

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

Parliamentary Record

Tuesday 3 May 1977

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NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

Speaker	John Leslie Stuart MacFarlane
Majority Leader	Godfrey Alan Letts
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government	Grant Ernest Tambling
Cabinet Member for Law	Elizabeth Jean Andrew
Cabinet Member for Resources	David Lloyd Pollock
Cabinet Member for Community Services	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry	Roger Ryan
Cabinet Member for Education and Planning	Marshall Bruce Perron

Members of the Legislative Assembly

George Eric Manuell	Alice Springs
Rupert James Kentish	Arnhem
Ian Lindsay Tuxworth	Barkly
Nicholas Dondas	Casuarina
John Leslie Stuart MacFarlane	Elsey
Grant Ernest Tambling	Fannie Bay
James Murray Robertson	Gillier
Paul Anthony Edward Everingham	Jingili
Roger Michael Steele	Ludmilla
David Lloyd Pollock	MacDonnell
Roger Ryan	Millner
Alline Dawn Lawrie	Nightcliff
Milton James Ballantyne	Nhulunbuy
Ronald John Withnall	Port Darwin
Elizabeth Jean Andrew	Sanderson
Roger William Stanley Vale	Stuart
Marshall Bruce Perron	Stuart Park
Hyacinth Tungutalum	Tiwi
Godfrey Alan Letts	Victoria River

The Committee of the Whole Assembly

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

The House Committee

Mr Speaker
Miss Andrew
Mr Steele
Mr Vale
Mr Tuxworth

The Standing Orders Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr Ballantyne
Mr Everingham
Mr Ryan
Mr Vale

The Publications Committee

Mr Ballantyne
Mrs Lawrie
Mr Dondas
Mr Perron
Mr Pollock

The Privileges Committee

Miss Andrew
Mr Kentish
Mr Tungutalum
Mr Withnall

The Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee

Mr Ballantyne
Mr Kentish
Mr Robertson
Mr Tungutalum
Mr Withnall

PART I

THE DEBATES

Tuesday 3 May 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

DARWIN CYCLONE RELIEF TRUST FUND

Mr EVERINGHAM: I table the Darwin Cyclone Relief Trust Fund reports for the months of July, August and September 1976. I do not believe that there are any subsequent reports.

Mrs LAWRIE (by leave): I move that the reports be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted

Debate adjourned.

POISONS AND DRUGS BILLS

Mr TUXWORTH (by leave): I move that items of government business numbers 1, 2 and 3 relating to the Poisons Bill Serial 178, the Drugs Bill Serial 188, and the Prohibited Drugs Bill Serial 189, be postponed until Thursday morning of this week.

As honourable members will be aware, the Majority Party has been endeavouring for some time now to have these bills introduced as a matter of civic importance. On the last day of the previous sittings, I indicated that these bills would be introduced today. However, there has been a holdup with the printing of the bills and they will not be ready until Thursday. The holdup has been brought about in part by a change in policy in one respect and in another by amendments proposed by the Health Department. It was felt that these things should be included in one bill rather than have amendments floating around.

Motion agreed to.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 171)

Continued from 3 March 1977.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to support the bill. It was instigated by the Government to conform with International

Labour Organisation policy on standardising compensation for employees who die or who are incapacitated by diseases contracted during their employment. I find this amendment necessary if we are to accept the responsibility of having an ordinance to cover general injury by disease.

Upon studying the fourth schedule, I find it covers all the situations regarding contamination by dangerous substances which could cause distress in the event of an industrial accident or contamination. Clause 4 of the fourth schedule interests me because it makes provision for a mine worker to be compensated for any lung disease that he could contract during or because of his employment. The main purpose of this amendment, which is well overdue, appears to be to provide automatic liability against an employer where a worker contracts a prescribed illness or disease and has been engaged in a prescribed occupation. I support the bill.

Mr TUXWORTH: I would just like to stress a remark made by the honourable member for Casuarina concerning the importance of this bill to people who work in the mining field. As members of this Chamber would know, there is already in the Northern Territory legislation that provides for people who can be proven to have contracted silicosis in the Northern Territory to be catered for. However, one of the great difficulties in catering for these people over the years has been that establishing where and when a person contracted silicosis or tuberculosis has been extremely difficult. In some cases, it has been almost impossible to establish. Persons who moved out of the Northern Territory were never able to establish whether they contracted the disease here or had it before they came to the Northern Territory. Consequently, their claims for compensation have been disallowed or treated in a manner that was perhaps not fitting. I believe the proposals in the bill will enable the matter to be dealt with in a more humane fashion.

Debate adjourned.

NON-ASSENT TO NORTHERN TERRITORY
DISASTERS ORDINANCE

Miss ANDREW (by leave): I move that this Assembly express its concern that the Northern Territory Disasters Ordinance passed by this House last December has not yet received assent and urge the Commonwealth Government to remove any obstacles to bring about the activation of this legislation as a matter of urgency.

In speaking to the motion, I would like to say that this is in no way a criticism of the actions taken last weekend by the committee which stood in the stead of the Counter Disaster Council. I would like to publicly commend the actions of the acting Police Commissioner and Mr Simmons who was acting in the capacity normally held by Mr Bob Phillips, that of Director of Emergency Services. The preparations which took place for Cyclone Verna were done quietly, without any emotionalism and they were done most efficiently. They led me to have great faith in the people concerned with preparation for the handling of disasters in the Northern Territory. However, these people were acting with virtually no legal backing. As it turned out, the fears that were held on Sunday night were not realised. By 11 o'clock on Monday morning, the whole operation was scaled down and even a white alert was no longer continued.

However, we had no legislation. As mentioned in question time this morning, the authority came from a letter written by the Minister for the Northern Territory to the Administrator. Now the legality of that authorisation can no doubt be questioned. Fortunately, it was not needed. It might have been; it could happen again tomorrow. Members of this House will recall the meeting which took place in here, with no lights, no airconditioning and very little of anything else, to ratify the action that had taken place in the week following Cyclone Tracy. We do not want to have to meet like that again and pass such legislation.

I assumed the responsibility legislatively for emergency services in

about May of last year, some preparatory work had already been done by officers of the Department of the Northern Territory on this legislation. However, my first move was to implement discussions between the police, the Department of the Northern Territory and the Legislative Assembly and to prepare legislation. A review of all available state legislation, with special reference to Tasmania, was done and, in September last year, a set of principles for drafting was forwarded to the drafting office. This was done in full consultation with the officers of the Department of Northern Territory. They took part in the negotiations. Officers of the Department indeed prepared some of these principles. It was with full knowledge and consent of the Department that these principles of legislation were forwarded to the draftsman. We still do not have any legislation because it has not been assented to. The bill was passed in December 1976. On that occasion, I said that the bill was the result of long months of discussion and preparation by the Executive which had been concerned since the cyclone with the urgent need for disaster legislation so that actions would not have to be retrospectively legislated for as happened on 22 January 1975.

Since this ordinance was passed in December, officers of the Department of the Chief Secretary, officers of my department, the Director of Emergency Services and myself have been making constant inquiries about the ordinance. One government official referred to section 13F which gives the Director power to raise and train units and appoint persons as voluntary members of the emergency service. As I have already mentioned to the House, he said that the ordinance would not be assented to while such wide powers were extended to one man because it gave him an opportunity to raise and train his own army. This is the attitude of some officials towards a piece of legislation that could save lives because the organisation outlined in this legislation and defined by it could mean hastier action in time of disaster.

We discover now that they seem to have resolved their reluctance about section 13F. Now the problem is section 30 concerning compensation for personal injury. This legislation is in line with all state legislation. Surely, during that long period of negotiations between Christmas Day 1974 and December 1976, some officials somewhere should have discussed the compensation with the Treasurer. We are still waiting for the Commonwealth to accept responsibility in respect of the loss of life or injury to a person occurring while the person is engaged in counter disaster activity. Surely that is the whole crux of an emergency services bill. The bill was discussed in this House with special reference to that particular compensation section but we still do not have assent. I have personally appealed to higher officials of the Department of the Northern Territory, to Treasury officials, to the Administrator, to General Stretton and to the Department of Defence. Nevertheless, along comes a cyclone on 1 May and we still do not have legislation. The problems that arise as a result of this are very real for the people concerned in administration. Since Sunday night, I have had discussions with Mr Texter and Mr Simmons and they have expressed anxiety that, had Verna come, there would have been no legality. There is no definition in some areas of exactly the powers and responsibilities of the various people involved. Whilst all went smoothly because common sense was used by the people concerned, this may not have been so if mayhem had ensued as a result of a disaster.

There was no ratification of any of the plans. The plans existed but they had never been ratified. The council could not meet because it does not really exist until such time as this legislation is assented to. Possibly, there are certain points within those plans that could be vastly improved and round table discussions by the council could bring these out. Planning is being held up because of a lack of definition. The Director of Emergency Services has a responsibility to present all plans to the council under the

new legislation whereas, under the old legislation, it was presented to the co ordinator. There is little definition of the regional areas. Finally, there is no definition of responsibility. When does the Territory co ordinator take over? Does he operate under the old plan or the new plan?

These problems are rather frightening and this has just been brought home to us over the weekend. Meetings were held left, right and centre on Saturday morning after the cyclone had reared its ugly head on Friday. Why could not these have taken place last January? People of the Northern Territory have been most fortunate that there have been very few cyclone scares this year. I am reluctant to say that I almost wish that there had been a couple. At least, it might have made people realise that, when you are living in an area prone to natural disasters, you need legislation to cover action taken and protect those people who are trying to protect the community.

I would like to draw your attention to a motion that I presented on 25 February 1976 regarding the non assent to the ordinance. In my remarks following the moving of this motion, I said "the Administrator shall declare according to his discretion". I ask members to note that the word "shall" and not "may" was used. This implies an obligation and a time limitation on that obligation which is defined in the words "upon the presentation of the ordinance". This is an emergency bill and we have waited during January, February, March and April; and we are now into May, I think that the contents of that motion should be borne in mind.

Dr LETTS: At the outset, I would just like to say that the wording of the motion does leave a little to be desired; I know it was done in a hurry. It seems to me that in the latter part of the motion, following the words "the Commonwealth Government", we should be saying either "to remove any obstacles to the activation of this legislation as a matter of urgency" or

"urges the Commonwealth Government to being about the activation of this legislation as a matter of urgency". The combination of the two phrases that are there is somewhat clumsy and ungrammatical. While other speakers are speaking to the motion, somebody might give attention to the words so that we can, in its final form, have something which will be in the records in a way we would like it to be. However, everybody in this Assembly sympathises with and agrees entirely with the spirit and the intention of the motion.

Let me say at the outset that the Administrator, I believe, has been untiring in his efforts to get some finality and assent to the ordinance. I imagine that the Administrator has found the delays quite embarrassing because he has always shown his keenness to act in the spirit of the motion which the Cabinet Member for Law referred to at the end of her remarks. Certainly the Administrator took his duties in relation to this recent crisis very seriously, to the extent that, at the weekend, he was unable to go to a very important engagement he had at Katherine. But some aspects of the events of the weekend resemble a Laurel and Hardy show. The calling together of the Counter Disaster Council on a couple of occasions, presumably to cope with emergency situations, is really quite foreign to what we intended the functions of that body would be in the legislation. Quite clearly the functions of the Counter Disaster Council is planning in the broad sense for the Territory. The functions are set out quite well in the bill: to lay down general guidelines and, where necessary, give directions to be followed by the director in counter disaster planning; and to examine and approve regional and Territory counter disaster plans. These are the functions of the Counter Disaster Council. It is obviously, from reading through those and other functions, a forward planning, advisory and review body. It is not the body which takes charge of an emergency on the spot as it occurs and thereafter. The ordinance sets up people to do that. Firstly, there is the Territory Co-ordinator, the

Commissioner of Police, whose particular functions are to co-ordinate counter disaster activities during a state of disaster. Secondly, the Director of Emergency Services has a continuing role both in pre-planning and at the time of the disaster. These are the people, together with the Cabinet member for Law and the Administrator and the Executive Council, who have the action role in this situation. The fact that the machinery did not work is due in part to the fact that the legislation has not been commenced and in part to a misunderstanding of how the ordinance is put together and how it is supposed to work.

The Minister came here yesterday and he has now gone again. I commend him for having the interest to come here on behalf of the Commonwealth Government to see what was happening, even though I believe that he could have probably had some reassurance by virtue of some telephone calls yesterday morning before leaving that things were improving. But he came here. He made contact, as I understand it, with the Cabinet Member for Law, but he made no contact with me whatever. He came virtually unannounced; we had to hear it on the radio. The principal people who would be responsible for doing something if there was a crisis situation about us - that is to say, the Cabinet Member, the Territory Co-ordinator, the Commissioner of Police, the Director of Emergency Services - were all left in the dark about what was going on. Obviously, the Minister does not understand the machinery which we proposed to put into the law and did not know the people to whom he should have been talking. The chief point is that, whatever the reason, the Government has failed in its obligation to clear up problems which it may see, to negotiate with the representatives of this Assembly and to get this legislation off the ground. Last October, they wanted it in a hell of a hurry. It was brought in here and treated as a matter of considerable urgency. Now they have sat around in typical bureaucratic fashion and have to be needed from time to time by ourselves or by the presence of a cyclone before somebody is prepared to take any action.

This is an extremely good illustration of government from Canberra. We have put up with this for years and years and this is particularly sad to see because the question of emergency services was supposed to be a transferred function as from 1 January. They will not give us the necessary machinery to make that function work. I am glad that the Cabinet Member for Law referred to the earlier motion this Assembly passed dealing in general with the question of assent to legislation because it gives me the opportunity to also mention that, in respect of another transferred function - environment, national parks and wildlife - we have seen an extraordinary situation of delay by the Commonwealth Government. A bill which we passed 12 months ago, and admittedly amended a couple of times afterwards, has now been in their hands for well over 6 months. It creates the new Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission in the Northern Territory and gives us the machinery to discharge our obligations under the transferred functions.

On 9 March this year, I took the opportunity to see the Minister for Environment and Housing in person and to make very strong representations about the delays which had occurred in the assent to this bill. I was given the personal assurance of the Minister that they expected to be in a position to clear the way for assent within a couple of days. After a further 6 weeks nothing had happened although we had been inquiring weekly about the progress. I was going down to Canberra again so I sent a telex to the Minister's office. Back came a telex on 21 April, 6 weeks after the assurance had been given, saying "I am pleased that the way is now clear for us to support the Territory Parks and Wildlife Ordinance going forward for assent". The way is now clear. Just when we will get that assent, I suppose, will depend on Executive Council meetings. I will not believe it until I see it finally.

Both of these instances are completely disgraceful and certainly the emergency Counter Disaster Ordinance is more serious because it is something

which could affect the lives of many people and the safety and well-being of the whole Territory. I support the motion.

Mr WITHNALL: I certainly support the motion and I rise to remark that I was not only astonished but completely dismayed to hear the answer given by the Cabinet Member for Law this morning. I was dismayed at the proposal that people should act as though the ordinance had been assented to. That is one of the most extraordinary concepts that I have ever heard. Since the ordinance has not been assented to, and since it is not law, the proposition apparently was that people should act without authority and that all the powers to be given to persons under the ordinance should be exercised unlawfully. I find that incredible.

However, my chief concern is to express again my dismay at the way in which the Commonwealth Government treats this Legislative Assembly and treats the ordinances which are made here. I complained at the last meeting about the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs who was so rude towards this Assembly as to say that, as far as his portfolio was concerned, only the laws that he wanted would be passed by this Assembly. However, the matter is far worse when one considers the history of the Counter Disaster Ordinance because one realises that it is a prime example again of the passing of so many opinions by the public service upon ordinances passed by this Assembly. This is the cause of the delay.

A most extraordinary thing happened in relation to a Crown Lands Bill which by the terms of the Administration Act must be reserved for the Governor-General's assent. When this Legislative Assembly passed a bill relating to Crown lands, the bill was sent to the Department of the Northern Territory so that department could consider whether or not to advise the Administrator to reserve it. This little exercise took about 6 weeks because the persons concerned happened to be in Brisbane at the time. Eventually, the persons in Brisbane said that the Administrator

could reserve the bill. When a bill is reserved, a much more frightening thing happens. It then goes around every department of the Commonwealth Government which could possibly be concerned about it. It does not go to the Ministers; it goes to the departments themselves. If there are any people to be employed under it, it goes to the Public Service Board; and if it involves the expenditure of any moneys at all, it goes to Treasury; if it is concerned in any way with industrial relations, it goes to the Department of Labour and Industry; and if it is concerned even remotely with the use of land, it will go to the Department of Primary Industry or some other department according to the land concerned. All these people do not receive the bill at the same time. It is shopped around and, if this is not clear cut case of government and legislation by the public service, I do not know what is.

This Legislative Assembly has been completely ignored and treated as shabbily as it ever could be treated by the public service and by the Ministers who ought to know better. This is supposed, and I use the word "supposed" advisedly, to be a democratic form of government that we have here. It is not a democratic form of government as this instance now before this Assembly makes quite clear. It is a form of government by the public service. I do not even use the word "bureaucracy" because it is not the system, it is the people themselves. The legislature in the Northern Territory is completely under the hand of public servants in Canberra who know nothing about the situation here and who care less.

If this cyclone over the weekend had struck, it would probably have been a worse disaster than Cyclone Tracy because, on that occasion, everybody pulled together and got the organisation going. On this occasion, there would have been much more disorganisation because we had set up a system for the handling of this situation which, because of a number of public servants and a number of departments, just did not get off the ground.

The matter of assent to ordinances by the Commonwealth Government must be taken up most urgently by the Majority Leader and at the highest level. The fact that this Assembly's ordinances come under the scrutiny of so many unelected persons is a disgrace. I suggest to the Majority Leader that this is one of the most burning questions of the day. We should insist that, when bills leave this Assembly, they go directly to the Administrator and from the Administrator they go directly to the Minister concerned - not through public service departments, not through a number of public servants who are seeking to enlarge their own empire, and who enjoy telling people in the Northern Territory exactly what sort of laws they are going to have or not going to have.

There is a further matter that I would also like to draw to the Majority Leader's attention. This concerns what I regard as the most pernicious provision that any law relating to any constitution of a legislature can ever contain - the provision in the Northern Territory (Administration) Act that the Governor-General may refuse assent to part of an ordinance. That must be removed immediately. There is no precedent for this anywhere in the history of Westminster parliaments. That provision has been abused and one can fear that, in future, it may be abused even to the extent of not assenting to the word "not". It is an absurd provision and I commend to the Majority Leader the task of seeing it removed immediately.

I also commend to the Majority Leader that there should be some effort made to remove from the Northern Territory (Administration) Act another provision which enables ordinances to be sent back. If there is a mistake in an ordinance, it does not need to be sent back. If it is our mistake, we will acknowledge it and we will amend it ourselves. We do not need "big brother", we do not need a teacher to correct our exercises and send them back and say "Please do it this way". This is a responsible legislature and it is fully elected. It is about time

the Commonwealth Government woke up to the fact that it is fully elected, that it is fully responsible and is not to be charged with acting irresponsibly in the fashion which ministers and departments of the public service seem inclined to do.

I support the motion and I hope that the Honourable Majority Leader will take up what I have said with the Minister and with the Prime Minister and, as an urgent move, amend the Northern Territory (Administration) Act so that we can hold up our heads even amongst those people who particularly are looking to our downfall, that is to say the bureaucratic departments in Canberra.

Mrs LAWRIE: Probably all that needs to be said has been said by the former speakers, but I think it is important to indicate support for this motion along the lines that all shades of opinion in this Assembly need to say clearly to the Australian Government, and anyone else who is interested, that the non-assent to ordinances and the contempt with which this Assembly is treated is a reflection not only on the Majority Party but on the Assembly as a whole and one which I personally abhor and reject.

This Assembly has greater need than ever to jealously guard its rights to legislate and to speak in the best interests of the Territory. We swore to do that when we were first elected and first took our seats in this House. Yet, as the honourable member for Port Darwin has so clearly shown, we are prevented by faceless people within various Australian government departments. When this legislation was before the House, there were some aspects of it which I criticised and about which I still have reservations. I exercised my right as a member to speak on those occasions, both in the second reading and in committee. The House listened and made its decisions accordingly. This legislation was then presented for assent and there apparently it still lies - in limbo.

I will not rehash the reasons that have been so recently brought home as to the particularly reprehensible act-

ion in having done nothing about this ordinance, but may I say that it would have been reasonable for the Majority Leader, upon the passage of the bill, and for the relevant Cabinet Member, to have had discussions with such people as the Attorney-General and the Minister for Defence - because we are still regarded as a strategic defence area; not that you would know it when they close the railways and do not provide roads - to have discussions with these 2 important people as to the necessity for this legislation becoming law in the shortest possible time.

