of the question was: "Has Pancontinental completed an environmental impact statement and, if so, was it submitted to public inquiry?" The answer is that Pancontinental has provided preliminary environmental information to the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development which may be used as the basis of a draft environmental impact statement for public information in accordance with procedures under the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Opposition Leader moving forthwith the notice of censure which he presented today.

Motion agreed to.

CENSURE OF MAJORITY LEADER

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): I move that the Majority Leader be censured for his failure to consult the new

Assembly on its representation on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

In a previous debate, we had much talk about lack of backbone as far as the Opposition was concerned. If there has ever been a display of lack of backbone, sending the Northern Territory backwards and thumbing the nose at local autonomy, then we saw it yesterday in the speech by the Executive Member for Finance and Planning. If this is to be the attitude of the Majority Party, why don't we all go home and allow the public servants to run the Territory? If they are going to pay such lip-service to our representation on boards and authorities where we are required to nominate people, then frankly they deserve censure. For that reason, we have moved the motion.

The former Majority Leader was quoted in the press as saying - if you can believe them - that he does not want any jobs for the boys. This is not so with his former deputy. What do we see? We see an appointment which carries \$4,600 per annum and, with a mere three months to go, according to the Executive Member for Finance and Planning, that is a nest egg of \$1,150 for the former deputy Majority Leader. They say it is the last three months, so why worry about it. If that is the attitude the Majority Party is going to adopt, then I feel they have let the Territory down. All the discussions which took place about the need to have a representative from this Assembly on the DRC go down the drain; they are empty words from the Majority Party.

The Executive Member for Finance and Planning, in answer to a question, talked about the plan to be released by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. He indicated that there would be discussions from the community and said the Darwin Reconstruction Commission would look at those objections from the community and make a decision on them. Are these the unimportant matters that are to be decided over the next three months?

So what does the Majority Party do? They come to the Assembly and they have a spokesman say that they have already decided that they will not make a

decision. What they have done is to allow a person who is no longer a representative of this Assembly to stay on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission as our representative. They indicated yesterday that he no longer has the backing of the electorate of Fannie Bay, so how can he possibly have the backing of the city of Darwin? Here is the cardinal sin which the Majority Leader, the person who must take responsibility, has committed: the whole point of having a representative on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission was to enable every member of this Assembly to question that person, to find out what is going on in the DRC. How can we do it? The Executive Member for Finance and Planning says he will answer the questions on behalf of the nominee of the Assembly on the DRC. How is that possible? He is not in the precincts; he cannot be in the precincts. How does he think he is going to answer on his behalf?

It is my opinion, and it is the opinion of the Opposition, that a decision had to be taken by the Majority Party and it had to be a decision of putting a representative from this Assembly on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. They thumbed their nose at making that decision. For that reason - walking away from making a decision, something which they accused us of only half an hour ago - we censure the Majority Leader for his failure to consult with this Assembly on its representation on this most important body.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): This is more of the humbug that we have come to expect from the Opposition Leader. This motion of censure sits ill on the shoulders of the political disciples of Gough Whitlam, the man who appointed Al Grassby to be Commissioner for Community Relations when he was defeated in the seat of Riverina in 1975, and the man who appointed his Deputy Leader, Lance Barnard, to be ambassador to the Scandinavian countries when Lance Barnard realised that the political hour-glass was running out for the Labor Party. This motion of censure sits ill on the shoulders of the political disciples of the Premier of Tasmania who has just appointed him-

self to be Tasmanian Agent-General in London because he knows the sands of time are running out for the state Labor government in Tasmania. They were elected with a record majority and they are now hanging on by the speaker's vote and that is all. If that is a record majority, I hope I never get a record majority like that. I do not know what is going to happen. They have that strange formula in Tasmania whereby, through some chicanery, they get someone else to replace him. By God, it would not happen anywhere else.

I will not accept the censure motion of the Opposition Leader. We consulted this Assembly through my deputy. We did not have to make a statement to the Assembly. The resolution of the former Assembly stood, appointing Mr Tambling and, as far as I am concerned, we have fulfilled our obligation by making our statement yesterday. This is mere hypocrisy and humbug to gain political mileage to the detriment of the people of Darwin. My opponents know that Tambling has the experience on the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. He has been there since it was started. Do they want some novice to go over there and start fighting with these guys who know all the decisions that have been made for the last three years? There are mountains of decisions being taken by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. How can I or the Executive Member for Finance and Planning go through all these and then go to bat against the public servants who were put on the commission by Dr Rex Patterson, under whose act the Darwin Reconstruction Commission was set up?

Let me tell you about another undemocratic act of that same Dr Rex Patterson, the same political friend of my opponents across the other side of the House. Let us talk about democracy in action - democracy as the Australian Labor Party sees it - the Darwin Citizens Council. That is democracy! You get a council - or you call it a council - you get a minister who appoints a number of people to it and they elect a chairman and then the chairman goes onto the Darwin Reconstruction Commission - that is democracy, Australian Labor Party style.