Honourable members will notice that I have not mentioned the Minister for the Northern Territory. I accept fully the assurances given then and again now by the Cabinet Member that this legislation had the full approval of the Department of the Northern Territory and one assumes, therefore, that the legislation had been discussed between the relevant Cabinet Member and perhaps the Majority Leader and the Minister. Yet notwithstanding all these things, we have seen nothing happen. Honourable members will forgive me if I feel that this sad story has been heard so often before. We have had in the Northern Territory an acceptance of a form of government by Territorians and limited powers, certainly, but some powers going across to Cabinet Members and the Majority Party. We are to see a one-line budget presented in this House for the first time. These are significant things, and yet we are not operating as people expect and believe; as the member for Port Darwin has said and as the Cabinet Member responsible has said - we are being put aside by these public servants.

I support the motion and I can only, in closing, repeat that I think it is important for members who are not members of the Majority Party to indicate extreme disquiet with the procedures which are being adopted.

Mr DONDAŠ: I also feel that it is disgusting that the time of this Assembly must be used in debating a counter disaster bill which was introduced to the Assembly on 17 November 1976 and passed all stages during December of 1976. What this ordinance is all about

is to provide for the training of counter disaster and civil defence personnel, the adoption of counter disaster or civil defence measures during natural or other disasters, and for other purposes. I find it disgusting that the Commonwealth Government cannot assent to a bill that is going to protect the rights of individual members of the community in the event of a disaster. The bill has a proper regard to those rights and the citizens of the Northern Territory need the assurance of this type of legislation and are entitled to it. Long months of hard work have been put in by Cabinet Members and other members of the community to provide this legislation and the machinery to enable the legislation to function. Cyclone Verna over the weekend proved that the machinery could be put into operation - yellow alert, white alert, radio broadcasts and so on. If they can prove themselves even before legislation is assented to, they must certainly be organised.

The legislation covers most contingencies; for example, Counter Disaster Council, a Territory Co-ordinator, a Director of Emergency Services, voluntary regional organisations, states of disaster and various other things. We must have this legislation if we are going to meet any day-to-day emergency which may arise. I call upon the Commonwealth Government to assent to this legislation immediately and to formalise arrangements which have been made since the bill passed through this house last December.

Other members have spoken on various areas pertaining to the bill. I am not going to go along the same line; I support the motion.

Mr ROBERTSON: In rising to support the motion, I note that all honourable members today have referred to the event or possible event of cyclones. I can understand how honourable members from Darwin think in terms of cyclones; certainly, anyone who was here during the 1974 one would not want to see a repeat of that event. But it is perhaps fortunate really this cyclone did show its ugly head off the coast of

northern Australia and did catalyse this debate.

Mr Speaker, the types of disasters that we are likely to have in the southern regions are not so considerate as cyclones. It is difficult to detect a freak storm on radar. It is very difficult to detect a flash flood on radar. It is very difficult to detect a fire, an oil spillage, an explosion of a tanker or the spillage of a dangerous chemical, on radar. In other words, we do not get any warning at all. The fact that the cyclone was detected on radar sometime before it was expected to strike the Northern Territory coast allowed the Minister time to write his absolutely meaningless epistle to the Administrator and set a certain jumped-up mechanism into process.

If we in the south were to have a disaster, there would be no such lead-time whatever. That is why I find the prospects of the type of disaster we are likely to have in the southern area even more frightening than the prospects of a cyclone in the northern end. I would also remind honourable members from the northern electorates that a cyclone is only one of the types of disasters that they can face too. Darwin could share in any of those types of disasters which I have just outlined and without an operational mechanism. You too are not going to get any advance warning. You are not going to have the advantage of 2 or 3 days in which to act.

The net result would be a shambles and the awful spectre of exactly what happened in 1974: police officers from all sorts of places coming in and acting entirely illegally. That is what appalled all of us after the 1974 cyclone. It is the utter illegality of it that bothers me - people's rights of movement, their freedom, infringed upon by the state without any legal validity for those actions whatsoever. What if we had to get some sort of an ad hoc system going, and this would have been ad hoc, it would have had no basis of law whatever despite a letter from the Minister to the Administrator. What are

we expected as a legislature to do then? I suppose we would have had to do exactly the same as we were called upon to do last time: pass retrospective laws in respect of illegal actions or face the prospect of having our machinery, our bureaucracy, our police force, showered with writs of all kinds.

Perhaps, if it had happened, the most responsible thing that this legislature could have done would have been not to pass any retrospective legislation. Perhaps that sort of attitude will be the only way we will be able to get the message across to Canberra that we do not act flippantly or lightly in matters of legislation such as the Disasters Ordinance. It is enacted or ordained by this place for a purpose. It is not a plaything for the public service to modify, to hack around as it sees fit, to come up with idiotic reasons like the establishment of a separate independent army in the Northern Territory, or to come up with reasons within Treasury as to why they should not compensate people who are acting, in many cases voluntarily and in dangerous circumstances, for the community. The purpose of the legislation is to make provision in the event of an emergency. Perhaps this legislature should act as a "dog in the manger" on some occasions to get the message across that these are serious matters and are not to be dealt with lightly. We have the mechanism under the act to have these pieces of legislation assented to and brought into operation. Not only are we risking imposing upon the community a series of illegal acts purported to have been done by the law, we are also asking that community to accept government by the public service. The legislation is there. It is no longer a bill; it is an ordinance of the Northern Territory. The only difference between it and formal law is a small matter of assent.

The areas of concern for this Assembly and the slights that have been dealt to this Assembly have been adequately dealt with by the member for Port Darwin, and I support everything he said. I support the motion and I

support the Majority Leader's remarks, particularly those in relation to other pieces of legislation. Unless we take a stand on this particular one, the slights that have been perpetrated on the people of the Northern Territory will continue. I commend the motion and I urge honourable members also individually to bring their extreme displeasure to the notice of everyone from the Prime Minister down in the Federal Government.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I move that the motion be amended by deleting the words "bring about" in the fifth line.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Mr Speaker, you are no doubt approached by Cabinet Members from time to time with a request that you grant a certificate of urgency in respect of certain legislation presented by them to this House. It seems to me that these approaches to you are made in the best of faith and are usually made in respect of legislation which the Cabinet Member concerned would be presenting to this House on behalf of the Government. There have been a considerable number of requests for urgency from what I have heard and certainly there have been a good number of certificates of urgency granted. I may be wrong but I think a certificate of urgency would have been granted in respect of this piece of legislation because it was passed within a period of 28 days from its first presentation to this House. It was presented on 17 November and passed on 7 December so it would seem that you must have granted a certificate of urgency. It seems that the Australian Government's right hand does not know what its left hand is doing because the honourable Cabinet Member, with the full support of her colleagues in her party, approached you for a certificate of urgency for this piece of legislation, which obviously any responsible member would have wanted to see in force in the Northern Territory before the onset of the 1977 wet season, and you granted the certificate of urgency. We find ourselves in May 1977, five months later, haranguing one another and you, sir, with the

culpability of public servants in not having processed this piece of legislation sooner.

The second matter which I would like to draw to your attention - I know that the honourable Cabinet Member herself has already mentioned it in her remarks - is the resolution of this Assembly on 25 February 1976. I will read the last paragraph of that resolution:

Now therefore this Assembly resolves that the Clerk shall prepare with the least possible delay each ordinance made by the Assembly and shall forthwith present it to the Administrator in accordance with the Act; and in the event that the Administrator does not within a reasonable time declare his assent or otherwise, the Clerk shall notify Mr Speaker who shall, if the Assembly is sitting, inform the Assembly or, if the Assembly is adjourned, fix a sitting day in order that the Assembly may consider the matter.

Sir, I hesitate to criticise you, and certainly I must accept at least as much criticism as you because it had not occurred to me, between December and almost last weekend, to find out whether this particular ordinance had been assented to, but I feel that you may well investigate the position of other pieces of legislation at the present time pursuant to the terms of that motion which is more or less a standing fiat to you to act as watchdog on the swift passage of legislation from the Assembly through the assent stage and into force. Sir, I urge on you to consider with a great deal more scepticism applications for a certificate of urgency. I do not believe the Australian Government is being sincere when it makes these applications. I feel that we are being treated in a contemptuous fashion by the Government. I feel that it may well be a consideration that other members might like to take up, that the official responsible for delays should perhaps in the event of a repetition of lack of action of this nature, be brought before the Bar of this Assembly to explain his conduct or lack of conduct.

Finally, I do second most heartily the remarks of the honourable member for Port Darwin, although I do wish he would not get himself worked up into such a choleric state. I fear sometimes, at the height of his passion, that he will not be long with us; it cannot really be good for his heart at his delicate stage of life. He is a man who is very sincere in his desire to see real responsibility passed into the hands of the people who must wear the cap. It seems to me that in situations like this the people who have dragged the chain should be called on to explain themselves. One never hears of dismissals of persons for such laxity as has occurred in this situation. I would like to know what happens to these people that do nothing. Do they just keep on doing nothing for ever and ever? Mr Speaker, perhaps you could take up through your officials in the Assembly the investigation of what chastisement or punishment happens to the official who just lets a matter such as this, where human lives are endangered, go begging by default.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I, as Speaker, accept the blame for not complying with the terms of the motion passed by this Assembly on 25 February 1976. The Assembly itself might feel some guilt for not raising the matter at its March sittings. However, I would point out that, in relation to the presentation of ordinances generally, there is a difficulty in that prior advice is required from the Administrator as to his intention so that the correct certificate may be attached to the ordinance when it is presented. This a matter which needs to be resolved and I will discuss it with the Majority Leader with a view to devising a new procedure so that everyone may be informed when an ordinance is presented with or without result. I understand that this is the only piece of legislation outstanding.

Miss ANDREW: In exercising my right of reply in closing the debate, I would like to comment on a couple of remarks made by 2 of the honourable members. I thank members for their support of this

motion. I can assure the honourable member for Gillen that we have not simply been looking at the cyclone-prone top end in our concern about the assent to this legislation. All disasters come under attention of and are in the concern of the emergency services section which is of course in the Department of Law.

Regarding the matter of the Assembly not bringing to your attention, Mr Speaker, the fact that this particular ordinance had not been assented to, officers of my department and the Chief Secretary's department and myself have been untiring in the search for information regarding assent to this bill. We have constantly been assured that assent is really just around the corner and that no undue delays can be expected. For this reason, we have tended to live in more hope than was warranted. I thank members for their comments and I trust that Cyclone Verna plus the debate in this House will make somebody, somewhere, move.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

BRANDS BILL

(Serial 168)

Continued from 16 March 1977.

Dr LETTS: I rise merely to say in the second reading that the Brands Ordinance is one which has served the Northern Territory faithfully and well for a long time. We have always had the advantage over many of the other states in that it is a statutory requirement to brand horses and cattle with a 3 - letter brand. The origins of the bill go back to the early days of settlement when there were few fences and, in order to avoid disputes of ownership on boundary lines, some clear identification was required. It also relates to the days of droving. As recently as 20 years ago, nearly all of the Territory turn-off of 150,000 head moved down the stock routes, passing through many other stations in transit, and provided opportunities for the unscrupulous drover to build up the size of his travelling herd from the

properties through which he passed. Because of these sorts of considerations, the Brands Ordinance was originally devised and it has served us well. Today, it puts us in the additional advantageous position of being able to use the system of branding for the identification of cattle for disease control purposes. Every beast going through the abattoirs has a Territory brand on it and any horse which is sampled for a suspected disease has a known brand on it and so the diseases can be traced back to the property of origin.

Having said those words in praise of the Brands Ordinance, we have found from time to time the need to amend it. I foreshadow that, in the near future, an additional amendment will be required because, as we found with the Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Ordinance, circumstances can change and make what was once a good piece of legislation somewhat absurd in the light of current circumstances. We found it necessary to change the Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Ordinance so that ponies travelling from a place in the suburbs or outer suburbs to a gymkhana a mile away did not have to be subjected to the stockroutes and travelling stock permit system. With the great growth of equestrian sports in the Northern Territory, the placing of a three letter brand one and a half inches high on a foal which is only going to grow to a small pony size is rather disfiguring and somewhat unnecessary. It will be my intention to ask the Cabinet Member to examine this situation and bring in a further amendment so that special exemptions can be provided for other than station stock.

Mr POLLOCK: I thank the honourable member for his support. I can assure the House that this very matter is under some consideration by the branch. I too hope that, in the near future, we will see some action to bring the ordinance into line with the thoughts he expressed.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

PRISONS BILL

(Serial 169)

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr POLLOCK: I rise to support this bill. It does provide a very important machinery alteration to the ordinance in its recognition of the Director of Correctional Services. In recent times, the appointment has been made and the office has been occupied. The bill before us covers only a small area of the operation of the prison service and it could deal with a great number of other aspects relating to the proper operation of that particular service. From my time as the Executive Member for Social Affairs, a number of officers of that branch did bring forward a number of matters in relation to the operation of that ordinance. I would hope that the work that was done then will be carried forward. I appreciate that there are some difficulties in relation to some officers who carry out this work. With the appointment of the higher position of Director, many duties which were carried out by the Administrator and the Executive Member responsible will fall to him and that will greatly assist in the general operation of the ordinance. However, there are still areas which can be further improved.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to support the bill and take up a couple of the points raised by the previous speaker and the sponsor of the bill. The first point is the cost, references to which we have heard twice in this House today, and the shortage of specialist staff to service these executives in the proper and correct revision of ordinances that already exist. The honourable member for MacDonnell has already spoken of the need to update the whole Prisons Ordinance and that is a need which all honourable members will recognise to be long overdue. It does seem that the Cabinet Members are being hampered in their efforts by a lack of parliamentary counsel specialists advising them,

departmental staff in their own Executive. If this is so, I think it should be highlighted.

The administration of prisons in the Northern Territory, as the Cabinet Member mentioned in introducing this bill, is a history of disaster, of neglect, of being a century behind the times and the rest of Australia. This piece of legislation is at least one small step in catching up and making the Northern Territory appear to be on parity with what happens in the states. It is significant that, although it is a small amendment, at last we are going to have somebody within the system directly responsible to the Cabinet Member for the proper conduct of prisons in the Northern Territory, of the staff servicing those prisons, and of the legislation which enables the whole system to function.

The Cabinet Member spoke of various reports which were tabled in the Legislative Council dealing with this problem. The Ward Report, presented on 21 August 1974, was scathing in its condemnation of the system which has operated and which has meant that the person administering the prisons, a de facto Director of Correctional Services, although supposedly answerable to the Administrator, was in fact answerable to a number of Commonwealth public servants, although not himself required to be a Commonwealth public servant - in fact, he was supposed to be a Northern Territory public servant. However, the decisions taken at that time by a Northern Territory public servant, with direct responsibility to report to the Administrator, were constantly interfered with, overturned, ignored, put aside by a variety of persons in the Commonwealth Public Service. Their names are well known. I do not propose to repeat them because I do not think it is really necessary for them to appear in Hansard,

With this bill, we at last see a change in that ridiculous and iniquitous situation. We see someone directly responsible to this House through the Cabinet Member and who, hopefully, not only will push for the

updating of the physical prisons which are going to remain necessary for many years to come but will also, hopefully, be in a position to advise the Cabinet Member and to push urgently for a revision of the entire ordinance. In her reply, I hope that the Cabinet Member will say whether she is hampered in this worthy objective by a lack of specialist advice because it is the right of this House to know, and for pressure to be put upon the relevant Federal Government Minister to make such support staff available. I support the bill.

Mr ROBERTSON: At the outset, I would like to thank the honourable member for Nightcliff for her support. It is not often we hear it and it is very gratifying when we do. The point she raised in relation to expert assistance will be in the forefront of the consciousness of all honourable members. It is quite pointless to transfer executive functions unless we receive expert back-up for them.

There are a number of areas in this particular legislation which I would like to raise. Far be it from me to usurp the role of the absent Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry as the devil's advocate; however, it is rather extraordinary that we call gaols "prisons" and we call prisoners "prisoners" yet we call the director of this service "the Director of Correctional Services". When are we really going to accept the fact that gaols are punitive?

Mr Withnall: You could still whip them.

Mr Robertson: I would accept the honourable member for Port Darwin's words on this. If there was a whipping piece of legislation ever brought in, as Crown Law Officer in days gone by, he may have been responsible for it. Certainly, by his words, the honourable member scourges himself.

Mr Withnall: In 1884.

Mr ROBERTSON: I knew the member for Port Darwin was very ancient but I sup-

pose cannot really attribute that particular statute to him.

The point is that the world society seems to be going over further into this pussy-footing around with the wrongdoer, with the person who transgresses against what is regarded as normal behaviour. We see words creeping into law such as "correctional services". For heavens sake, surely it is a prison first and foremost and a correctional institution second, the whole structure of penalties reflects that; and this is quite outside of the line I normally take,

Mr Pollock: You can say that again.

Mr ROBERTSON: The sergeant corrects me.

Having made that observation, I do support the legislation. It brings into being the recognition of the Cabinet Member's responsibility within the framework of correctional services. It is a recognition of the transfer of powers which have occurred and it is under her wing now that these functions shall be governed. There is one point I would like her to clarify for me. It is in relation to clause 10 which will amend section 22 of the principal ordinance. It is the clause which states that the director may cause all or any of the prisoners confined in a prison or police prison to be removed to any other prison or police prison. I am wondering how that is proposed to operate with people who are overnight prisoners and who have not yet been tried and not yet been convicted. Is it proposed that the Director of Correctional Services will have control over those people because, as far as I am concerned, those people are not prisoners. They are merely in detention pending the course of justice. I do apologise to the Cabinet Member for not having raised this earlier; in fact, I am somewhat remiss in only just having noticed it, but it does cause me some concern.

A Member: You can always put them in the Travelodge.

Mr ROBERTSON: I will admit some evil people after the cyclone did dwell in the Travelodge, myself included.

I would like clarification of that. The basic thrust of the bill is something that we can all support with some pleasure in that it does recognise the status of the Executive Member, it does recognise that the prison service is a transferred function and I think in its own way it is recognised as an Assembly responsibility to the community. For those reasons, with reservations, I support the bill.

Miss ANDREW: I thank honourable members for their support for this bill. In reply, I would like to make a couple of comments. In particular, replying to the honourable member for Night-cliff's question about the shortage of specialist staff, the Northern Territory Executive and the correctional services section of the Department of Law in particular, not only suffer from a shortage of specialist staff but from a wholesale shortage of staff. Reform of prison legislation in the Northern Territory is long overdue, but I think that there are a lot of other problems within the prisons system that are equally overdue for a solution. Work is being carried out on reform of prison legislation, hopefully to the point where we can repeal the current Prisons Ordinance and replace it with something more appropriate. However, when you get down to a situation where at times 5 prison warders are operating a jail accommodating 87 people, work such as reform in the legislative field cannot take priority. Secondly, we have a shortage of trained staff because, in the past, people have been taken off the streets if they have applied for a job. We have adopted a more enlightened attitude and, as from last year, potential prison officers are now having training, too short a training, but nevertheless training. We have to start somewhere. We hope that this will be increased. At the moment, with the incredible problems caused by a lack of staff, the time taken to train them could put security, which according to our legislation is of paramount importance, at jeopardy. I can assure

honourable members that all steps have been taken in our efforts towards both the new jail in the Darwin area, improvements to the jail in Alice Springs, the prison farm at Gunn Point and the implementation of new legislation.

In replying to the comments from the member for Gillen, what we do have in terms of facilities in the Northern Territory could only be described as gaols. Indeed, Fannie Bay Gaol has been likened to some of those existing in more unenlightened areas of the world, for example, the Belgian Congo. In describing the director as a Director of Correctional Services, we are looking forward to a more enlightened approach to the treatment of criminals. New legislation and the design of the gaol have been aimed at weekend detention, community service, work relief programs as well as a series of rehabilitative programs. The Cinderella that we inherited leaves us an opportunity only to move forward and I hope that, in the not too distant future, we will be repealing this particular piece of legislation and replacing the entire ordinance in toto.

In answer to the question raised by the honourable member for Gillen regarding overnight imprisonment, it is my understanding that these do not come under the direction of the Director of Correctional Services unless the particular prisoner has been sentenced. It comes under the Police Commissioner.

I look forward to a whole new spectrum of correctional services programs in the Northern Territory and see this only as the very beginning. I commend the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED GOODS BILL

(Serial 179)

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr WITHNALL: When this bill first came before the House, I had some criticism to make of it, and I think the honourable member in charge of the bill took a good deal of notice of what I had to say. I now have one comment to make which relates to 2 clauses of the bill. Under clause 4(a), section 8(1)(c), goods which are required to be advertised in the Gazette now have to be advertised in a prescribed form, I have the very greatest objection. When you are advertising conditions for the sale of goods, to be circumscribed by a prescribed form means that you must limit what you have to say to that form. It may not only create difficulties, but provides a lot more control by public servants of the sale of goods under the ordinance and, frankly, the benefits to be achieved by putting this provision in seem to me to be entirely illusory.

I make similar remarks about the provisions of clause 7 of the bill relating to the record of sales or disposal. Again, it is now to be provided in a prescribed form. If somebody has to make a record, and the bill spells out the things he has to record, why is it necessary to make it in the prescribed form? I have looked at prescribed forms, and I generally find that they want a lot more information than the ordinance itself requires. I have a very great objection to the extension of bureaucratic control. If a man is bound to advertise the conditions as to the sale of goods, let him do so in his own words and let him be responsible. If he is bound to make a record of the sale or disposal of goods, let him do so in his own words. There is no need to prescribe a form. One of the difficulties about prescribed forms is that sometimes you find that you cannot get them. Then you have to go to all the trouble of getting someone to look up the regulations themselves and copy out the prescribed form or type it out yourself. Prescribed forms, if they are not going to be available at all convenient places, merely mean a lot more work for the person concerned in disposal of the goods.

It seems to me that no benefit can be

obtained from the inclusion of clauses 4 and 7(a) and I object to any further provision that requires a person to rack the town for a prescribed form before he can do the things he wants to do. Somebody in Tennant Creek might want to take action over this ordinance and there will be no prescribed forms in Tennant Creek for sure. He has to put it all off until he can get a prescribed form from somewhere else and maybe even then finds that there is not a prescribed form available in Darwin. So he has to get someone to copy it out of the regulations book. The sections are clear as to the conditions that must be advertised and the things that must be recorded. Why cannot we leave it at that and not talk about forms?

Miss ANDREW: I accept the comments of the honourable member for Port Darwin who has been the only speaker on this bill.

Mr Robertson: That is because you rushed in.

Miss ANDREW: My apologies to the honourable member for Gillen.

I would like to point out that, in including clause 4 and clause 7(a), the intention was to assist the public. If someone has some goods and seeks advice about their disposal, the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Ordinance is thrust upon them but over half the population would need to seek the advice of a solicitor in order to interpret exactly what they should do. In this instance, if the prescribed form can be simply handed across the counter - and I do the people of Tennant Creek a greater favour than the honourable member for Port Darwin in thinking there would be a form there and, if there were not, they could at least get a copy of the regulations and type it out themselves - the gentleman can simply fill out the form and proceed. If indeed he did have to seek the advice of a solicitor who may or may not be available in order to interpret what this legislation says, that would be doing the public a greater disservice than simply providing them with the form. I see these as formal amendments tidying up

an ordinance ready for its implementation.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later.

SEEDS BILL

(Serial 184)

Continued from 15 March 1977.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

SOIL CONSERVATION
AND LAND UTILISATION BILL

(Serial 187)

Continued from 17 March 1977.

Mr MANUELL: The bill has been dealt with quite adequately by previous speakers. However, in my capacity as the member for Alice Springs, I feel compelled to offer my support to the proposed amendments. At an earlier stage, I raised a question with the Majority Leader as to the satisfactory conduct of some members of the community in relation to soil conservation and, in particular, those activities that were undertaken by people using off-road vehicles. I raised the question whether off road vehicles were contributing towards soil erosion. Subsequent investigation by the Lands Branch tended to confirm the observations that I had made and, in that respect, I believe the present legislation caters for that requirement in that it preserves the interests of all people in what must apply to their natural heritage, their land.

The amendments proposed in this legislation are a little wider in application than simply catering for the interests of those who utilise land, in particular off-road vehicle drivers. It applies to soil conservation under circumstances where land

is utilised in any way, whether it be leased land or whether it be vacant crown land. It is my strong feeling that the adoption of these amendments will not necessarily curtail the activity of those people who are interested in undertaking recreational activity with off-road vehicles. It will simply provide the law with the ability to control those who are perhaps not necessarily aware of the damage they may do by undertaking such activity.

It came to my notice at an early stage that, with the ready acceptance of off-road vehicles, not only 4 wheel drive but 2 wheel drive, and the application of some of these vehicles on the land by people engaged in sporting and recreational activities, lasting damage could be done to the soil of our country. There are areas where off-road vehicles can be used with no damage to the soil; there are some areas where off-road vehicles can cause lasting damage. It is for this circumstance that this legislation is, in part, designed.

I do believe that the maintenance of land in the Northern Territory should be the responsibility of this Assembly and it is fitting and proper that we should legislate accordingly. There is no doubt that our land is a national heritage and that land use is a national responsibility. But when it comes to utilisation at a local level, I believe that clearly the responsibility for the preservation of that land is this Assembly's.

In addition to those matters, this bill sets out powers of the commissioner. Once appointed, the commissioner has the power to carry out the treatment or rectification of those soils and areas of land that have been damaged by utilisation. I believe this to be appropriate because, when we observe that damaged soils and erosions have occurred, we must have the power and the ability to go and put into motion rectification processes and these only can be done by law. I believe these powers have been made available through the proposed amendment in clause 11. Apart from that, I do not bel-

ieve there is much more to say about this bill. I believe that it has been adequately covered by the members who have spoken. I do commend this bill to the Assembly and I look forward to its speedy passage.

Mr TUXWORTH: In rising to support the bill, I would like to speak very briefly on one particular aspect that was raised with me during the period in which I was involved with the carriage of the bill. The point relates to the relationship between the landholder and the departmental officer whose duty it is to make an appreciation of the damage that has been done to land, and the recommendation that may be necessary on any soil erosion improvements that may be needed. In discussions I had with the Centralian Pastoralists Association, they made a very strong point concerning the relationship between the departmental individuals and the landholders in the Alice Springs area. They felt that too often the departmental officer entered the land, made an assessment of the soil erosion in the area, returned to his office and sent out a screeed to the landholder advising him what needed to be done, and what had to be done in a very short time. Quite often the assessment made by the departmental officer was one that the landholder could not conform with and, worse, he could not rationalise in his own mind. The Centralian Pastoralist's Association sought to have included in the legislation particular details outlining the power of entry and notification that departmental officers in the Soil Erosion Section would have to give to the owner. Having listened to their complaints and understanding how bureaucrats do become a little carried away with their own importance, I did appreciate their argument. However, we may be well-meaning in trying to control the way officers carry out their duties, but it is just not practical at ground level. I have taken this point up with the Centralian Pastoralist's Association and explained it to them - and I do not doubt that my colleague, the Cabinet Member for Resources, has also had to explain to them that it is not possible.

One thing that I think we should emphasise during the debate on this legislation, for the benefit of departmental personnel, is that it is the wish of this Assembly that the duties of the officers be carried out with due regard to the people they are looking after as well as the land they are trying to protect. Unfortunately, many of the pastoralists have developed a siege mentality towards officers of the Soil Erosion Section. They believe the officers have nothing else to do in life but get at the pastoralist. I do not think it is a fair attitude for the pastoralist to have adopted. On the other hand, there may be some actions of officers that have warranted them to take this stance. It is not possible for us, in the legislation, to insist that a departmental officer advise by phone or by mail of an impending visit to inspect the property for the purpose of checking on soil erosion on a property. However, I do believe it is fair and reasonable for officers to extend to pastoralists and property holders the normal courtesies of life. The sort of activity whereby the inspector would come to the door and say, "I am here to inspect your property, would you care to accompany me. If you can't accompany me, could I call in on my way out and let you know what my findings are?", is not predominant in the soil conservation section of the department from my experience in working with it for 12 months. Legislators and administrators should watch this carefully rather than have confrontation between people who have a mutual aim in the preservation of our soil.

Mr WITHNALL: I have a number of comments to make with respect to this bill. I do welcome all legislation which is designed by reasonable means to conserve land from ravages of the weather or the ravages which are occasioned by the use of vehicles or any other use in the Northern Territory. While I accept that a very large part of the Northern Territory is probably more fragile in this respect than other parts of Australia, I think that legislation of this sort has to be scrutinised very carefully before it is

passed. My comments on this bill will not be very detailed. However, I will ask the honourable member in charge of the bill if he could be more careful when he talks about a soil conservation order. He uses the expression in the amending bill and one assumes that it has the same meaning as an order from the commissioner in the principal ordinance. It seems to me that he is erecting the soil conservation order here into a much more powerful instrument than is referred to in the original bill. This he does by virtue of clause 11 which amends section 14 of the principal ordinance.

I would like to direct the honourable member's attention more particularly to his new proposed sub-section 2A which I think needs a little bit of attention from the drafting point of view. His subclause (c) of clause 11 proposes that a soil conservation order requiring a person to reduce the number of livestock carried on an area of land should not be valid or enforceable unless it has first been approved by the Administrator in Council, so he has got to go to the Administrator in Council and ask "May I issue this order?". He gets that approval, and then he goes along and issues the order. It might as well have been that the Administrator in Council should issue the order because, if every time an order is to be issued it has to go to the Administrator in Council, effectively it is the order of the Administrator in Council and not the soil conservation officer himself. It seems to me that the intention of the clause is not very clearly expressed and I think some more attention might be given to its terminology.

The new subclause 2B proposed to be introduced into section 14 says that the commissioner may require a landowner to produce a plan of the existing use of land referred to in that order and of that landowner's proposals for the future use of the land. It is a niggling point, I do thoroughly agree, but I think the use of the word "plan" in that circumstance might confuse a number of people. The word "statement" or some other word of that sort would

have been far better than "plan".

Coming to clause 13, there is a new section 16A to be introduced which requires the entry of a memorial of soil conservation orders into the register. I thoroughly agree with that principle. I think that is certainly a proper thing to do. I accept that if there is an order of this sort, and it may indeed be a very savage order in force with relation to land whether it be leased or freehold, the public who are searching the title of the land ought to be informed of it. But I direct attention to a couple of provisions in the proposed new section 16A. Subsection (5) says that where the requirements of a soil conservation order in relation to which a memorial has been entered in the register in accordance with this section have been carried out to the satisfaction of the commissioner, the commissioner shall so notify the Registrar-General in writing, thereupon the Registrar-General shall make an entry in the appropriate folio in the relevant register discharging the memorial of the order entered on that folio and the proprietor for the time being of the land concerned shall be discharged from the obligation of complying with that order. But surely he has already complied with it because compliance with a law of this sort is a question of fact and the commissioner must be satisfied, before he puts this thing in, that the requirements have been carried out to the satisfaction of the commissioner. If they have been carried out to the satisfaction of the commissioner, that is the end of the matter surely. There is no need to make the proprietor of land wait until this is registered by the Registrar-General before he is discharged from it. He is discharged by performance and not by entry in the register.

The next subsection of the new section 16A provides that the commissioner may by notice in writing to the Registrar-General request that the memorial be noted in the register as withdrawn. If he was serious in the first place about this memorial, then surely if it has been complied with, why do you need a provision saying that the commis-

sioner may withdraw the order?

I have quite a low key comment to make about subsection (7) of the new section 16A which relates to the application to the Supreme Court for an order that the memorial be removed from the register. The provision is that, upon such an application to the Supreme Court, that court may, upon proof of service of that notice of motion and upon such evidence as that court may require, make such order, ex parte or otherwise, as may seem just in setting the payment of cost of motion. Courts, generally speaking, like to be told in what sort of way a discretion given to them is to be exercised. Generally speaking, legislatures provide guidelines for courts to exercise discretion which are imposed in those courts. This section simply says that, if you apply to the court, the court can do what it likes. Apparently there must be a law that you must bring in such evidence because the expression is "upon such evidence that court may require". It seems to me that the whole section is somewhat hastily conceived and drafted with a lack of particularity. I commend the honourable member's attention to that section and suggest that some amendment is necessary.

The only other comment I have to make is in relation to proposed new section 20B to be introduced by clause 16 of the bill. That section relates to the control of the public in restricted use areas. It seems to suggest in the definition that most of the effect of the section will relate to public land, roads and other places over which persons may pass at any time. "Open land" is said to be "any land which is held by a landholder under any tenure and over which members of the public, whether unlawfully or not, may pass". That seems to be an odd sort of definition which imposes great restriction. Similarly is subsection (8) of the proposed section 20B: "The Administrator may exempt from the effect of a declaration made under subsection (2) such roads in the area of the land to which the declaration relates as the Administrator shall define in the declar-

ation". I suggest that the provisions of new section 20B will go further than is really necessary and that some attention should be given to textual limitation of the effect of section 20B rather than a limitation by declaration of the Administrator in Council.

With those comments, I support the concept of the amendments as I did support the concept of the bill in the first place.

Mr BALLANTYNE: For some time, we have had a lot of trouble in the Territory and other states with erosion, both man-made erosion and that caused by the elements. There are very good methods of controlling this and the soil conservation officers are the ones on whom we could probably rely to see that this work is carried out. The proposed amendments lay down clearly the powers to enter on the land and also the powers of the commissioner. These and other people have power to enter on land and stop people from destroying areas of land by the use of motor vehicles, motor cycles etc. You have only to look at some of the damage done to crown land and even private land by the uncontrolled use of motor vehicles,

A great deal of work has been done to protect the sand dunes surrounding the Gove peninsula from erosion by vehicles, motor cycles and sand buggies and also the sea has caused environmental problems there. Recently, the Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal land is not mentioned here, have restricted the use of that area to try to let nature restore itself. Natural damage can be increased by vehicles and it will get to the stage where major work has to be done to restore that particular area. Everybody here knows exactly what I am talking about because we have had complaints. The member for Alice Springs spoke about motorcycles. I am not against motorcyclists because I was one myself. In a properly controlled situation, these people can still enjoy their sport and not destroy the land.

Division 4 controls the public on restricted use areas and lays down penalties which do not seem too harsh when you think that thousands of dollars worth of damage could be caused. A fine of \$400 or \$500 will not solve it. In the area where I live, there has been a case of people removing sand from an area. The amount of erosion caused to that area is unbelievable; it is not only an eyesore. There is not enough control over these contractors. The mining engineers who have been out to inspect it say that it looks all right but, to my way of thinking, it is very badly controlled. If we had proper control, people could still use the natural resources. You could have what you need for building construction but it could be controlled so that the land will not be left in the shameful state which it has been in the past. I commend the bill and only hope that these new laws can come into force so that we can get down to proper thinking and not have a repetition of what we had in the past with erosion caused not only by the human elements but by nature itself.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mr DONDAS: I rise this afternoon to air a few of the problems I have in my electorate.

The first problem I would like to bring to the Assembly's notice is Nakara Primary School. This morning, I asked a question without notice of the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning. It has been brought to my attention that the Nakara Primary School is going to be used by the Education Department as an administration centre. Whether it is going to be an administration centre for the northern suburbs I am not quite sure; in fact, nobody seems to know. At the moment, we are faced with several problems in the area.

Mr Steele: Pilot farm.

Mr DONDAS: Whether it be a pilot farm, a school of linguistics, community college, craft and media centre, these particular areas are looking for space. We have the Nakara Primary School sitting out there idle and rather than turn it into some type of office accommodation for the Education Department I feel that the needs of the community would be served better by putting in the services that the school was built for, primarily education. A school of linguistics is a form of education. The community college is suffering from a lack of space and I believe that their arts and crafts centre is now situated in Woods Street and various other areas and all their pupils are working under adverse conditions - overcrowding and bad ventilation. The media centre is operating out of the Stuart Park Primary School. The Stuart Park Primary School is itself short of classroom accommodation and the media centre takes up something like 5 rooms. Why not move the media centre from Stuart Park out to Nakara Primary School?

The basic question is, and I have been unable to get a proper answer, whether the Nakara Primary School is going to open up as a school for the people's children in the area. What about the people who bought their houses close to the school knowing their children would have a school within walking distance of their home? At the moment, children in the area must go either to the Tiwi school which is over a major highway, Trower Road, or to the Alawa Primary School. The Alawa school at the moment has 2 demountables and in fact they are looking for a third demountable. That means they must be short of space. Why are we not opening the Nakara Primary School? You ask the Education Department the question ...

Mr Ballantyne: No money.

Mr DONDAS: You do not need any money; the building is already there. All they need are a few teachers.

Mr Ballantyne: All right then, they may be short of teachers; you only take them from other places.

Mr DONDAS: The Nakara Primary School is there and it has been sitting there since the cyclone; in fact, it was almost completed before the cyclone. At each sittings of the Assembly, I have asked the person responsible when the Nakara Primary School was going to open. I have been told, "At the beginning of the next school term". Two years have gone by and I am asking the same question and now the reply I am getting is that it might not be used as a school, that it might be used as administration accommodation for the Education Department.

My next question is why do we need the new school at Wulagi that is currently on the drawing board at a cost of \$3 or \$4 million if we are as short of money as the honourable member for Nhulunbuy assures me that we are? They are thinking about building another school at Anula. That is almost completed.

Mr Everingham: Don't close down any other projects, please!

Mr DONDAS: We do not want to close down any projects but, at the same time, we will have a school sitting out there and they claim that we do not need it. We have been waiting for 6 weeks now for 2 demographers to give a report on educational needs in that particular area. How long are we going to wait? We have a school and we have children but, unfortunately, we do not have enough children to fill the school. Will the Education Department take it upon its own shoulders to turn Nakara Primary School into an administration centre for the Education Department? I certainly hope the answer is no, and that they do make room for the community college to take over certain areas for their arts and craft department and that they do make it available for the media centre so that they can operate efficiently.

Another area of concern is the Brinkin subdivision. I would like to

refer to a press release dated Thursday 17 February 1977: "The Hooker Corporation has put alternative propositions to the Government on the development of proposed Brinkin subdivision". Hookers have been talking to the Department of the NT for 5 years and are still talking. They might be blue in the face by now, I do not know. I would have certainly given the idea of development away after waiting 5 years. We are trying to get people to put money into the Territory but the Department is sitting on its backside and doing nothing. Some departments are not doing anything and they should be held accountable for their lack of action. It continues: "Announcing this, the Acting Secretary of the Department, Mr Frank Dwyer, said Tracy and other factors including escalating development costs had affected the Brinkin situation. Prior to the cyclone, Hooker Corporation had been about to start development of the Brinkin subdivision which involved about 650 home sites and a lake. Mr Dwyer said the Government was now examining alternative plans put by Hooker Corporation and further talks would be held with the company."

That was 3 months ago and we still have not heard. I asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning whether he was involved in any discussions on the Brinkin subdivision and he assured me that the only inroad that he has been able to make was to advise the Department of the NT that he would like to be included in any discussions regarding the Brinkin subdivision. Today he has not been invited to attend such talks, so I can only assume that nothing has happened about talks with Hookers and the Department of NT regarding the Brinkin subdivision. I am aware that cyclone Tracy and the tidal surge brought some complications, and that they are going to build a very expensive lake there for the beautification of the foreshore and the surrounding blocks but, at the same time, if the Government - and I mean the Department of NT - do not want to go ahead with the Brinkin subdivision, let Hookers know, let the community know, because people are holding back. There are 650 prime blocks there and people

are waiting to buy a prime block there. They are not looking for a cheap block but they are looking for a block of their choice, as I have mentioned in this House on several occasions. A lot of us have not had a choice as to where we were going to purchase our house. We have had to wait for a government auction. We had to go along to that auction and hope that we were successful in being able to buy a block, whether it be in Wagaman or Wanguri or Nakara or Tiwi or Alawa. These people who have been waiting to be able to buy a block in an area of their own choice might be prepared to pay an extra 3 or 4 thousand dollars for a better site. At the same time, we have the Department of NT which for 5 years has been talking to and fro and there has still been no decision. I refer again to this press release of 17 February 1977 but still no talks have been held. What are we going to do? Are we going to allow this situation to go on for another 3 or 4 years? I certainly hope not.

This brings me to another area of concern, the Alawa oval. I would like to thank the honourable member for Nightcliff for bringing it to my attention by way of a note on Monday 25 April: "Are you aware that the city council is considering establishing a council depot in the vicinity of the Alawa sports oval? It is to be discussed at next Wednesday's council meeting. I have expressed my opposition to the proposal and I hope you also will oppose it." I thank the honourable member for Nightcliff for bringing it to my attention. The Corporation of the City of Darwin wants to put a depot on a recreation area; it is an open area, nobody has leased it; it is just open crown land. The first argument is, if Brinkin goes ahead, then we are going to finish up with a sub-depot there. We do not want a sub-depot there. But even if Brinkin does not go ahead, why should the Corporation of the City of Darwin be able to say, "We want that piece of land; we want to put a maintenance sub-depot on it", knowing very well that they have been negotiating for another block of land, which I believe they have purchased with the improvements. This is the old Grollo

site camp on Vanderlin Drive in the Wulagi area which is quite suitable for what they want to do. I agree with the council that they are trying to save time and trying to save the taxpayers' money by putting in a maintenance depot in the northern suburbs. I agree that it should be done because it does take a certain amount of time to drive the slow moving thrashers, slashers, front-end loaders etc from the Council depot in town on heavy traffic mornings. It might take them an hour to get there. They leave at 8 o'clock and they are there at 9. By half past 9, it is smoko and by the time they get back onto their motor and kick it over it is lunchtime. By the time they have lunch, it is time for smoko again and then it is time to drive back in with it again. They have done 2 hours work out of an 8 hour day, I appreciate the fact that they want a depot out there, but why take an open recreational area when 5 or 10 minutes away they are negotiating to purchase the improvements of a work camp? There are 2 or 3 acres there. Why do they want a quarter of an acre or half of an acre of land on an open area? The thing that gets my goat is that the area they have picked is right next to the toilet block.