We really cannot accept this motion of censure for more reasons than that. The fact of the matter is that Mr Tambling can be questioned, if indeed it becomes necessary to question him closely and if indeed the answers to questions posed by members of the Opposition or members of the Majority Party are not satisfactorily answered by my friend the Executive Member for Finance and Planning. The fact of the matter is that this is a mere attempt to gain cheap political mileage, having no regard for the real interests of the people of Darwin to whom the provisions of the Darwin Reconstruction Act apply. Mr Speaker, I reject the motion of censure.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): Mr Speaker, I move that the motion be now put.

The House divided:

Ayes 12

Noes 7

Mr Ballantyne	Mr Collins
Mr Dondas	Mr Doolan
Mr Everingham	Ms D'Rozario
Mr Harris	Mr Isaacs
Mr MacFarlane	Mrs Lawrie
Mr Oliver	Mrs O'Neil
Mrs Padgham-Purich	Mr Perkins
Mr Perron	
Mr Robertson	
Mr Steele	
Mr Tuxworth	
Mr Vale	

Motion agreed to.

Censure motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr STEELE (Transport and Industry): Mr Speaker, I would just like to reply to a few questions that have been asked of me in the last couple of days. On the question from the member for Alice Springs concerning the footbridge over the Todd River, my information is that the footbridge is not to be demolished. However that information is probably a bit suspect; perhaps if he has any

other information he would like to give me, well, there may be some elaboration to that.

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy asked me a question about the sealing of the Yirrkala road and getting it on the civil works program for next year. I am trying to have that arranged as he requested.

On the question from the honourable member for Stuart concerning the Alice Springs rail terminal, the RDC committee - comprising Australian National Railways, Department of Transport and Department of Northern Territory - has been set up to consider least cost options for the site of the railway terminal at Alice Springs, as part of the study of the Tarcoola-Alice Springs railway system. Those persons in Alice Springs wishing to make any suggestions to this committee should contact the planning and projects co-ordination branch of the Department of Northern Territory. Town planning aspects will be taken into consideration by the committee.

Mrs O'NEIL (Fannie Bay): I wish to speak briefly in this adjournment debate in view of the time, but I would like to speak at this stage of the Assembly's existence on the need for cooperation between the various parties. The Opposition believes such cooperation is essential for sound management, good debate and, ultimately, good laws resulting from good debate for the people of the Northern Territory.

In the first adjournment debate in this Assembly on Wednesday, the honourable Executive Member for Community and Social Development who is also the manager of government business in this House claimed that the Majority Party had attempted to cooperate with the Opposition to this end. Allow me to present briefly, Mr Speaker, examples of the cooperation which we have so far received. We were not informed of the date of the opening of this Assembly, and then only by a message from a staff member, until the same time that the press were informed that it would be this Wednesday. Is this courtesy and is this cooperation? It was not until

Monday of this week, despite repeated requests by our leader, that we had any idea of what business would be presented and even then we were presented with a very incomplete list. It was not until Tuesday that we were told how many days we would, in fact, be required in this House and then on Wednesday, the manager of government business told us that after the statement on uranium by the Majority Leader the debate would be adjourned until Friday, I have it here in his writing, And yet when the Opposition Leader attempted to move that adjournment, the honourable member vigorously strove to prevent the adjournment of that debate to Friday and attempted to bring it on, presumably at that time.

Mr Robertson: That is a lot of poppycock.

Mrs O'NEIL: Well, you will have to say it, Sir, I could go on. I could talk about the staffing; I could go on about the debate here this afternoon and the number of speeches we were allowed on a matter of importance such as this. But I will not, Mr Speaker, because I do not want to continue the lack of cooperation that has so far existed. I trust these instances are perhaps just due to the inexperience of the manager of government business in the House and in fact the executive ...

Mr Robertson: You're hardly a geriatric in this business,

Mrs O'NEIL: True, too true. And that's why we require cooperation. I think it might also be due to the fact that five of the seven members of the previous executive were defeated in the election and therefore your executive is also very new in the business.

I was pleased to note the honourable member's courteous action today in moving the extension of time for the maiden speech of the honourable member for Arnhem and I hope we can look forward to that as an example of the cooperation we will be able to effect between the government party and the opposition party for the future benefit of this Assembly.

Mr EVERINGHAM (Majority Leader): Mr Speaker, I feel I must rise to take issue with the honourable member for Fannie Bay, not very seriously because it may be due to a lack of communication between her leader and herself. In fact, the Opposition Leader phoned me on Monday afternoon and, in our discussion on the telephone, he asked me what I understood our legislative program would be for this sittings. On Monday afternoon, I personally informed the Opposition Leader of the full contents of our legislative program. In fact, I recall telling the honourable member for Nightcliff - it was certainly not a closely guarded secret - when she rang me on Tuesday or thereabouts.