Mr Withnall: Where would you put it then? You don't expect them to walk do you?

Mr DONDAS: If the honourable member would like to wait to hear what I have to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, he might learn something this afternoon. All right, they need toilets, I admit, but if you are going to look at a long term development of 20 or 30 years in the northern suburbs, you should be able to afford an investment of \$20,000 or \$30,000 to put into an ablation block on a permanent basis. Why should it go into an open area? At the moment we have 2 or 3 ovals that are being constantly used over the weekend by thousands and thousands of sportsmen and sportswomen. If you have a toilet that has a maintenance depot right next to it, that means that you are going to take up in the area I am talking about a certain amount of parking area. Once you have more squeezed into the parking

area, then people are going to park in the road. Once they start parking in the roadway, then you are going to start creating traffic hazards. You are not talking about 10 cars, you are talking about hundreds of cars and the council wants to put their depot right where the parking area is and right where the toilet is. I say it is no go.

Mrs Lawrie: Hear, hear!

Mr DONDAS: Another area out there is the Marrara subdivision. If honourable members from the southern part of the Territory do not know where I am talking about, it is adjacent to the RAAF Base. There are hundreds of acres available out there for all kinds of sporting complexes. The Department of NT has not made up its mind; the DRC has not made up its mind; but if the council want to put another depot in, let them take 3 or 4 acres of the 200 acres out there.

I have a copy of a press release issued by the Mayor: "The Mayor of Darwin, Dr Stack, said last night: 'The city council would be delighted if it could avoid siting a work sub-depot for the northern suburbs on the Alawa oval complex. However, an alternative site would have to be found and, if it did not have an ablution block, the council would have to raise \$30,000.' The Mayor was replying to criticism of a proposal to build a depot on Alawa Oval on Lakeside Drive. The city council decided that no action be taken on establishing a depot until reports on the matter are received from the Town Clerk, the City Engineer, and Director of Parks and Gardens. They will also report on the possibility of an alternative site for the proposed works sub-depot in the northern suburbs". She would be delighted if another site were there, but there are no other sites out there with ablution blocks on them. So the city council is going to be forced to spend \$20,000 or \$30,000 on a permanent basis, or over 20 years or 30 years, not to get into the public areas.

This morning I asked how much it cost for this park over the road. I was under the impression that it was under

council funding. The honourable member for Finance and Local Government "semi-assured" me - he was not 100 per cent sure - that the finance would come from the DRC.

Mr Tambling: I can assure you now.

Mr DONDAS: All right, so how much was it \$20,000 or \$30,000 ...

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

Mrs LAWRIE: Perhaps I can take over where the honourable member for Casuarina has had to leave off. Firstly, I express my appreciation of his feelings and the action he has taken to bring to the attention of the public the proposal of the Corporation of the City of Darwin to establish this contentious sub-depot. It came to my attention when a constituent said to me, "By the way, have you heard what the city council are going to do? They are going to put a sub-depot on our oval". I did not believe the city council would even contemplate such a matter and it was difficult to substantiate this story. However, substantiate it I did and I found that it was a recommendation going from a works committee of the council to the general meeting of the council the following Wednesday. Knowing that Alawa sporting complex well, having visited it at least twice a week for the past 3 years, I realise what a tragedy this would be, not only for the sportsmen and women using that oval but for the public of Darwin. It does seem that every time we have an open, green area which is reasonably developed and which has an ablution block to service the public, it is at risk. For example, we had the fiasco at East Point last year. Accordingly, I expressed my concern to the Legislative Assembly member for the area whom I guessed could not have heard of it any more than I had or we would have heard from him. I expressed my concern by way of a telegram to Her Worship the Mayor and all the aldermen of Darwin in the following terms:

I understand you are considering a proposal to establish a council depot vicinity Alawa Sports Oval. Urge you to reject such proposals as depot would restrict use of present sports facilities and may also constitute traffic hazard.

I have had replies as follows. From the Mayor of Darwin: "Proposal for small sub-depot on undeveloped land near toilet Alawa will not limit use of sports facility. Will save ratepayers' money". From Alderman Firman: "Do not consider small council security yard vicinity Alawa Oval restrictive to sporting bodies or traffic hazard. However, suggest you contact me for further discussion and/or visit site to enable you to be fully informed".

I notice from a report in the NT News of Friday 29 April that, when the proposal came up for discussion in council, Alderman Firman did in fact oppose such a move at this stage, pending further reports. I would like to thank him for obviously reconsidering his decision and for the backing of the Deputy Mayor, Cec Black, and a couple of aldermen in opposing the establishment of the depot without investigating the priorities for the area, the status of the land and whether in fact a simple sub-depot could be established somewhere else as the member has so clearly suggested.

There are a couple of things which should be mentioned in relation to this whole fiasco. On Sunday of that week when I left the oval at the conclusion of a successful sporting carnival, I spoke to some of the ratepayers in the area, none of whom had the faintest idea that this proposal was even being contemplated. The reason is that meetings of subcommittees are confidential and are held in camera. Some people oppose that principle and some people approve of it. Quite clearly, a majority of aldermen approve of it. If they are to continue in that manner, there must be some means whereby recommendations going from those confidential subcommittees to a full council meeting can be made known to the general public who would be affected. Daily in the

press, there is criticism of this Legislative Assembly, either collectively or individually. That is to be expected in politics. You cannot please all of the people all of the time; you are damn lucky if you can seemingly please 10% of the people 15% of the time. At least, what we intend to do is public knowledge. The debates are public, they are reported in the press in varying degrees of accuracy, but the people do know what the hell we are up to, and one of the restrictions this Assembly has placed upon itself through standing orders is a restriction to ensure that, unless it is very unusual, legislation is not introduced and passed quickly at one sittings without full public knowledge and debate.

I would like to suggest to the aldermen of the city council that there have to be some steps taken, and they are the people best to implement such steps, to ensure that, when a decision or a proposal is going to be debated by that city corporation, the people whom it is likely to affect can know about it. If they care, they can voice their objections to the relevant alderman. Of course, this whole debate brings forward again the necessity for a ward system. After the next city council elections, which will be conducted under the ward system, there will be 1 or 2 or perhaps 3 aldermen representing a ward of the city as we represent electorates. We hope those aldermen would take urgent steps to inform the people whom they represent as to what happens in council meetings. I am glad that some aldermen saw fit to call for further ramifications but I hope that, in the future, all this heart burning, all this urgent action taken by Assembly members will not be necessary.

How is it that the people did not know? They did not know because apparently procedures did not allow them to know and I find that equally if not more disturbing than the issue of the siting of the sub depot. To return to that specifically, may I support the remarks of the member for Casuarina and say that, in my opinion, the siting of a sub-depot by the ablution blocks on the Alawa oval would seriously detract

from the use of that area. Even if we did not have sports played regularly on the oval, which of course we do, it would be a big detraction and I believe it would constitute a traffic hazard. Those ovals are one of the few complexes in Darwin which are regularly used. Gardens oval would be the only other oval in such constant public use. It is quite a beautiful area and, with the development of the lake at Rapid Creek, it will become more beautiful. It is not a simple matter of its being advantageous to the ratepayers or citizens living adjacent to it, it is a community facility that we should all appreciate and we should all fight to preserve.

Mr MacFARLANE: I was in Brisbane at the end of March attending a meeting of the Cattlemen's Union. After one busy day, I was approached by the publicity officer of the Cattlemen's Union who told me that a reporter from Time magazine wished to get some information on the Top End. I said that I had a taxi waiting and I declined to be interviewed at that particular time. When I read the complaints about the terrible Top End by various disgruntled people, I was sorry that I was not available to be interviewed that night. However, the reporter could have contacted me later that night or the next day. When you read the complaints by Sir William Gunn, Mr Killen and others, you must admit that these people have a point. They have gone broke; they have put their money where their mouth was and the terrible Top End has killed them.

I do not take the view that these people are completely out of step. I just say that it is another episode in the saga of the undeveloped, high rainfall area of north Australia. What do you do with this area? At the cattle industry conference at Alice Springs a short time ago, great emphasis was placed on disease control. How do you control disease and the possible introduction of a disease like foot and mouth and other exotic diseases unless you do develop the Top End? The Top End is here, whether you like it or not. I do not know where it starts and where it finishes but, apparently, anyone who

goes broke blames the terrible Top End for it. In the old days, it used to be the drought in the centre and various other problems which have been overcome with good seeds but now it is the terrible Top End. If you do not develop it, you have these problems. You have feral buffalo, you have feral cattle, feral pigs, roaming around which can spread these diseases, not only TB, not only foot and mouth, but any other disease which is introduced.

Then you have the matter of defence. I suppose one of these days someone in the north will decide that, as we are doing nothing with the Top End, nothing with the north of Australia, they might as well have some of it. Illegal immigrants will come in, drug running will increase, illegal fishing etc will increase. Of course, you have your minerals, not to mention the uranium province which is only a few miles from the undefended northern coast line. You have places like McArthur River and many other unexplored areas too. We heard the Majority Leader this morning say that he did not know whether base camps had been established on areas in the north of Australia. I believe that there have been base camps established. I believe that foreign fishing vessels have established base camps and they are growing vegetables and raising pigs and poultry. Good on 'em! We do not seem to want it. We cannot even defend it. This is the terrible Top End; nobody wants it, not even our enemies.

Sure, this is a harsh country, particularly for cattlemen. It is not too bad up there in the air-conditioned comfort of Darwin, but if you have been in the cattle industry for 30 years, it is hard, it is tough, particularly when the rains come late every year and you have a drought. It depends in severity on when the first storms come and how good they are whether they grow grass and whether they lay water enough for the cattle to survive until the monsoon begins in earnest. But we know this, and personally I make no excuses for the terrible Top End. I have been here for 30 years; I came here broke and I am still broke. But I have also a family, a good wife, a good station, good

cattle and I am the richest man in Australia, but I have not got any money. All we seem to have up here in the Top End, in the higher rainfall area, is potential. We have had that a long time too. People have gone broke; enterprises have failed: Humpty Doo, Tipperary, Scotts Creek, Willeroo. Gunn's done his empire, Killen's done his empire, and it is fashionable these days to laugh at these people and scorn them.

All we want up here in the north is development, but you have to have development around some grass or legume or some revolutionary item such as a good overseas market. In the 30 years the Government has been working things since the war, all it has come up with really is Townsville stylo and I suppose to a certain extent grasses like urochloa. If they have come up with anything else, I have not heard of it or I have not seen it until the field day at Manbulloo last Saturday. It has always been my contention that what we need in the Top End is a grass or a legume which will grow like a weed and which cattle will eat. Anyone who has travelled the roads will see "Curteis' curse" or "Berrimah buffel" which grows very high but nothing will eat it.

Mr Withnall: Pennesetum - they will eat it down to the ground.

Mr MacFARLANE: The honourable member has a chance later on in the afternoon to talk about pennesetum if he wants, I can assure him that it is a pest in the Katherine area.

At this field day, we saw various legumes, cultivars of Townsville stylo, being developed by the CSIRO which could be the answer for the higher rainfall area. We have had lots of things like rice, sorghum - all these things grow but they do not grow well enough to be viable. In fact, there are not too many viable things in the Top End. Fishing is only just making out; prawning is only just making out; cattle is not making out at all.

Let us have a look at what other things the Government has put into the

Top End, Communications - well, they put the Stuart Highway in during the war. They put in a few Sukarno highways which they call beef roads; they put these in as a defence effort. Communications, to say the very least, are suspect. You have a very delicate shipping situation. Your airlines are all right. When you go away from the major towns and you think about communications through the wet, you immediately get back to the "Never-never Mailman", don't you? You will find that, in the Elsey electorate, he calls only at Katherine. In the Barkly electorate, he does not call at all and that is about a quarter of the Northern Territory. If you study his latest flight schedule effective from 21 February to 20 October 1977, you will see that he calls at about 3 cattle stations. That is about all the Government is doing for the cattle stations as far as communications go. Nothing!

You cannot wonder too much about some of these people who go broke and then complain about communications, can you? If you read your telephone directory, Alice Springs and Katherine, you will find it reads like the "Who's who" of the cattle industry. I do not know about Alice Springs but, if you get up to Katherine and try to use the radio telephone, you might have to wait an hour before you are even called up and then the static might be too thick. This is what you call government assistance. I don't blame these people for complaining bitterly.

What are we doing about developing our market? This is something that the Government can help with because markets are what we are talking about and markets are the only reasonable way to suggest development. If you have no markets, well, finish. We have 200 million people just up here, closer to Darwin than Canberra is, thank God! They can be our friend or our enemy but we are not worrying about them. What do you find? You find that it is a very frustrating exercise. When you get down to McArthur River, you find that you cannot get much government assistance. I understand that Mt Isa Mines chartered the McArthur River at their own expense to develop this area. Surely, this is

what we are talking about. If we do not want development we should say to someone: "Apart from Darwin, we have nothing to skite about in the Top End. Lots of people have put in lots of money and have gone broke and we call it the terrible Top End. If you want it, you can have it because we do not; we are not prepared to back it."

Mr WITHNALL: I rise to give notice to the Majority Leader of 2 questions I propose to ask him tomorrow morning. The first question is, "Will the honourable member ask the Administrator this morning the following questions, and today report to the Assembly the Administrator's answer. 1. Has the Administrator received from the Minister any general instruction as to the reservation for the Governor-General's assent of ordinances made by this Assembly and, if any such instruction has been received by the Administrator, what is the text of that instruction? 2. Was any instruction received by the Administrator from the Minister which required the reservation of the Counter Disaster Ordinance for the Governor-General's assent and, if so, what were the terms of any such instruction?" The second question is, "Since in every other parliament under the Westminster system a fully elected legislature has a complete and regularly exercised oversight by a person responsible to that parliament of the matter of assent or non-assent to laws made by the parliament, will the honourable member set in train a vigorous campaign to ensure that the matter of assent to ordinances of this Assembly should be determined by only the executive body responsible to this Assembly, namely the Administrator in Council?"

Apart from giving notice of those questions, I give notice that I intend to prosecute the matter of the reservation of ordinances of this Assembly for the consideration of the Governor-General with the utmost vigour that I can command for the task.

Mr VALE: I rise to speak briefly on 2 points this afternoon. The first one pertains to recent problems in Alice Springs surrounding the Alice Springs

Hospital and press comments on the same matter. Some of those pertain to staff levels and an announcement by the Miscellaneous Workers Union that they were going to go out on strike if they were not given additional staff for the industrial section of that hospital. I am sorry that the MWU took that attitude, but my main purpose is to speak in support of another organisation that took a completely reverse attitude and should be commended. They took a very responsible attitude and I refer to the Hospital Employees Federation who are basically responsible for the industrial employees at the hospital. They said, "Come hell or high water, we are not going to strike. We are short staffed; we will do what we can but we would like some help". I have met with that organisation on 3 recent occasions, the last one with the Cabinet Member for Community Affairs. While that attitude prevails with an organisation such as that, they deserve the wholehearted backing of people such as the Cabinet Member for Community Affairs. I also commend his attitude in making a special trip to Alice Springs and talking to them. I am hopeful that, in the near future, he will be able to come out with some additional information pertaining to the increase in staff numbers there and take the pressure off so many of those overworked members of the industrial section. I refer to the cleaners, the yardmen, the ward orderlies and the catering department. The Hospital Employees Federation in Central Australia has taken a very responsible stance and one which deserves the backing not only of members of this Assembly but the whole community.

The second point relates to the back-up service that we give to the public servants whom we send bush, be they out to settlements or to outlying pastoral properties. I refer particularly to Central Australia. In recent days, I have been out south west of Central Australia and in the last couple of days back up in the north east. Wherever you go, you find that the attitude by the departmental heads seems to be to bush these people and then forget about them. They provide little or no

backup facilities. They forget they are there. There is no assistance for the day to day administrative problems and inadequate supplies and equipment for the operation of the jobs, be they police vehicles or government vehicles or repairs to washing machines or the provision of airconditioning etc.

Last week, in one of the stations south west of Alice Springs, we saw in a police station a finger print pad which the police officer had been desperately seeking from their department for some weeks. Finally, in desperation, the officers made one out of a flattened beer can and tacked it on a piece of wood with shoe tacks. I do not think that is good enough. The big problem is probably bureaucratic. By the time a complaint is put in or a service requirement is put in to headquarters and the department gets out there to repair those or the Department of Construction gets out for a maintenance trip, there are quite a number of other problems that have arisen since the report was first submitted. What could happen, particularly on large settlements, is that the one person should be put in charge of the day to day reporting of service requirements, no matter how large or how small. It would not matter which department is in charge, be it Police, Health or Education or Aboriginal Affairs. When the repair crew arrive in an area, they should report to that particular person, find out what the latest requirements are for repairs and carry them out. That is for major repairs. There are a lot of smaller repairs which would require just a minimal amount of money and a minimal amount of time.

What should happen is that all of the departments involved, that is the four I just listed, should supply information about who has particular qualifications. I know a number of cases where, for example, a person who may be employed now as a clerk with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs may have been a former electrician or former plumber, mechanic or whatever. He could carry out those repairs if the authority was granted within the department to allow that to occur. This

would take the pressure off repairing faulty air conditioners and washing machines and so on. The officers in charge of all of those 4 sections on settlements and in outlying areas should have the power to spend up to a certain amount of money to enable this repair work to be carried out if and when required. If senior departmental officials in Darwin look at their figures, they will find that either resignations or transfers in remote areas are increasing and will continue to increase until all those departments responsible see if they can do something to overcome these day-to-day service problems.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I want to say a few words about my electorate and make complaints across the Chamber. As with all complaints, they listen to us but we never get speedy action. However, I would like to remind this Assembly again of the question I asked this morning about road grading on the Dhupuma Road. I haven't mentioned it today but I probably will by the end of the week and that is the road out to Yirrkala which, by the way, was supposed to have been surfaced this year, but because of the Works program it had to go into mothballs. They are going to think about it at the next appropriation and so on. In about another 5 or 6 years, we might have the road out there.

Mr Kentish: Gordon Bryant promised that.

Mr BALLANTYNE: Probably when the member for Arnhem lived out there in the early days, they were talking about building a road to the wharf from that mission. But I refer to the grading of Dhupuma Road itself. It was only recently that the Minister for Education and the Minister for the Northern Territory were paying a visit out there. I didn't have to explain to them the condition of the road because we were in a little Kombi bus and at times we had to do 5 to 10 kilometres an hour to dodge all the potholes. I pointed out that the reason it was being held up was because there was some problem with the tendering. It appears

that one tenderer put in some figure and another one put another figure and then, when it come to sorting it out, they decided on a certain tender but then the other one objected. Then they went right through all the red tape again and they couldn't say who was going to get the job because it was left up to the Ministers.

The amount of money concerned in that tender was something in the order of \$3,000. The Prime Minister of Australia said in 1975 that we were going to put management back into government. If you tell me that a Minister has to make a decision on a two or three thousand dollar job, I don't even know why we are standing in this House talking about things because it is absolutely ridiculous that the man here in the Department of the Northern Territory cannot make that decision himself. If I was a Minister, I would shut the door in their face; I wouldn't even listen to them. That is one of the reasons for all this holdup. We hear it every time we come to the Assembly. We hear it from down south and the Alice Springs area. We heard Mr Speaker today talking about things from the Katherine area.

I don't feel too flash living in the Top End sometimes because I think that in Nhulunbuy where I live we are just as much second class citizens as a lot of other people. We do not enjoy some of the benefits that other people have in the Territory because we are a closed town and it is up to the Godfather, the great firm of Nabalco, to supply all these things. What annoys me is the time taken and the answers that you have to give the people. I feel a fool sometimes even having to answer some of the questions that are given to me in the way I do to make things sound easy for the department. This is one of the things that I am really concerned about. We spoke about the payment for contracts in the past; it is just a continual saga, as Mr Speaker said, on all these facets. If I couldn't make a decision on the grading of a road and the tendering in my own area, there would be something wrong. Those are the sort of things that do concern me. If we are to have proper management in

government departments, I am sure that there has to be a big shake up very shortly.

Recently I went down to Tortilla Flats. I was asked to go down there for the field day and it was quite an experience coming from the country in Victoria; it is a different terrain up here. I would like to comment on the amount of work that has been done in that area by the departments, particularly in the development of the Townsville stylos and also the calopo leaf and some of the para grass and rice and bananas. There is a lot of potential in the Territory and I do not know why we have not been doing this for years. Everyone seems frightened of the Territory now; they are frightened to have a go at these things. I know that out at the mission at Yirrkala they used to have a wonderful market garden. They have a banana plantation which still gives quite a good service; it supplies bananas to the market here. I was also very interested in noting the amount of research that has gone into cattle grazing and things like that, and I would like to see some sort of development like that in the Gove peninsula. I believe, years back, they used to have a few cattle there but they went wild and they have not seen much of them since. I would like to see it even from the point of view of the government departments going out there and seeing whether there is a chance to develop the Aboriginal land with the assistance of the departments.

One thing on that day was the address by the Administrator who said that was what these people in the departments were there for, to better the land, to help develop what you might have in the dairying industry, cattle industry, raising horses. He said, "You have these people there; use them". I am sure that is what they are there for, the agronomists, the veterinary surgeons and all those people, and they are only too willing to help. They are being paid to do the job and I am sure that is what we have to do.

Another thing I would like to talk about is Melville Bay, probably one of the biggest harbours outside Sydney Harbour, which I think could be developed as a naval base. It could be developed along with the concept in Darwin. You have not got the port facilities here. It needs so much development here; you get a vessel here but it cannot even turn around, I see now that they are developing the Fort Hill wharf down there. I was down there on Sunday and I noticed some framework going up there. I wondered whether it is a race to march the wharves over into the sea or perhaps to run cattle down onto a ship. I have not quite worked it out yet.

I would like to see some work put in by the Defence Department to develop some sort of naval base in the Gove area. You have access right across the gulf to Cape York and could cover right around to Cairns and Townsville. From the Top End, you could cover right across the top of Australia and into the Indian Ocean. There has been some talk about the Indian Ocean for quite some time and I am sure that, if the Defence Department looked into the future, we would not have to worry about people setting up base camps in the Top End of Australia. I feel sure that we would have some proper surveillance of the area. I do not know what would happen if we stretch out our demarcation line to another 100 kilometres but I am sure that it would make it a bit difficult for us because we would send off a boat one day and you would not see it for 12 months. It is bad enough with the 10 mile limit now watching the Taiwanese boats and other outside fishing people coming into this area.

Mr STEELE: You will probably be interested to learn that, during the crisis of the Cyclone Verna coming over the northern coast, the Prime Minister was very well aware of its movement. On Friday night, Senator Webster told me that he wanted to be reported to more or less on the hour as to the movements of the cyclone. What he was unaware of was that, if the cyclone did strike the northern coast again and there was need for some sort of action

to be taken, it would be done without any sort of legislative backing. This matter was debated earlier in the day. This leads to the question of the process of reservation of ordinances from this House. As we march slowly forward in our constitutional progress and our development, it seems that a decision has to be taken fairly early as to just what the future system is going to be, whether we are going to be able to pass the assent to our own legislation through our own governor; and, if the federal people are concerned about this, whether we are going to have to look at another House for the Northern Territory which is not beyond the realms of possibility although probably it is not desirable. It is probably better that the lower house, the single house, be the one proposition. But the way it is going, just how long do we put up with this sort of non-assent confusion? I do not know what the answer is or whether some sort of parliamentary scrutiny is needed over bills as they are introduced into the House. It seems ridiculous to me that, every time a bill was introduced, we would have to nominate one member of this Assembly to follow the bill through to its logical conclusion. If that meant that, by motion of the Assembly, a bill for example had the member for Alice Springs to follow it through, would the member for Alice Springs then have to ring up every person concerned with that bill on a daily basis until such time as it reached the other end and came out of the pipeline? I really do not know. It might just have to be that: a boundary rider with every piece of legislation. I leave members with that horrifying thought.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

DEBATES

Wednesday 4 May 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PETITION

TENNANT CREEK CRECHE

Mr TUXWORTH: I present a petition from the residents of Tennant Creek relating to the use of the old hospital building in the town as a creche and for other community purposes. The petition is couched in respectful, decorous and temperate language and bears the certificate of the Acting Clerk that it conforms with standing orders. I move that the petition be received and read.

Motion agreed to.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE
SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR
THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

The humble petition of the undersigned residents of Tennant Creek respectfully sheweth that (a) the existing creche facilities in Tennant Creek are of a temporary nature and have a probable life expectancy of only 6 months before maintenance costs become prohibitive; and (b) the new hospital will not be able to open to its full capacity unless there is provision for the care of children of staff. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to make available the old hospital for use as a community resource and creche rather than use it for flats. And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

AYERS ROCK - MOUNT OLGA
NATIONAL PARK

Dr LETTS: I table the fourth report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation relating to the management of the Ayers Rock - Mount Olga National Park.

Mr POLLOCK: I move that the report be noted and ask leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC BILL

(Serial 199)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr RYAN: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This piece of legislation is a small but important amendment to the provisions relating to the observance of stop signs. The relevant provisions of the Traffic Ordinance, section 35P, were inserted in 1972 and twice amended in an attempt to achieve effectiveness and clarity. The section as it now stands does not meet this requirement and in fact the last amendment in 1976 further confused the position. It first inserted the word "stop" to make every reference apply to stop lines, the amending provision relating only to lines not stop lines. The section relates to two situations: firstly, where there is a stop sign and stop line and, secondly, where there is a stop sign but no stop line. It specifies the requirements for a driver in each situation. It then advises the action to be taken by a driver after having stopped in those circumstances.

To ensure full effectiveness and understanding, this bill will repeal and restate the section, clearly stating the requirements for a driver in each circumstance. Honourable members will note that the bill does not in any way alter the law on the subject, the wording used is practically identical with the existing section with the correction of the incorrect amendment made in 1976. The breakdown of the section into appropriate subsections for each circumstance will ensure full understanding and applicability. I comment the bill.

Debate adjourned.

MOTOR VEHICLES BILL

(Serial 198)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr RYAN: The proposed changes to the Motor Vehicles Ordinance in clause 3 of the bill will grant to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles the power to issue a driver's licence to a person who is under the present statutory age of 17, or 16 in the case of a person enrolled in a student driver education course.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Did you move the bill be read a second time? Are you expecting a second reading?

Mr RYAN: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I thought I did move it.

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

The proposed changes to the Motor Vehicles Ordinance in clause 3 of the bill will grant to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles the power to issue a driver's licence to a person who is under the present statutory age of 17, or 16 in the case of a person enrolled in a student driver education course. It is intended that this discretionary power be used only under very exceptional circumstances. An example of the exceptional circumstances where the registrar would exercise his power is the case of a crippled, under-aged person whose only means of suitable mobility is by a motorised wheel chair. The terms of the Motor Vehicles Ordinance class this type of unit as a motor vehicle and the operator requires a licence to drive it. Up till now, the issue of any form of licence has not been possible. Apart from the relaxation of the age factor, the registrar will still need to satisfy himself that the person is capable of operating the vehicle with safety and understands the rules of the road.

Clause 4 amends the fourth schedule to the Motor Vehicles Ordinance in respect of the braking provisions on trailers. Proposed changes are parallel with the requirements in the other

states. Briefly, our current braking requirements are related to the length of the trailer. The amendments relate braking to brakes. It has been noticed regularly of late that many caravans in the 20 to 25 foot category which have been manufactured in the south are equipped with override brakes as standard equipment. These have been made to southern registration requirements. Our laws do not permit this type of braking system in trailers over 6 metres, which is just under 20 feet in length. Persons with these vans are finding it difficult and quite expensive to have the braking system altered. The amendment will rectify this anomaly.

Debate adjourned.

ARCHITECTS BILL

(Serial 197)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TAMBLING: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The Architects Ordinance 1963-1971 authorises the registration of architects if they are members of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects or they hold a degree or diploma in architecture conferred by an Australian university, college or school or they hold prescribed qualifications. In essence, this means that immigrants with overseas qualifications may not practise architecture in the Northern Territory without first being accepted for membership by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects unless they hold prescribed qualifications. Some architects strongly resent what they see as official pressure to join the institute. In this current year, 4 applicants for registration in the Northern Territory with overseas qualifications but who were not members of the institute have been refused registration although they were all eligible for registration elsewhere in Australia. One of the 4 held a diploma from an English university, was registered as an architect in the United Kingdom, in Queensland and in New South

Wales but the Architects Board was prevented by the present ordinance from registering him to practise architecture in the Northern Territory unless it made specific regulations to prescribe his qualifications.

The bill to amend the ordinance proposes to empower the Architects Board to register persons who hold qualifications recognised by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects but who are not necessarily members. The body whose assessment of qualification is accepted by all other registration boards in Australia is the Architects Accreditation Council in Australia. To ensure the broadest possible scope, the board's powers have also been related to institutions recognised by the body. The relating of the board's powers to these 2 bodies will not restrict the board but will give greater flexibility than by making regulations specifying recognised institutions.

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects is the professional body governing the activities of architects in Australia. The Architects Accreditation Council of Australia was established by the representatives of the Architects Registration Board of Australia and by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects with the prime object to recognise and accredit the internationally accepted standards of architectural education. The council received the advice on overseas qualifications in architecture from the expert panel of the committee on overseas professional qualifications. This committee was instituted by ministerial direction in 1969.

If the amendment is accepted, the Architects Registration Board will be enabled to continue registering architects with Australian degrees and diplomas. In addition, the board will be able to act on the very latest information available in Australia about overseas qualifications on an equal footing with the registration boards of the other Australian states. The power to make specific regulations will be retained to maintain the independence of the board if there are particular

circumstances it would wish to recognise.

Debate adjourned.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS PRICE EQUALISATION SCHEME

Mr RYAN: I move that this Assembly ask the Commonwealth Government to reintroduce the Petroleum Products Price Equalisation Scheme to ensure that inland consumers pay no more than 0.73¢ per litre above capital city prices for certain petroleum products.

The time has come when the Government has once again to consider the reintroduction of this scheme. The background of the scheme was that it was introduced in September 1965 after complementary legislation had been passed by the states. The basic purpose of the scheme was to reduce rural costs, particularly transport costs. It ensured by means of subsidy payments to the oil companies that the wholesale prices of selected products did not exceed by more than 3.3¢ per gallon, which is 0.73¢ per litre, the capital city wholesale prices. In 1973, consideration was given to discontinuing the scheme but the Government decided to increase the permitted differential to 5¢ per gallon. Eventually, the Labor government removed the scheme. They made some quite interesting comments; they were more concerned with the people living in the cities and neglected the fact that Australia has relied heavily upon the country areas. One comment was that Australia did not have any scheme to subsidise petroleum prices until 1965 when the scheme was introduced following pressure from sectional interest and, when this and the need to deal with inflationary pressures are considered, the question to be answered is not why the scheme should be abolished but why there should be such a scheme. We know that they were not particularly keen on subsidising the people of the country areas because they did not feel there were too many votes in that area. In fact, as I will point out later, they were quite right.

One comment they also made in relation to the removal of the scheme was that the main beneficiaries of the scheme were those using above average amounts of petroleum products in the distant areas, for example mining enterprises and pastoralists. They went on to say: "These users are located in distant areas just because that is the best place for them to carry on their business". It would be pretty difficult to run a cattle station in the middle of Sydney or to have a mine where the ore was not available. I do not think people go out of their way to get out in the middle of the country. If they happen to be there, that is where the property is they need for their business.

The Labor Government argued that the minority should not receive such benefits. Removal of the scheme was in fact one of the few steps taken by the Labor Government to reduce spending and this was one of the arguments put up by the Labor Government, that in an effort to cut down on spending they had to remove the scheme which cost between \$25m or \$30m a year. They did remove it in fact but it was pretty insignificant compared with the money they spent in other areas. The move did in fact meet with strong opposition in Caucus and after the original decision was made there was a subsequent meeting at which the member for Darling, which takes in Broken Hill, with the backing of Dr Patterson, almost upset the decision. I believe the voting was something like 43 votes to 40, and was a victory for the Prime Minister who spoke against the proposal to reintroduce it. So, with a bit of luck, we might even have had the reintroduction under the Labor Government because there were quite a few members concerned with the ramifications of the decision. It is significant that at the election in 1975 Labor lost all country seats except Darling. I do not think that there was any tie-up with the subsidy there because Darling happens to be a pretty strong seat but they did in fact lose all other country seats.

There may be a message of some kind for the present Government in that result. I hope they take heed of it. As is usual, the present Government, which was in opposition at the time, made a lot of noise when the scheme ceased, but they have now been back in government for 18 months and no moves have taken place to reintroduce the scheme. We know that the Government did inherit a very high level of expenditure and there was a large deficit which they had to overcome, but I believe the time has now come to once again assist people in the more remote parts of our pretty big country. The politicians in general live off the large cities but Australia's economy has always lived upon industries which have been far removed from the cities. People have to work these industries; they might be a minority but I think you will agree, Mr Speaker, that they are a very important minority. I do not think we would have such large and beautiful cities in Australia if it was not for the fact that there are some people prepared to go out into the more remote parts of Australia and carry on the various industries upon which we have relied for so long; mining and the rural industry, to mention two of the most important ones. There is nothing we can do about moving them, their positions are dictated by the very nature of the operation. They have in fact helped decentralisation and it is something which we have discussed very often in Australia, how we can decentralise. The Labor Party were not all that keen on decentralisation. This Government should be keen on decentralisation and I think they should reinstate the scheme.

No doubt the scheme would cost money. I would assume, on the last figures that are here of \$32.1m in 1976-77, we would expect to get at least \$40m on the same basis that they operated before, but they could possibly bring in a small increase of prices of petrol in the city, a very insignificant increase applied to petrol or fuel in the metropolitan areas. It could be 0.5¢ a lit-

re or even less than that; it could be picked up by the state governments as an offset to the cost of the subsidy to the rural areas. This is possibly the only way it could be approached. The present Government is still taking a hard line in relation to spending and to ask for \$40m for the areas we are concerned with would most probably meet with refusal; the Government would say that we just cannot afford it at this time. However, the country cannot afford to keep going the way it is going with people expected to live in remote areas. Their conditions have improved over the years. I think everybody realises that the towns in the remote mining areas and the rural areas have improved. Communications have improved, roads have improved, but these people are still a long way behind the city folk in their day-to-day facilities. I therefore suggest that, in reintroducing this scheme, the present Government look at the possibility of applying a small extra charge to fuel costs in the metropolitan areas to offset the cost of equalisation of the fuel prices in outer country areas.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am pleased to be able to support the motion on the equalisation of fuel prices throughout Australia. It is a matter that is very dear to my heart because I come from an area where fuel is most expensive and where it is a commodity that is more important to the individual than any other facet of life. One of the great Australian dreams is to have an equality of opportunity and facilities and services extended throughout the Commonwealth and, because of the geography of this country, it is not always possible to keep this equality at a reasonable parity. There is no doubt that the Government does go out of its way to make sure that some aspects of life do maintain a parity in all Australian communities, and I refer here to education and health where the Government accepts that services in remote areas cost a little more and they pay a little more to maintain them for the people in those areas.

Fuel is the most important commodity to the Australian today. It is becoming a rare resource and in the years to come it will become a very expensive one. With this in mind, I fail to see why people in the remote and distant areas should be penalised even more than their counterparts in the city by having to pay greater prices than would be necessary. It is not unreasonable that people in remote areas should have fuel at a comparable price to their city counterparts because fuel is the basis of all cost structures. The first cost ingredient to go into anything that man does is the cost of fuel and the cost of energy. If that cost is much greater in remote areas, then it will be reflected in prices earned on export markets and prices paid by consumers in capital cities for commodities they use.

One other benefit that I see in an equalisation program is very simply one to the tourist. Four or five years ago, there was probably much more road traffic travelling around Australia and into the distant parts of the country than there is today. One of the attractive things about travel in that period was the fact that the tourist coming out of the city could be assured that his fuel price would be within a few cents of the price of fuel in the city. Today, the tourist can be assured that his fuel price will vary between 80¢ and \$1.80 a gallon, depending on where he is, and it is a great deterrent to people travelling in cars to think that they may have pay these prices. Their wallets cannot stand it and because of this they do not travel. If we do nothing else with an equalisation program, we will get people back into their cars and moving around in the security of the knowledge that they can meet their fuel costs.

It has already been mentioned that there can be several methods of introducing an equalisation program for fuel price. There is government initiative whereby the Government carries out a

program as instituted in 1965. There is also a possibility that a program can be initiated by the industry. The former Labor Party Minister, Charlie Jones, suggested that the oil companies club together themselves and form a subsidy system. There were several inequities involved in that there are many oil companies in Australia who would not have 5% of their pumps outside city boundaries and there are several other large companies which would have a great percentage in country areas. One or two companies would therefore be bearing the brunt of the whole scheme. One other possibility would be for us to develop a local energy resource and eliminate the freight component altogether.

While I believe that in the short term the initiative should come from the Government through the reintroduction of the program which was established over 10 years ago, in the long term, as Territorians, we have only one assured method and that is the development of local resources such as the Mereenie fields outside of Alice Springs which would provide us not only with fuel but with LPG which is necessary to maintain a reasonable standard of living in that area. The motion is most timely, it has my wholehearted support and the support of everyone in my electorate.

Mr MANUELL: I rise to support this motion. I believe however that the initiative behind the termination of the petroleum price equalisation scheme by the then Labor Government may have been twofold. It seems apparent that it was partly designed to kill the cattle baron attitude and was also a cost saving device. I think the Labor Party would have had second thoughts about the cattle baron part of it since then because the cattle industry people are fairly hard nuts to crack.

The cost saving motive was perhaps an illustration of not doing sums properly because, whilst there may have been initially a cost saving to the nation, one should also consider the income generated by the continuation of the scheme. The removal of the freight

component of the petroleum price equalisation scheme has affected Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, central Queensland, western New South Wales, northern South Australia and parts of the Western Australian hinterland. It has affected the tourist industry; it has affected the transport industry; it has affected the building industry; it has affected primary production; it has affected mining; it has affected municipal councils and corporate bodies that provide community services; it has affected electricity supply units and the cost of generating electric power. This effect has all rubbed off onto the consumer.

The tourist industry in central Australia has suffered. A number of bus operators do not come any longer because fuel is too expensive, and the fares they have to charge are too high. Some years ago, a number of bus tours travelled from Alice Springs across the Tanami Desert and the bulk of those buses came from Victoria and New South Wales. They no longer travel that route because in the Tanami Desert fuel is \$1.80 to \$2 per gallon, if they can get it. It is a snowball effect because the people at Rabbit Flat do not run the sort of industry and enterprise they used to have there; they do not stock the amount of fuel any more; they do not provide the sort of service any more that will encourage the bus operator to go through, that will give the traveller the sense of security he needs in the remote areas of Australia. When people are tourists, they consume energy; they consume fuel; but they also wear out tyres; they also take up time; they also spend money; they buy souvenirs - and this is all a generation of cash flow.

The transport industry has suffered. The transport industry, because of the increase in fuel price, has had to pass on to its customers, higher prices for freight. People have tended to rationalise, they do not buy as much or else they buy it in different ways. So it has affected the transport operator; he now no longer does as many miles. He has the same unit, perhaps even a unit of greater capital cost, that no longer

does the same number of miles and therefore the cost per mile is higher for him; his labour component is dearer and the cost to the end consumer is higher.

The building industry in the Northern Territory, and in other parts of Australia removed from the coastal areas, has expressed its concern at the increasing cost of freight as a component of the cost of construction, and we should concern ourselves with this. The impact of the lessening of building industry activity provides us with a lessening income for people employed in the industry. Skilled tradesmen, unskilled tradesmen, labourers, overseers, foremen, no longer have the amount of work. So again there is a cumulative affect; it all builds up.

As for primary production, Mr Speaker, there is little need for me to speak to you about the cost of running around and maintaining bores, fences and waters. But perhaps other members of the Assembly would be interested, and perhaps even more so those people who bother now and again to read Hansard. It is a fact that the cost to the primary producing industry of maintaining capital equipment on beef producing stations and sheep stations, as well as those that produce horses and other animals for sale, is increasing. We have got to admit to ourselves that, unless we approach this matter of dealing effectively with cost control in all aspects and at all levels of our internal life in Australia, it is eventually going to run away with us and we are just not going to be able to control it.

Then there is the cost of the reticulation of electricity. It may be ironic, but it seems to me coincidental that at about the same time as we experienced the removal of the petroleum products price equalisation scheme we started to note escalating prices in service industry costs - the cost of water rising, the cost of electricity rising, the cost of other essential services rising. Municipal rates and taxes increased because the councils were paying more to run their vehicles

and to run street lighting at night. All this is associated with the cost of fuel.