As far as I am concerned, we are prepared to extend every possible cooperation. It seemed to the Executive Member for Community and Social Development on Wednesday, when the members of the Opposition failed to stand to support a customary type of motion, that they were intending to be uncooperative. It may be that this misunderstanding arose too quickly. The fact of the matter is that we do want to cooperate on the smooth running of business in the House and we will do that,

I do remember, however, arriving in this House this morning and finding the honourable member for Fannie Bay talking to my whip and I said, "What is going on?" The honourable member said, "I am telling your whip our arrangements but at the latest possible hour". I just wonder what the true position is ...

Mrs O'NEIL: A point of order, Mr Acting Speaker! What I have just been quoted as saying is not true. I will accept your guidance if that is not a point of order and will make an explanation later,

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: You cannot interrupt another speaker,

Mr EVERINGHAM: Those are certainly the honourable member's words as I recall them, I do not want to make an

issue of it but there you are.

We do want to cooperate. I say that sincerely and I think that, whenever the Opposition Leader has asked me for information, I have attempted to provide him with that information frankly wherever it was possible. That is all I have to say. I hope our whips can get together and see that the business of this House runs smoothly.

Mrs LAWRIE (Nightcliff): Mr Speaker, I am sorry the Majority Leader has spoken in this adjournment because I was hoping he would reply to a question I was about to put to him. Perhaps, at the next session of the Assembly, he may indicate whether he sees a difference between decisions taken by the executive and decisions taken by this Assembly. In the second last paragraph of a statement which was circulated to us yesterday dealing with Assembly representation, the Executive Member for Finance and Planning indicated that the executive had decided certain things on behalf of the Assembly. I will pursue this at the next sittings of the Assembly but I wish to indicate to the Majority Leader that, along with most Australians, I see a vast difference between executive decisions and those taken by parliament as a whole. One of the criticisms levelled at Mr Fraser by members of his own party, and indeed by members of his own Cabinet, has been his inability to differentiate between cabinet decisions and parliamentary ones.

I do not think that the statements which are supposed to emanate from this Assembly can emanate from the executive. In the previous Assembly when there were 17 members of one party and two other members who were both independents, proper respect to this House as a parliament was always shown by the Majority Leader and his executive. If any decisions were to be taken by the Assembly, they were debated in the Assembly. I pay him due regard for the respect that he always showed both to the former member for Port Darwin and myself. Although we were vastly outnumbered and had no hope of ever winning a vote if it came to outright opposition, proper parliamentary procedures were followed and it

was always on the motion of the Assembly that certain decisions were taken and appointments made if it was to be an Assembly decision. There is a tremendous difference between executive decisions and Assembly decisions, I ask the Majority Party to bear that in mind and not to confuse the two.

Mr DOOLAN (Victoria River): Before we break up until the next sittings, I wish to raise a matter of some urgency to some of the constituents of my electorate. I refer to the road running from Daly River to Port Keats. This road is in a dreadful condition. It serves the communities of Palumpa - of 60 to 70 people, Peppimenarti with some 200-odd people and Port Keats with nearly 1,000 people. The very last thing they want is an upgraded beautiful highway; they do not want people in there in fact. However, what they have now is an apology for a bush track which you cannot normally run four-wheel drives on without breaking them.

They are trying desperately to make a go of a cattle enterprise and they are, in fact, catching bulls and trying to get them out. However, the creek crossings are bad and they are breaking trucks on them. A grader did go through recently and brushed the surface. This was no fault of the grader driver because there are two particularly bad creeks that stop you all the time. This road, incidentally, is hopeless in the wet. I am not speaking of the wet season because it is out altogether. However, in the dry season the road should be passable for some months. These particular crossings are hopeless and these people cannot get their cattle through.

Following the visit of the grader, a Health Department mobile unit went down there and was stuck for a day in a particular crossing at Sandy Creek. Then these people had 60 cattle on a truck and they spent 6 hours bogged in the creek. I do not think it is unreasonable that consideration should be given to doing something at least about a couple of creek crossings. The people concerned have tried to do something themselves; they have gone out and filled in the creek crossing by hand

with rocks. Then Morandini's contractors came through and the first roadtrain chewed the rocks out again,

I bring this to the Assembly's notice in the hope that perhaps the Executive Member for Transport and Industry may possibly be able to take action before the next sittings.

Mr HARRIS (Port Darwin): Just a short comment, Mr Acting Speaker. I was going to speak in the uranium debate today and one of the very important areas which came up in that debate was the Aboriginal situation. It is unfortunate that the honourable members of the Opposition continue to attack the relationship between the people of the Northern Territory - that is, the Aboriginals and the white people. In this area we are all one ...

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: A point of order! Is it the honourable member's intention to continue the uranium debate?

Mr HARRIS: No, no, it is not; I am just making a point,

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Carry on.

Mr HARRIS: As in all societies there are always exceptions to the rule. We are not against Aboriginals or the Aboriginal people; we are for the Aboriginal people. We are against the introduction of southern interference and the mention of racial discrimination. The Northern Territory is perhaps one of the only areas in Australia where the Aboriginal people are still accepted; we are proud of this fact and we will continue to give all people the rights they deserve.

If the honourable members of the Opposition feel there is a problem in this area, let the Majority Party know by all means but not by interjections. We are interested, despite what they might think.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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