Originally, as I recall, the maximum differential that applied throughout Australia under the petroleum products equalisation scheme was 3.3¢ per gallon; this is 0.73¢ per litre. Associated with the removal of that scheme and the discontinuing of the subsidy, we had, in conjunction, an increase in the price of dutiable distillate from 17.5¢ a gallon to 23.5¢ a gallon. Again, this has an effect on our costs. In terms of cost to government, our Federal Government, by reimplementing such a scheme, should see it not as not a cost but a possible way of re-energising our economy at essential levels of activity that all have a spinoff in terms of cash flow. Ask any tourist operator whether he would like to have more bus trips. Ask any transport operator if he would like to have more trucks and cover more miles. Ask any builder if he would like to undertake more buildings. Ask any primary producer if he would like to sell more cattle or retain a little more profit from those he sells. You can go to your consumer or your housewife. Ask your housewife or your householder whether they would like to pay less for their electricity or their water or their rates and taxes.

There is possibly only one way in which it could be achieved and that is to consider very strongly the reintroduction of petroleum price equalisation schemes and other schemes that will let this economy re-energise itself from within. I do not see such a scheme as being a handout to people in the hinterland. The Government and the people in coastal areas should see it as supporting the overall development of this nation. Unless we develop this nation, we can forget ourselves. What is the cost of development? I do not believe that there is a real cost. The only cost will be what will happen if development does not take place, I have very much pleasure in supporting this motion.

Mr POLLOCK: I support the motion, I was out at Ayers Rock the other day and petrol there was 26¢ a litre, In Darwin, it is 16¢ or 17¢ a litre. However, other aspects disturb me, such as the price war going on in southern states where you can buy petrol for 13¢ a litre. You sometimes wonder just where all the pricing structure of petrol really gets to.

The member for Alice Springs did mention that one of the high costs for the cattle producer was transportation. If transportation costs can be reduced through the operation of a scheme such as this, then the return to the producer must be increased. This is one of the big bugbears in the whole system today. The cost of travel for the ordinary motorist, particularly in the outback areas, is considerable. Anything that can be done to get that cost down and to encourage people to travel more by road, to travel to the centre and other tourist areas, would be greatly appreciated.

Mr KENTISH: I support this motion because it is an important one for a person in a rural electorate. As I listened to the remarks, I remembered listening a few years ago to Mr Gordon Bryant, the great elder statesman of the Labor Party, who announced more than once that it would be the object of his government to see that no person in Australia was disadvantaged more than any other person. Having made that statement several times, and I presume it was supported by his party, they proceeded to wipe out various things that were helping to maintain rural communities in a healthy financial position. Then came the time when the scheme was rescinded. I remember that Mr Whitlam remarked: "What are they all squawking about, a few cents a week to take their motor car to the nearest town for shopping? What is that to worry about? It does not hurt anybody". I do not for a minute think that Mr Whitlam was so stupid or childish as to believe that that was all that was involved. Perhaps he was hoping that his audience was stupid enough to believe that. When the scheme was rescinded, it hit costs from every

angle that you could imagine. Everything that concerned a person who lived in a rural area was hit by the removal of the equalisation scheme. Freight costs hit everything - building, food commodities, electricity that the country person provides with a petrol or diesel generator, I believe that Mr Bryant may have been quite genuine when he made this statement but his whole party apparently was not of the same opinion. I do not think that the Labor Government either financially or electorally gained anything from this rescinding of the equalisation scheme.

The primary wealth of Australia - it is well recognised; I see it in statistics and statements occasionally - is produced by a very small percentage of the population. Mostly they are people in remote areas, not only cattle producers, but miners, tourist promoters and so on. Tourism of course is not a primary industry, but nevertheless the wealth of Australia is produced by a very small percentage of the Australian population in remote areas, and I do not think it would be too much to say that these people are the most disadvantaged of all Australian citizens. Their greatest disadvantage would perhaps be fuel costs which are related to everything they do and everything they eat or use or build with.

My electorate is strung out along the coast of Arnhem Land, a little bit inland, and is very heavily hit by fuel costs - fuel costs related to freight costs, to commodity costs and to building costs. It has a great impact on the electorate but no one receives higher wages on account of it there is no compensation in that way, and no one receives any greater pension because of the extra costs. They just have to take it on their backs and grin and bear it. Possibly these were the people that Mr Bryant was worried about when he was the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and yet they received the weight of that blow, the removal of the fuel equalisation scheme.

Possibly some people may say this is a socialistic thing, you can look at it that way. It may be a socialistic sch-

eme that you put everyone on an equal level more or less as regards their basic costs, electricity costs, water costs and so on. But it is a lot more than that; that would be the least important angle to consider. What it does mostly is give strength and impetus to the people who are producing the primary wealth of Australia. It gives them encouragement and the ability to carry on. It gives them the encouragement to go to these remote areas which are often desperately short of labor and carry on the jobs that they have to do there, and so I regard it as being a necessity, not from a socialistic angle but from a development angle primarily. I support the motion.

Mr VALE: I support the motion. It is very timely that the proposal to re-introduce this scheme is now being made. The Cabinet Member outlined a brief history of the scheme from when it was first introduced in 1965. I think tribute should be paid to the author of the scheme, Sir John McEwen. It is amazing that the amount of work that he and his department did in introducing that scheme was wiped out so quickly by people like Dr Coombs and the Labor Government.

One thing that has arisen in the debate this morning is the fact that people talk about inland consumers, or remote area consumers. The fact that should be studied is that inland consumers, no matter how close to the coast they are, also have the potential to benefit from the reintroduction of this petroleum freight equalisation scheme. The scheme was designed so that, once petroleum products moved away from a coastal area and freight charges were involved, the Government paid any charge over and above 3.3¢ a gallon. Under the terms of the old scheme, it was to be applied against those products used mainly for transportation, and the scheme benefited rural industry and the individual. In the Northern Territory, government agencies also benefited. The fuel used in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine powerhouses attracted a subsidy. In the Northern Territory, the re-introduction of the subsidy would

benefit all Territorians, including Darwin-based residents, because the fuel acquisition cost is averaged out across the Territory in determining the fuel price component of electricity charges. Probably the reintroduction of the scheme would not reduce electricity charges throughout the Territory but at least it would be beneficial in stabilising operating costs of all of the powerhouses in the Northern Territory.

In the Central Australian area, individuals, the cattle industry, the transport industry, the tourist industry and the mining industry would all benefit greatly from this. In Tennant Creek, the Warrego smelter which was shut down some years back would benefit on two counts: the fuel used in the generating of their smelter system and the transportation costs to get the products to the market.

In Alice Springs, there is a proposal to establish a small oil refinery. Under present proposals, the Alice Springs refinery has a small unit production and a higher unit cost of production than say, a coastal-based refinery such as Port Stanvac in South Australia. In 1972, the then Minister for National Development, Sir Reginald Schwartz, indicated that the freight subsidy which then applied would not inhibit the establishment of an oil refinery and the higher cost of production in Alice Springs would be offset by the application of a freight subsidy at the gate of the oil refinery. The reintroduction of this freight equalisation scheme would, under Federal Government rules, still apply. The oil companies picking products up from the refinery would apply for the freight equalisation scheme to be paid against the unit cost of production.

The Labor Government wiped the subsidy scheme out in two hits; they did not remove it overnight; it was a gradual abolition of the subsidy. Because of the high cost and the present Federal Government's attitude to expenditure anywhere in Australia, what we should be pushing for here is, rather than a complete reintroduction over-

night, a scheme to ensure that inland consumers pay no more than 3.3¢ per gallon more and that we seek the gradual reintroduction of the scheme so that eventually all consumers away from the coast pay no more than that price.

Motion agreed to.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 171)

Continued from 3 May 1977.

Mr ROBERTSON: As has been outlined by previous speakers, the bill merely seeks to ratify the International Labor Organisation's convention on industrial diseases. I am pleased to see that those are now going to be defined in Territory law.

There is just one query I do have in relation to the bill which perhaps can be clarified for me by the Cabinet Member in charge of it. In the item listed as number 4, dealing with silicosis, I am wondering if it is the intention of the honourable member to include general work in the field of asbestos manufacture and handling. I may be wrong, but I do believe that silicosis can be caused by asbestos fibres. It seems to me that 4 only deals with the mining exploration and prospecting areas of silicosis contact; perhaps it might be extended to the manufacturing area.

As a justification for what might appear to you, sir, as a divergence from the contents of the bill I might say that any legislation for it to be successful requires a successful method of implementation and operation. This legislation is to be operated by the Workmens Compensation Tribunal and it is to that body I would like to address myself. This piece of legislation, like the principal ordinance, is administered by the tribunal system, I would like to query the merits of a tribunal system at all, particularly in the way in which this one has developed and the way it is now being operated. If it cannot be operated efficiently, then all the tidying up and all the

agreements of international conventions such as this really come to nought.

The tribunal in Alice Springs has an official membership of 8. Of that 8, 4 come from the employer representative groups and 4 from the unions. This is to give it balance. When we examine how it operates, we see that 2 have left town, 2 have made themselves unavailable in recent times - I understand that the reason behind this was an alteration to the payment system; not the amount, but the system - and one is a transport driver who is away from Alice Springs very extensively. This leave 3 persons to carry on the functions of the tribunal and the net result is that it is difficult for the clerk of that tribunal to ever get a tribunal together. This morning, I phoned the clerk of the tribunal in Darwin and, not surprisingly, found that he had an identical problem. It is fortunate from Darwin's point of view that they have one person who makes himself permanently available - I noticed in the Chamber this morning another member of the tribunal - nevertheless the operation of this type of legislation is made difficult by the composition of these tribunals. I put it to the Cabinet Member in charge of this legislation that the whole system of tribunals is neither necessary nor even desirable.

If I may take the liberty of referring back to the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on the Landlord and Tenant Control of Rents Ordinance, stated in that committee's report is probably the best expression of the uselessness of tribunals. It will be recalled that the select committee examined the possibility of replacing a magistrate of an appeals board with a tribunal. The committee said: "The inherent cost of such a system is obvious and it could not be justified. The main reason for your committee's rejection of that type of tribunal is its firm belief that magistrates, overall, would do a more competent job. Any committee type of tribunal would be cumbersome and slow. It would contain, of necessity, people from the industry and possibly people against the industry. Its

views would be prone to the trap of subjectivity. Magistrates, on the other hand, are trained to be objective and impartial". It is the question of subjectivity in the consideration of legislation like that that puts the tribunal system at great risk in my view.

I think the honourable member in charge of this legislation is aware of an instance in the tribunal dealings here in Darwin where an agreement had virtually been reached to the satisfaction of all parties but the union representative acted, as he shows a propensity to do, disruptively. The net result is that the thing must now go to arbitration and it is the generally held view that the claimant will be worse off under arbitration than he would otherwise have been. So clearly the system has acted against the very person it was set up to protect. It is quite obvious to anyone that, where you have sectional interests meeting together over a sectional interest problem, you are going to get conflict. Further, I understand from Alice Springs that, where areas of conflict do not exist, then the members of the tribunal other than the magistrate contribute virtually zero to the deliberations. So we have a cost factor involved.

The tribunal system is either ineffective because of sectional interests bickering at each other during the hearing, or they take no interest in the matter whatever and the magistrate does all of the work anyway. If the magistrate is basically making the decision and basically doing all the work, why clutter his tribunal up with other people who are contributing nothing? The magistrate is required to be there anyway; his wages are being paid anyway; so why not let him do the job himself? That is what he is competent at. He is experienced in the matter of judicial consideration and I think he should be allowed to do it.

Other than that, I support the general thrust of the bill in bringing into legislation and defining clearly those industrial diseases which are

recognised by the International Labor Organisation.

Mr PERRON: I thank the honourable member for Gillen for his remarks on this bill and also the other speakers who have made reference to it at these sittings and at the previous sittings. I particularly welcome the honourable member for Gillen's remarks in relation to his views on the structure of the workmen's compensation tribunal itself. The structure of the tribunal has been a concern of mine for some time. I have some talks coming up on this very matter and his comments will be noted during those talks.

He also mentioned item 4 in the schedule which relates to silicosis yet does not seem to relate specifically to manufacture; it relates largely to mining and prospecting. This seems to be so and I will have the matter looked into. However, there will be no need to hold up the process of this bill while that is being looked into. The Government, I understand, intends to have at some later stage a Dust Diseases Bill introduced into the Assembly and I will ensure that, in any talks I am involved in in connection with that, the subject of asbestos manufacture is included to ensure that there is full coverage.

The bill itself, as members have outlined, covers a range of activities of very real interest to the Northern Territory mining, agriculture, and the meat industry, and the effect of the bill boils down virtually to one section. Section 4 states: "For the purposes of this ordinance, unless the contrary is established, a disease shall be deemed to be caused by the nature of employment if that disease and that employment are listed in the schedule". This primarily takes the onus away from the injured or incapacitated worker or, in some cases even a dead worker, from having to prove that his employment was the direct cause of his incapacity.

It is a step forward for the Northern Territory to accept this International Labor Organisation recommendation which Australia has ratified. It deals in one

section with uranium which is certainly a potential involvement for the Northern Territory. In section 9 of the schedule we see that pathological manifestations due to radium and other radio-active substances is covered. Basically, it will mean that, if a worker in the Northern Territory has a disability or injury or disease which is attributed to radium or other radio-active substances, it shall be deemed that his employment caused the disease if he was involved in handling this type of equipment. He will not have to go through expensive litigation to prove that his employment was the cause of his disability.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED GOODS BILL

(Serial 179)

Continued from 3 May 1977.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

ENVIRONMENT BILL

(Serial 182)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr WITHNALL: I move that the bill be now read a second time.

In so moving, I would like to adopt all the remarks that I made on the first introduction of a bill under this name, the second introduction of a bill under this name and the third introduction of a bill under this name. Nobody can accuse me of not being a patient man and there is a saying that might well be applied in this situation, that one should beware the fury of a patient man.

Apart from adopting the remarks I have made on other occasions and which are available to honourable members in Hansard, there are some remarks that I

should make upon the introduction of "this episode", as the honourable member for Gillen calls it, of the Environment Bill. One is that this episode contains amendments which were foreshadowed at the introduction of the last episode. Since the last bill was introduced, I have had further conversations, principally with mining interests, and, while there are some amendments of a minor kind, I do not think there will be any major amendments as far as I am concerned. However, I have had, through the courtesy of the Majority Leader, a telex message from Mr J.C. Rowntree of Pancontinental Mining Limited, Mr Rowntree has about half a fathom of teleprint to deal with the subject of this bill and, while he does not suggest what should be done, he seems to spend the whole half fathom in saying that the bill is a piece of rubbish. The honourable member for Jingili and the Majority Leader and I have had long discussions about this and, while I think there probably are still some unresolved points of difference between us, by and large we are quite certain that a bill generally in the form of the one that is now before the Legislative Assembly is desirable. The alternative is that there will be no bill before the Legislative Assembly and I am still quite fearful that somebody in the federal sphere will decide that the Northern Territory is a piece of environment about which they should make some legislation. If that result comes about, we will cease to have control over our own country, and it is most important that we should have legislation on environmental matters administered by the local executive,

If there has been one criticism of the bill which has lingered in the minds of the honourable members opposite, it is that the provisions relating to statutory nuisance ought not to be contained in a bill relating to the environment. Indeed, this is a point made by Mr J.C. Rowntree, whose intention seems to be to make sure that no legislation is introduced or passed, He says: "It is extremely doubtful whether such items as public nuisance, public health or similar areas of fringe connection to broad, vague concepts of

environment and quality of life should come within the scope of environment legislation or under the technical and administrative control of an environment control authority". Well, if they are not going to be in an environment ordinance, then in the name of God where do you put them? We have hitherto carved up all our ideas about controlling the environment and said that the Health Department can do this, somebody else can do that, the Mines Department can handle this aspect - and the whole thing has got completely out of control and completely out of balance. There should be a unified environmental control authority in spite of what Mr J.C. Rowntree has to say.

He is also critical of the provisions about what I call statutory nuisances and which he describes as public nuisances. Well, on the contrary, the bill I have introduced seems to be supported by quite a lot of thought both in America and in Australia that environmental control ought to be as much a matter for the people themselves as it is for any environmental authority. And if you give everybody a right to do something about his own little bit of environment, his own backyard if you like, his own house if you like, his own person if you like, then the environmental control authority must surely be supported and he certainly has available to him a source of information and a reason to take action in circumstances in which he would not be able to do so unless the provisions relating to statutory nuisances in this bill were left in it.

I commend the bill to honourable members and if any honourable member wishes to see the remarks of Mr J.C. Rowntree, I am quite happy to make them available on the table of the library for any honourable member to study. There are no suggestions as to what might be done; it is simply a long and fairly unintelligible statement on what Mr Rowntree thinks about my bill. He is proceeding on the basis that "bullshit baffles brains".

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Everingham: Some people get away with anything, Mr Speaker. Only independents though.

Mr WITHNALL: The contents of this telex are neither constructive nor effective. It is just a general statement that he does not like what I am saying but he does not know why he does not like it.

I have had some comments also from the Chamber of Mines and I am in the process of looking at them. There are some amendments which they have proposed and which are quite intelligent and quite helpful. I am happy to consider them; if I adopt most of those comments from the Chamber of Mines, I will indeed improve the content of the bill. However, I have read through this telex from Mr J.C. Rowntree and I find nothing in there that helps me at all. There are no suggestions which I can take, no criticisms of particular provisions, and I say that with some regret because I think that mining companies are most concerned with this bill.

Debate adjourned.

HOME FINANCE LOANS

Mr EVERINGHAM: I move that this Assembly expresses its concern about the availability of adequate funds for the continuous and orderly operation of the cyclone reconstruction and normal home finance schemes administered by the Home Finance Trustee and the Department of the Northern Territory; and requests the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government to make representations to the Commonwealth Government -

- (a) *in respect of the cyclone reconstruction loans:*
- (i) *to ensure that the Government's commitment and guarantee of the financial needs of all eligible applicants are met without delay to reconstruction; and*

- (ii) to ensure that appropriations for the future are sufficient for the continuous and unkindered operation of the scheme;
- (b) in respect of the normal home finance loans:
 - (i) to have the loan limits increased from \$15,000 as at present to a more realistic figure which recognises the special requirements of the Northern Territory; and
 - (ii) to have the terms and conditions of loans reviewed to establish similar terms and conditions to those made available to the Home Builders Account Funds of the various Australian states; and
- (c) to ensure that the tardy and inadequate administrative procedures adopted by the Department of the Northern Territory for processing applications and progress payments be overhauled and accelerated.

I propose this motion in response to overwhelming pressure from all sectors of this community, not only from the public but from real estate interests, building interests, the legal profession and people who are affected by the delays in dealing with loan applications by the Home Finance Trustee. In putting such a motion to the House, it is necessary to give something of the history of the Home Finance Trustee scheme in the Northern Territory. It has been an integral part of our housing finance system for quite a considerable time and one might also say that it has been a palliative for our housing finance system because we are not a party to the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement. It has been very hard up here to procure the establishment of either permanent or temporary building societies because building societies have not been able to get access to the

government funds on which they depend very largely for their existence. We have only one building society in the Northern Territory. That building society is unique in that it is prepared to accept second mortgages by way of security, granting the first mortgage to the Home Finance Trustee.

Other than that, we have had to depend very largely on bank finance and so people here have come to take for granted the fact that they will have access to loans from the Home Finance Trustee. The inflated building prices in the Northern Territory mean that the prices that one might expect to pay for a house in Darwin or Alice Springs are the same as one would expect to pay for quite a mansion in a southern capital. By comparison, what one gets up here is, relatively speaking, rubbish. The concessional interest rate available through the Home Finance Trustee, even though the amount of the loan is relatively small, helps cushion the blow for people prepared to put their roots down in the Northern Territory. At present, the finance market which has been created by neglect or lack of policy by previous administrations, where we have only the banks, the finance companies and one building society - this finance market created by government policy over the years - is now aggravated by the cutting off of supply by the Home Finance Trustee. This has tended to assume a monstrous importance to the whole Northern Territory economy, particularly in places like Tennant Creek and Katherine. In Katherine, it might be possible to get a bank loan but I believe in Tennant Creek it is next to impossible to get a bank loan and the only possible source of home finance has been the Home Finance Trustee. Not only Darwin and Alice Springs suffer but the other centres suffer greater hardships than the larger centres. It need not be this way because I personally have had inquiries over the years I have been here from several southern building societies, and also local groups, interested and indeed anxious, to get off the ground as either permanent or terminating building societies. But owing to the lack of access to Commonwealth money,

through the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement, and because of the antiquated building society legislation up here - which I do understand that we are attempting to cure - other building societies have not been as fortunate as the one that has got going and which managed to do so in a unique situation; and so we are still very dependent on the Home Finance Trustee.

I am asking this House to request the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government to make representation to the Commonwealth Government, and in particular the Minister for the Northern Territory, to ensure that the Government's commitment to continue funding special cyclone 6% loans goes on. Without these loans, Darwin would be a lot further back in its reconstruction. They at least brought rebuilding within the realms of feasibility to the ordinary man and woman. There is no doubt in my mind that the Government is committed to this scheme and to its continuance but I just want this House to underline that by supporting this motion. The money must be set aside next year and the year after, I believe that an amount of perhaps \$15m or \$20m may be necessary next year and we must see that the money is set aside. It is not a commitment that can be scaled down. It is easily capable of estimation and there would really be no excuse if the right amount is not put by each year so that it is available when required.

As to section (b) of the motion, I am assuming that there is no question that the scheme will continue. I make the point that the Minister and his advisers have been wrong in their estimating, or perhaps "guesstimating", 3 times now and I would not like to see the trustee run short or out of funds again. It seems to me that there is an evil genius somewhere at work in the department who deliberately pares down provisions of this nature and gets some delight in seeing the consternation that he causes. I do not know who it is but it seems to me that there is someone there who just does not like to see plenty of money around.

\$15,000 is the amount which is available to applicants under the current, normal Home Finance Trustee Loan Scheme and that is obviously not enough today. Perhaps \$20,000 would be enough; I doubt that really it is enough, but perhaps it is as much as we can hope for. I would hope that the eventual aim would be something like \$25,000, bearing in mind that the average home today seems to cost somewhere pretty close to \$40,000.

We find that in the states, under a scheme called the Homebuilders Account Fund, people are eligible for an amount of \$18,000 and yet we in the Northern Territory are only eligible for \$15,000. Surely, we should not be more adversely affected than the states. After all, the Commonwealth has a responsibility to develop the Northern Territory. It is not our fault that we are not a state and that we cannot become a party to this arrangement. Surely then we should at least be on a parity with the states and not \$3,000 behind them. I believe that not only should we be on a parity with the states but we should be well above the states because of the greater cost of building and living up here and because the Commonwealth has the responsibility to attract people by making conditions favourable for them to settle in the Northern Territory.

Finally, I will deal with the procedures for dealing with applications. As far back as 1967, when I applied for \$6,000 to assist in the purchase of a house in Alice Springs, it took me 4 to 5 months from the date of application, which was fully supported with all the requisite documents and references from here, there and everywhere, to the time of the granting of the loan. In fact, references are absolutely useless if a person has an income statement which will show that he can make the payments. Nevertheless, people have to go hunting around getting references for these applications. I am aware that the average application to the Home Finance Trustee at present takes about 3 months to process and quite often longer. This

is just far too long; no more than 28 days should be required to process and finance applications. After all, banks can do it in far less time. If the banks can do it, why cannot the Home Finance Trustee do it?

I believe that one of the reasons the Home Finance Trustee processes take so long is because the applications are tied to the availability of funds. It is a production line process. It seems to me they know how much money they have at the moment so they just go slow on applications, and find fault with many, whereas at other times, they would not find fault over relatively small things. Because they are running out of money, they find little pernickety reasons to send people away for something else.

In Friday's edition of the Northern Territory News, there is a report that an official of the Department of the Northern Territory whose name is not quoted, who remains one of those nameless officials who govern us, not even with the honesty of Pontius Pilate, appeared before an estimates committee in Canberra and said that there was no delay in dealing with applications. What is his name and what real facts did he give? I can tell you, and I say it upon my oath, that these applications have been wilfully delayed - and this nameless man goes down to Canberra and says, without contradiction, that there is no delay. I am afraid that it is really getting right at my goat. I wonder what sort of public service it is? The criteria of the public service that we should have were set by a gentleman called Samuel Pepys who was a man of honour. But these people are not men of honour; they clutch at straws; they use arguments of sophistry - they were not quite out of money so they have not run out of money. But, in fact, if all their commitments had been presented to them, they would not have been able to meet them, and if that is not running out of money, I do not know what running out of money is. Nevertheless, they can go down to Canberra and say, "We are not running short".

I sent a telex to the Minister for

the Northern Territory, Mr Adermann, several weeks ago in relation to this matter. I still have received neither an acknowledgement nor a substantive reply from the Minister. It seems to me that ministers should normally accept responsibility for the actions of their departmental officials and all the people in their department. As far as I am concerned, Mr Adermann has had plenty of warning now about the Home Finance Trustee; and if he is convinced that he has the right men in the right place, then I say to him, finally and once and for all, that I believe he is wrong. The Minister appears to have no intention of changing the setup, changing the officials who are handling the administration of this scheme, and I can only say that as far as I am concerned this is the last time I will direct my attention to the officials of his department; in future, Mr Speaker, I will direct my attention to the Minister himself.

Mrs LAWRIE: I read the motion as proposed with some interest and rise to support it. In particular, I support some of the remarks made by the proposer of this motion, particularly when he spoke of what seems to be the deception which has surrounded the 6% concessional home loan for the past 18 months. On 17 December 1976 in the Northern Territory News, there was an announcement that an additional \$3m had been advanced to the Home Finance Trustee and that the \$3m came from the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. In the report in the paper, a spokesman said that the Minister, Mr Evan Adermann, had been given Cabinet approval earlier this year to shift money between the DRC, NT Housing Commission and the Home Finance Trustee as the need arose. "The Minister is very pleased with the co-operation he has had from the commission and its chairman, Mr Clem Jones". Further down, the article says, "The Executive Member for Finance and Community Development said: 'I pointed out in February that the HFT needed \$15m this year and I am pleased it has now been found'."

The overall thought at that time was that we had sufficient money being made

available to service loans for the remainder of this financial year. We all know that this was not the case. The problem is that we were never told officially that funds were drying up again. It took action by several members of this Assembly and very vigorous action by the Cabinet Member concerned to bring to the Minister's attention that again the Home Finance Trustee was in trouble and that platitudinous statements from the Minister or his department that all was well would not wash at all. Members of this Assembly had constituents ringing them, and builders and suppliers landing in their offices, saying they had resupplied all the documentation to the Home Finance Trustee months before and had not received progress payments. When one person came to one's office with such a tale, one could believe perhaps that it was a single oversight or a slip in the system, but when a large number of people start to come in with the same story the most obtuse of members would start to think that perhaps all was not well with the department.

Mr Dondas: You did not believe me last August.

Mrs LAWRIE: How could I not believe you?

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Port Darwin and myself realised that there were problems, and on 12 April 1977 sent the following telegram to the Minister:

Re Home Finance Trustee. Delays of 3 months occur before any payment is made following lodgement of relevant documents. If this is departmental policy, it will inhibit cash flow this financial year. We point out that it is critical to have money continuing to service the Home Finance Trustee loans without undue delays through this dry season. We seek your assurance that adequate finance and staff will be made available to service the loans as required.

That does seem to me to be a fairly polite but straightforward telegram. The honourable member for Jingili men-

tioned that he has had no reply to telexes to the Minister. I can inform the House that I got what I consider to be an incredible reply to that telegram sent jointly by the member for Port Darwin and myself. I shall read it:

Re your telegram to the Minister regarding HFT loans. Please see the Minister's statement issued today. Understand you do receive copies of ministers' statements. Alex Somlyay, Senior Private Secretary.

Now I propose to reply to that telegram. That incredible press release N/12, issued under the name of the Minister, the honourable A.E. Adermann, reads:

HFT situation. The Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Evan Adermann, said today that arrangements for further funds for the Home Finance Trustee were well under way. Meanwhile, accounts were being paid as presented to the HFT. Mr Adermann said, "The HFT will continue to make payments for the remainder of this financial year. The HFT is definitely not out of funds. It has received unexpected accounts for large amounts of money in the last month which have substantially reduced its already increased allocation".

If we have a close look at that ministerial statement, it says nothing. "Accounts were being paid when presented to the HFT". If he means "within a reasonable time", either he is attempting to mislead the public - who are not going to be misled because they submitted the accounts - or someone has not been telling him the whole story.

Dr Letts: Aha!

Mrs LAWRIE: Either way, surely the Minister must realise that at intervals of approximately 5 to 6 months he is being embarrassed publicly by yet another furore over the HFT, by yet another clamour from builders, suppliers and applicants.

Dr Letts: Somebody has not been frank?

Laughter.

Mrs LAWRIE: I acknowledge the interjection of the Majority Leader so that it will get into Hansard.

Regularly, the Minister is publicly embarrassed by controversy in this community over the 6% concessional loan. How can he allow this to continue? How can he allow himself to be put in this dreadful position, not taking any account of the personal hardship, the hardship throughout the business community and the lack of confidence it engenders? In the press release, Mr Adermann said the HFT would continue to make payments for the remainder of this financial year. He does not say how many, at what rate or whether all payments falling due will be paid. That was the assurance we were seeking, that as they became due with the proper documentation, the money would be forthcoming. We are talking about money - cash flow - and there is no such assurance given in that statement. We find the Minister saying the trustee was definitely not out of funds but just embarrassed at the moment. Later on, having said it was not out of funds and wondering obviously why these people in Darwin were continually upset, we find that the Minister managed to scrape up an additional \$2m which he hopes will service the cash needs for the remainder of this financial year.

I am losing faith in the Minister who reassures us one minute and then admits the next minute that he has been able to get some more money from one place or another. What we want is an assurance from the Government, from Treasury, the Prime Minister - the whole lot of them - that the money will be made available throughout this coming dry season, which is the remainder of this financial year, as and when required. This is, I understand, the precise meaning of the first paragraph (a)(i) of the honourable member's motion and I support it completely.

He also says in paragraph (a)(ii) that he wants to ensure that appropriations for the future are sufficient for the continuous and unhindered operation

of the scheme. Don't we all? All members, not only those living in Darwin, would agree because we are trying to build up faith in the future of the Territory, a faith which has to come from the business community as well as members of this Assembly.

In last Friday's NT News there is a headline on page 2, "No HFT Delay, A departmental spokesman told a Senate estimates committee: 'There is no concrete evidence to justify accusations of lengthy delays in providing home finance for Darwin residents'." How anyone could have the gall to make such a statement to a responsible committee beggars the imagination. I would like this particular spokesman to have had to deal with the distraught people I have had in my office. I would like him to have spoken to a few of the lawyers and real estate agents around the town who have mentioned the incredible tangle people have got themselves into through no fault of their own. I advise the House, this spokesman and the Minister that the people were being told orally that the loans had been approved and, when they went back wondering where the money was, at least one person was told, "I know it has been approved, but we are out of funds at the moment". That is a dreadful thing to happen. This person had gone ahead and made other arrangements, only to find that a government loan was not to be forthcoming in the time one would reasonably have expected.

We would all have appreciated it if the Minister could have said 6 weeks ago, "Funds will be tight, do not take approval as meaning cash within the next few weeks or days". At least that would have been a breath of fresh air and honesty. Naturally, we would have been upset and we would still have pressed for further funding, which we have eventually got, but I find particularly abhorrent the fact that you have to drag out of the Minister confirmation of what we already know, that the finance is very tight. Whether it is at the direction of the Minister or not, I am not in a position to know, but when funding is becoming particularly tight, nothing is said. It is

perhaps a vague hope that if it is ignored, it will all go away.

A large number of people in Darwin have been seriously inconvenienced and are losing faith in the HFT loan and that is the worst part. Some builders do not want to touch HFT loan building because they do not feel they can guarantee the money coming in. Other people have taken bridging finance at 18% in the fond hope that their HFT loan would come through. It had not come through when I spoke to some of them some days ago and they were flat out trying to service the 18% interest on their bridging loan. This is something that should not have happened in the first place and should certainly not be allowed to continue.

The second part of the motion deals with the \$15,000 Home Finance Trustee loan. If I am to believe the stories of my constituents, and I have no reason to doubt them, money is also very tight in this area. It appears they have had applications lodged for a longer time than one would consider normal. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government will perhaps elaborate on this point because it was my understanding that additional funds had been found for that loan and it was believed they would be sufficient. The information I now require is not confirmation that additional funds were received but an indication of whether it is considered they will be sufficient this financial year to service that loan. I have a horrible suspicion that perhaps the honourable proposer of the motion could have also put a rider to the effect that we hope the appropriations for that future operation will be sufficient. Perhaps he hopes that, with the ability to have other home builders' accounts operating in the Territory, that would pick up the extra which is not forthcoming from the \$15,000 loan.

We have seen people embarrassed and distraught over the past few months through no fault of their own. I noticed particularly that honourable members this morning - I think the honourable member for Casuarina and the honourable

member for Jingili - asked questions of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government as to the numbers of outstanding applications with the HFT waiting to be processed. He stated, and I hope I do not recall it incorrectly, that he had asked the Minister for this information some months ago and it has still not been made available. I find that deplorable. Here we have members of the Assembly, elected to work for the good order of the people of the Territory, asking proper questions in a proper manner, and we find the Cabinet Member responsible - and we are supposed to be in a transition to something approaching statehood - cannot get this basic information from the Minister. People down south wonder why we are all suspicious up here. Why would we not be when we cannot even get that information through the proper channel, that is this House?

I support the motion and I hope to God it is the last time we are going to have to raise it in this manner in this Assembly.

Mr TAMBLING: I too am embarrassed as are other members, at having to participate in this debate.

Mr Withnall: You should be ashamed.

Mr TAMBLING: I am not ashamed, Mr Speaker. I have done everything possible in my power to obtain action in this regard. As the honourable member for Nightcliff has just mentioned, it has been some considerable time since I requested statistical and detailed information that is required for us to make a proper assessment of this scheme. That information, perhaps coincidentally, arrived just before lunch, so I will start my speech by giving that information. Of the 6% concessional loans, 928 have been approved and these give a total value for loans of just in excess of \$28m. There are a further 637 loans still to be processed at the natural rate that people will wish to progress to taking up the loan. I would therefore estimate, on the averages of the past loans approved, that this will involve a commitment of a further \$18 to \$20m. In total, the 6%

loan scheme will require a total government commitment of approximately \$50m.

The values of progress payments to date and the appropriation made to date are very close, in the order of \$24m. So the cash required will be an additional \$4m to meet present commitments, and then an addition of at least \$18m or \$20m on top of that to meet future loans as they are taken up. We are aware that the Minister has recently made some short term and temporary borrowings to carry over the cash shortfall period between now and 30 June, but they will have to be repaid out of future appropriations.

I support all 3 aspects of the motion. With respect to the special cyclone construction loan, it is worthy to note that this is the money that has been guaranteed to the private sector for its reconstruction. I do not know why the spokesmen, the so-called "advisers", within the Department of the Northern Territory should necessarily think that the activity in the private sector will be at a slower pace than reconstruction for rented housing to public servants, the housing provided by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission where some phenomenal work has taken place. By the end of December this year, when the Darwin Reconstruction Commission winds up, the entire government rental housing stock will have been reinstated. At the moment, work is in hand or has been completed on over 2,700 dwellings by the DRC and they are proud to claim that 73% of their housing program is now completed.

The Northern Territory Housing Commission, which is a half way house to provide rental accommodation to those members of the private sector who choose to use the Housing Commission as their housing agency, are about 50% complete on their reconstruction program. They have a slight advantage in that some of their damaged housing is liveable and people can be accommodated in these homes. Of over 1,400 houses, they still have over 700 to be upgraded or restored. Of 490 flats, they have approximately 200 still to be restored

or upgraded.

It is interesting to note where the priorities have gone in the expenditure of monies in the reconstruction period. Whilst I believe many people in the private sector have made very extensive contributions of their own finances, this was an early commitment to the reconstruction of Darwin and, for some reason, and this concerns me, those officers who advised on priorities and estimates seem to feel that the private sector does not need to be pushed at the same pace as the other sectors. I appreciate, as I am sure you do Mr Speaker, that the Government has a difficult job in juggling its budgets in the Northern Territory. Not only is housing always a needy area, there are other areas such as the primary industry and rural reconstruction needs and grants to community organisations in the arts and education. The demands on government in the Northern Territory have been high for the last few years as part of the reconstruction. But that ought not to be an argument that stops the reconstruction proceeding at the pace at which people can do it.

The second part of the honourable member for Jingili's motion relates to the normal home finance loans. I am pleased to note that this scheme has been operating very effectively. In fact, in the previous 4 financial years, the loans approved were: 95 loans in each of the years '72 to '73 and '73 to '74; 74 loans in 1974-75 and 78 loans in 1975-76. In this financial year, the figure has more than doubled to 158 to date. The source of funds for the normal home finance scheme is not by way of government appropriation and I think that, whilst the honourable member for Nightcliff did feel that perhaps appropriations ought to be made in this area, it is important to make it clear that the source of funds for this scheme does come by way of loan raisings at the Home Finance Trustee direct from lending institutions; occasionally they do use the Government as a lending institution in that regard.

The honourable member for Jingili has linked his motion to the requirements of the Home Builders Account in the states. In recent months, I have been participating with state housing ministers in a review of the Housing Agreement Act for 1978. I attended a meeting of housing ministers last week in Melbourne where this issue was discussed and, whilst we are not a formal party to the Housing Agreement Act - we possibly will become so with statehood or at a later stage of our constitutional development - the general rules of the Housing Agreement Act have been applied in the Northern Territory, particularly with regard to the Housing Commission's activities; that is, the interest rates at which it secures its finance and the level of funding made available. The Home Builders Account, however, is an important concept that has not yet been adopted as a guideline in the Northern Territory. I believe it is timely for us to explore this concept further and perhaps to start looking very closely at the funds available to the various state Home Builders Accounts and the interest rates at which they are made available in order to service the needs of many people in our community who would like to build their own home but have no access to finance. We did receive a special concession from the Government when the schemes for the sale of government homes and Housing Commission homes were recently reintroduced. The low interest loan was for people who earned less than 125% of the average weekly earnings. In the states, the formula is 85% of the average weekly earnings. That was a tremendous recognition by the Australian Government of the special needs and requirements of the Northern Territory and I am pleased to take credit for the involvement that I had on that particular new policy. I am hopeful that, with respect to normal Home Finance Trustee loans, not only will we see an increase in the ceiling limit but also some adjustment of interest rates to take account of people who perhaps qualify for a lower than normal interest rate.

With regard to the administration procedures adopted by the Department of the Northern Territory, I am always

concerned. In fact, I am always at a loss for an apt description of the Department of the Northern Territory. Perhaps the best one I can think of these days is that it is a eunuch; it is trying desperately to protect its Minister, but it has certainly lost its creativity. We have seen over a long period of time that the administrative procedures adopted by the Department of the Northern Territory have been totally inadequate, particularly with regard to the way in which it processes information. I am at a loss to understand whether there is any forward planning or thought as to how the estimates are put together or, if a scheme is running tight on cash, how it offers advice to the Minister. It appears that the Minister is continually caught in the dilemma that he receives advice too late. I am not trying to excuse him for that - it is his department and he has to take responsibility for it - but for some reason the information does not come through. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has continually supported the reconstruction loan scheme and it has always been prepared to make adjustments in its own program in order to keep the private sector reconstruction viable. Unless this information is presented either to the Minister or the Darwin Reconstruction Commission or to myself to make other adjustments in the housing votes as necessary, then we cannot cope.

Probably the answer to this is the formulation, at the earliest possible date, of a single housing authority in the Northern Territory, not only to take over the functional roles that are very adequately performed today by the Northern Territory Housing Commission, but to put under the umbrella all of the public service housing of the Northern Territory and to incorporate within that single housing authority the administration of the Home Finance Trustee. If we can put these functions under an umbrella administered by a responsible group of administrators such as we have in the Northern Territory Housing Commission and make that body politically accountable to this Assembly through the appropriate Cabinet Member, I believe that the respon-

sibility will rest where it should rest, in the Northern Territory and not in Canberra.

Mr WITHNALL: That I support this motion would be quite obvious from my previous remarks upon this subject. The time has come for a single housing authority to be established in the Northern Territory and for it to be placed under the complete control of the local executive in the Northern Territory. If that is done, we will be sure to be able to get some answers to our questions; we will be sure that we will not be met with a brick wall whenever we try to find out exactly what is happening with the Home Finance Trustee. In this respect, I suggest to honourable members that in the Department of the Northern Territory today there is lacking a sense of honour. All the statements that you can get out of the Minister or out of his department or out of that fellow who probably changes like a chameleon from time to time, "the spokesman for the department", are statements which are designed to veil the truth. You can make the truth tell a lie for you; that is very easy. I suggest that the statements that have been made about the Home Finance Trustee have been designed upon that basis. You can say, for instance, that funds are not exhausted when there is \$50 in the account. The truth of the statement nevertheless tells a lie. You can say, as this statement in the Northern Territory News of 29 April said, that the length of time a claim took from processing in the Accounts Branch in Brisbane to the appropriate authorities in Darwin was about 10 days. However, you do not say how long it took to get to the Accounts Branch in Brisbane and how long they took to look at it. The statement is only about the length of time it took from processing in the Accounts Branch in Brisbane to the appropriate authorities in Darwin. He is talking about the Post Office. It is the truth and yet it tells a lie.

Mr Everingham: It is all bullshit, as you said before.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WITHNALL: Later on in the statement, the same officer said that the finance question was not his department's responsibility, but there was no concrete evidence to justify the accusations. What he was really saying was, "I do not have any concrete evidence". He did not say he had not investigated the finance question, just that he had no evidence. Thus, the truth again works to tell a lie. He went on to say that the department was seeking an additional \$3m to add to its present appropriation. That is a confession that his previous statement is quite a lie. He said, "It is not our responsibility, there is no concrete evidence, but we are looking for another \$3m".

It is about time we had a sense of honour abroad in administration in the Northern Territory. However, while there is no local voice, local authority or local decision so far as the operation of the Home Finance Trustee is concerned, I am quite sure we won't get it as far as the Home Finance Trustee is concerned.

As regards the \$15,000 loans, there is no earthly reason at all, upon statements made by the present Department of the Northern Territory and the present Minister - who probably does not know a quarter of what his department is doing - why that cannot be transferred immediately to the local executive. It only involves borrowing money from someone else - at such-and-such a rate and lending it out at another rate. This is a function which surely is not the prerogative of the Commonwealth Government, since its finances are not involved. Surely to goodness, that is one matter which can immediately be transferred to the Territory Executive.

Paragraph (b)(ii) of the motion talks about having the terms and conditions of loans reviewed to establish similar terms and conditions to those made available to the Home Builders Account Funds of the various Australian states. I am very attracted by 3 propositions. One is now being very seriously looked at by housing authorities in Australia,

and that is the proposition of having the repayment of interest excused for a number of years. That seems to me to be a very attractive proposition because it is the interest repayments in the first 5, 6 or 7 years that really eat up the amount of money that a man has available to pay for his housing. I am not talking about forgiveness of interest at all, I am merely saying that repayments of interest should be postponed for a period of years which I am not sufficiently capable as a mathematician to work out. But it should be postponed for a number of years so that in the first few years a young man starting with a young family is not overborne by the enormous interest that he has to pay for his housing loan.

I am attracted to another proposition which is perhaps subject to criticism. That proposition is that, although the interest rate may be excused during that period of time, if a person is prepared to pay that interest rate and to ask that it be taken off instead of the interest payments being excused for a period of time, if he pays that amount of interest, it can be taken off the capital during that time. If a person is required under a mortgage to repay in a year, say, \$3,000 by way of interest and capital, he could be excused the payment of the interest and the same amount of money can be paid by him and accepted as a reduction of capital. This would be an attractive proposition for the simple reason that the lenders would get their money back more quickly and, in times of inflation, this must be a valuable thing as far as they are concerned. It would also assist the person buying the house because he would have his capital reduced accordingly. I am not expert in this field but it has occurred to me that this might possibly be a matter which could be examined by the Home Finance Trustee, and indeed by the Housing Commission, with a view to seeing whether some such scheme could not be operated in the Northern Territory.

I support the motion wholeheartedly. Like the honourable member for Nightcliff, I regret that it has been so

difficult to get any information out of anyone with respect to the accounts of the Home Finance Trustee, with respect to the situation so far as the availability of money is concerned and with respect to the difficulty in finding out why it takes so long to have a fairly simple application processed. There is a very great lack of a sense of honour in the Department of the Northern Territory today, and the statements of the Minister - they are probably only statements of the department - can be severely criticised because, while the words used in these public statements about the Home Finance Trustee are truthful, they nevertheless are designed to tell a lie.

Mr DONDAS: I support the motion. I would like to refer to the press release mentioned by the member for Jingili because it does coincide with something I said in this House on Wednesday 18 August 1976. The headline was, "No HFT delay". It stated: "There was no concrete evidence to justify accusations of lengthy delays in providing home finance for Darwin residents still rebuilding after Cyclone Tracy, a Department of the Northern Territory officer said today". It went on to say that it only takes 10 days for an application to be processed from Brisbane. However, referring to Hansard of Wednesday 18 August, in the adjournment debate, I called upon the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development to instigate an inquiry into the operations of the Home Finance Trustee and to make every representation to the Minister to have the Finance Section of the Department of the Northern Territory return to Darwin earlier than was intended. The intended time then was November and apparently they have just arrived. At that time there were still delays of up to 7 weeks. During that speech, I chastised the HFT office because of the lengthy delays and I think I came under some kind of attack from the honourable member for Nightcliff for having a go at the department. When we listen today to what has been going on, maybe I was right 7 months ago. Maybe we should have had an investigation into the department at that time. At that time I

had worked out that the Home Finance Trustee office was processing about 14 applications a week, with a staff of some 14 to 16 people whilst, at the same time, the private enterprise field by way of the Home Building Society with a staff of 2 were processing many more.

During the course of these sittings I asked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government a question without notice regarding the accounts outstanding in the HFT and the information was given to me just before we came in this afternoon. The number of loans approved since the inception of the scheme is 928. At 1 July 1976 we had something like 611 loans approved. To date, 317 loans have been approved since July 1976 which works out to about 8 a week. We have gone back from 14 loans a week being approved in late 1976 to 8 now in early 1977.

They talk about funds being available. According to the figures we have, the value of loans approved to date is \$28m, give or take a couple of hundred thousand dollars, and the value of progress payments made since the inception of the scheme is some \$24m. But when we start doing some sums to see where the money has come from, we have: cash provided in 1975-76, some \$9.5m dollars, then in 1976-77 some \$11m, then in 1976-77 an advance from the Housing Commission of \$2m, and then in the same period another \$3m from the DRC. We are looking at something like \$25m being made available. Yet \$28m is the amount of loans while the amount paid out so far is \$24m. There is still a shortfall of \$4m. No wonder there are delays in progress payments. No wonder some small builders are going broke. No wonder constituents are pulling their hair out and crying on the phone and saying: "What are we going to do? We have paid a deposit to purchase a house and unless we get our loan approved in the next 2 or 3 weeks we are going to lose our deposit because the time has run out to exercise the option of purchase".

I am not going to bang the desk but I am disappointed that 6 or 7 months later we are still debating this par-

ticular issue. I was not, as originally inferred by the honourable member for Nightcliff, slamming the HFT department, I am not slamming the department; I am going to have a slam at the Minister and his advisers because, as I have said before, the staff of the HFT are all working hard. But if they cannot approve loans because there is no money there, because the fellow on top says, "You can only approve 10 loans this week", well, of course they are going to twiddle their thumbs, of course they are going to look for excuses, as the member for Jingili has said, not to approve a loan. There is some skulduggery going on at a higher level than the Home Finance Trustee, some skulduggery that maybe even the Minister for the Northern Territory does not know about. Every time we bring the subject up or the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government brings the subject up with him, he says: "There is enough money". Look at the figures. We need \$28m for the loans yet only \$25m has been provided and we have still another 2 months of this financial year to go. What will happen to those other people who are sitting around waiting for their loans to be approved or waiting for progress payments so they can continue to build? I called for an investigation once before and maybe it is time we had an investigation.

With regard to the second part of the motion, an increase from \$15,000, I was one of the moving forces to have this particular part of the motion included. Several weeks ago, I approached the Majority Party to ask for some parliamentary wing advice as to whether we should have this loan increased from \$15,000 to maybe \$20,000 or \$25,000. As we know, \$15,000 on the first mortgage in the Northern Territory does not go very far when a house costs something like \$40,000 or \$45,000. By the time you get your \$15,000 from the HFT and you try to get the other \$30,000 from the Home Building Society or the bank, you are barking up a tree; \$15,000 is nowhere near the necessary amount of money; \$20,000 is semi-realistic and \$25,000 is more realistic to help build a house in the Northern Territory. Houses are not cheap but people must

have a roof over their heads and, unfortunately, the Housing Commission, at this stage, are not in a position to provide all the accommodation requirements that we need.

The Cabinet Member has given us some vital statistics. He tells us that there are problems and that a single housing authority may help solve those problems. But what are we going to do in the meantime? Are we going to get a single housing authority next week? Are we going to get a single housing authority next year? What is going to happen between now and whenever we do get the single housing authority? I do know that the establishment of a single housing authority and the problems that we have been having with the Department of NT with regard to the Home Finance Trustee loans is another good argument for statehood for the Territory because then you would have responsible people making the decisions and, if they were not making the right decisions, then the electorate would kick them out.

Mr ROBERTSON: This debate seems to have developed into an endless tirade does it not? I would like to put my sixpenny-worth in from the southern regions of the Territory on this debate on the Home Finance Trustee, and I suggest that that sixpenny-worth might be about five-pence-halfpenny more value than some sections of the Home Finance Trustee are at the moment, particularly the officers of the department.

A lot of play has been made about the NT News issue of 29 April and some information provided to me by the honourable Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government, interestingly enough, perhaps coincidentally, is dated the 29th of that month. The 6% concessional loan scheme does not affect my electorate; it does not affect the people of Alice Springs at all; it is purely Darwin. The unnamed spokesman for the Department of the Northern Territory made a statement that there was no concrete evidence to justify the accusation of the fund running out of money. At that time, it is to be noted, an expenditure had occurred of

\$23,996,764, as has previously been indicated by the honourable Cabinet Member. That was made up of \$9.5m in 1975 76, \$11.5m in 1976 77 and an additional \$3m ex DRC. Allowing for incidental expenditures, simple arithmetic will tell us there was not much left. At the time this spokesman told a parliamentary committee that there was no concrete evidence at all to suggest that the 6% concessional loan scheme was running into financial difficulties, my information is that there was a grand total of \$3,346 in the bin. So much for the 6% concessional scheme. That is my information. You would want a pretty cheap house to be the last in line wouldn't you?

My area of concern is not the 6% concessional scheme but the scheme referred to as the normal scheme, and what an appallingly confusing scene it is. I am aware that a person can get himself into a circumstance that, with the inflexible rigidity of the present Home Finance Trustee rules, he can have approval, be in a position where only \$12,000 is necessary to finish his home, and he can neither finish his home nor get any funds from the Home Finance Trustee from whom he already has approval. It is something like the matter the honourable member for Night-cliff raised some time ago about the public servant tenant situation, the real catch 22 concerning defacto relationships. In this particular case, this person has spent all of his own money and in addition he has borrowed \$3,000 on a personal loan to get his home to the state where \$12,000 would be sufficient to completely finish it off. He then goes to the Home Finance Trustee who agrees to lend him \$12,000 in order to finish it. The position he finds himself in is that he has no money to do any further work and the Home Finance Trustee will only pay out on the presentation of an account. He can't spend money which he doesn't have and he can't get anything from the Home Finance Trustee because he can't produce an account. That person in my electorate has been in that position for about 3 months.

If the honourable Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government had his way, then the thing could perhaps be placed under the type of arrangement that he suggests within the framework of the single housing authority. Then perhaps that type of inflexibility could be overcome. If we are to accept that there are funds available in the general fund, the normal funding - and certainly I know of no person who has been eligible and who has actually been refused in the general Home Finance Trustee fund - where is the delay and why is there a delay?

I recently had a loan discharged by the defence homes scheme under the War Services Act. I was dealing with an office in Adelaide, the mortgage settlement was conducted in Darwin and, as all honourable members know, I live in Alice Springs. It took precisely 14 days from the time I told the defence services homes branch of the Commonwealth Housing Corporation that my home was finished and I wanted them to settle the mortgage. Over a distance of some 2,000 miles between Adelaide and Darwin and with me living in Alice Springs, right in the middle, it took them 14 days to settle it. If one branch of the Commonwealth Public Service dealing in housing and housing finance can do that, why can't this establishment here?

Other members have perhaps been a little kinder than I would have been. The honourable member for Port Darwin used the term "the truth will tell a lie". While that may be the case, I think that we have been served up unmitigated falsehoods by officers of the department. To suggest that there have not been any delays is, as all other members have pointed out, ridiculous and patently wrong. I phoned an agent in Alice Springs at lunch time and was informed that a home in Wingfield Street Alice Springs was sold in October last year, approval was granted by the Home Finance Trustee in the first week of January this year, and settlement occurred last Monday. If that is speed, I would hate to see what a startled gazelle looked like. That is an appalling record and it is not the

only one. There was another one sold in December on a contract of sale drawn conditionally upon the Home Finance Trustee providing funds. It was sold in December and approval for the loan, for a person fully eligible with all documentation - it is a house already built - was provided 14 days ago. That was from December yet we are told by this unnamed spokesman from the department that there is no delay, that there is no evidence to suggest that funds are short. I do not know what you would call delay, but I would think that between December and 14 days ago just for approval is a reasonable sort of delay. I would hate to go without food for that amount of time and I daresay that, if this spokesman for the Department of the Northern Territory really thought about it, he also would consider it an unreasonable delay.

The problems we have in Alice Springs are equal to those in Darwin. I think that eventually the 6% concessional loan scheme must fold. I do not think that it should be used for the purpose of new residents and the scheme will eventually phase itself out. The important thing for this legislature and for the Executive is to ensure that a more efficient and equitable system is devised, one in which people have access to information via the Cabinet Members. Above all, what must be achieved is flexibility in decision-making which does not exist at the moment. The example I have given of the person who is in the classic catch 22 situation must not occur again. I support the motion.

Mr EVERINGHAM: In reply, I should like to thank all honourable members who have contributed to the debate for the constructive suggestions they have made, for their forthright criticism, and for their candour and frankness. Perhaps what is needed is for some of that candour and frankness to be transplanted into the Department of the Northern Territory.

The honourable member for Port Darwin was a little concerned that I had no particular mention in paragraph (b) of the motion in relation to representa-

tions for the continuation of appropriations for normal Home Finance Trustee loans. I acknowledge that the honourable member for Nightcliff may have said it, but I think the honourable member for Port Darwin also mentioned it. I have taken it as a matter of gospel, as I think I said at the outset, that the normal loans would continue and I hardly felt it necessary to request the Cabinet Member to make representations in that regard. As to the matter of the single housing authority for the Northern Territory, that is obviously one which is widely supported here.

I cannot but agree with the honourable member for Port Darwin about a certain lack of honour being noticeable in the way the senior officials of the Department of the Northern Territory seem to attempt to cover up at all times. I would like the Minister to take note that this House appears to be unanimous on this issue, that there is in fact a great shortfall between promise and performance in the Home Finance Trustee. The Minister is getting to the stage where he is going to have to choose between his advisers, his senior departmental officials and what they feed into his ear, and what we say. It appears that this House is unanimous in this regard, and I say to the Minister: "Minister, beware of whom you accept advice from in this regard in future".

Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS BILL

(Serial 196)

Continued from 17 March 1977.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I support the bill. I might say on behalf of the Law Society of the Northern Territory, of which I am president, that the provisions of the bill have been drawn up in close consultation with a sub-committee of the society and has its full approval,

There is one defect, perhaps, that may require amendment, if not now at a

later stage, and certainly the honourable Cabinet Member for Law might well give it consideration; I believe that she is doing so. It is not a matter that is imperative, but it is one that should be rectified, if there are any real grounds for it, as soon as conveniently possible. It is that it seems to me in this particular piece of legislation there is no right bestowed on any other person to demand payment of the trust fund committee from deposits made by a legal practitioner other than the legal practitioner himself. In other words, if the legal practitioner dies or becomes insane - God help us! - bankrupt, or perhaps leaves the Northern Territory or cannot be found ...

A member: Not bankrupt!

Mr EVERINGHAM: Well, you would not really know how close some of us are, Mr Speaker.

I would suggest to the honourable Cabinet Member that there is some room for possible improvement in this piece of legislation in that regard. It is a situation that is not likely to arise, and may not arise for 10 years, 20 years even, but it is an avenue that should be covered because it may just arise tomorrow. I do support the legislation.

Debate adjourned.

DEATH OF FORMER MEMBER OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Dr LETTS (by leave): I move that this Assembly record its sincere regret at the death of James Brunton Watts, place on record its appreciation of the meritorious service he rendered to the Legislative Council and to the Territory, and tender its sympathy to his family.

Jim Watts was elected as the member for Larrakeyah in the Legislative Council at a by-election held on 28 January 1961. He was a member of the Australian Labor party at a time when that party had 4 representatives among the 8 elected members. The others were Fred Drysdale, Len Purkiss and Dick Ward. He

was part of a pretty formidable team in which he served for 2 years until defeated in the December 1962 election. Jim Watts was active in the Darwin community, particularly in Masonic circles, until he developed a heart condition in 1976. I did not have the privilege of serving with Jim Watts, but I did know him quite well, particularly in later years when he was the curator of the municipal golf course near the Botanic Gardens. I enjoyed his company and was a patron of the area on several occasions. Jim returned to England only a few months ago and he unfortunately died on the 29 April 1977.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA BILL

(Serial 194)

Continued from 17 March 1977.

Mr TAMBLING: I am personally very proud to support this bill, not only because I am a member of the United Church in North Australia, but because, next to my family, the church influence has probably been the next most important in my own social development.

The historical situation of the United Church in North Australia is well worth looking at, particularly when you consider that for the last 21 years the United Church in North Australia has been a co operative partnership. Perhaps it is coincidental that it is its 21st birthday at such time as it moves to formalise its constitution right throughout Australia. The historical situation of this Church has also thrown up many people in many vocations and callings right throughout the Northern Territory, meeting various needs and particularly the need of mission to Aborigines. It is well worth noting that there is a very strong, close link with the timing of this change for the Church with those moves that are also happening on constitutional development in the political forum and in many other community organisations.

The legislation is in 2 parts: firstly, the section which deals with the inauguration of the Church and, secondly, the creation of a suitable property trust. I note that the basis of the union is set out in the bill as the first schedule, and of course the basis of the union is a very strong spiritual statement of the objectives of what this Church will seek to do. It states the principles of action that the Church will undertake and it states the spiritual and creative points of view that it recognises in what its role is in our community. There are many statements in that basis of union that I can personally identify with; I have found them at all times to be very relevant. I will not list them. I am tempted, but I will not bring them out because to pull out small pieces does not really complement what is set out in that document.

The new Uniting Church in Australia will have a close link with us through what is called its northern synod. They have not stayed within the boundaries of the Northern Territory to create the northern synod; they have pushed their area of influence into the Kimberley region of Western Australia plus a slice of the top of South Australia. The membership of the Church is well recognised in census and statistic forms as probably being the largest group of people that claim adherence to a particular denomination. There are approximately 1,400 confirmed lay members of the church in this new synod. The administration and government of the Church will be divided into 4 presbyteries, Arnhem, Arafura, the Centre and Kimberley. Within those 4 presbyteries, there are 14 parishes. Those parishes will be Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala, Galiwinku, Milingimbi, Maningrida, Warrawi, Minjilang, Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Pitjantjatara, East Kimberley and West Kimberley. Seven of those 14 parishes are predominantly Aboriginal, and 5 of the parishes have patrols associated with the parish because of the particular type of activity that is carried out.

The church umbrella also incorporates a number of very fine institutions that we have recognised as performing social programs in our community. The institutions that are well-known to many of us are the Aboriginal Advisory and Development Services, the Arnhem Land Progress Association Incorporated, Somerville Homes Incorporated, a body which has a specific charge of child care - the Old Timers' Homes in Alice Springs, Griffiths House in Alice Springs - which is a hostel - Saint Philips College in Alice Springs, the Gordon Symons Hostel in Darwin, the AIM Hospitals in Halls Creek Western Australia, Fitzroy Crossing Western Australia and at Finke, and a geriatric hospital at Numbia Nunga in Western Australia. In addition, the Church co-operates with the Anglican Church in Nungalinya College, a theological and lay training community development centre. The personnel within the church are just a microcosm of our community. There are 31 ordained ministers; 17 of these are in parishes and patrols, 12 of them within the Northern Territory. Ten of the ministers have special appointments in the Northern Territory and 4 have retired in the Northern Territory. Amongst these 31 ordained ministers, there are 3 Aborigines and 3 Pacific Islanders from Tonga and Fiji. In addition to ordained ministers, the total staff is 125 personnel, 44 in Darwin, 36 in Arnhem Land, 25 in Kimberley and 20 in the Centre.

The concept of unity within the Church is not a new one. The United Church itself for the last 21 years has been a very prominent example to all Australians of what can be achieved when major denominations come together. I am sure that the United Church in North Australia has been the main example to demonstrate that it can work and therefore should work with the major amalgamations that will happen Australia-wide in June of this year. The concepts of unity will go on. I notice that in the bill itself, provision is made in clause 10 that "notwithstanding anything in this ordinance or in the basis of union, the Assembly may from time to time resolve that the Church enter into union with other

branches of the Christian Church". I look forward to the time when further amalgamations will take place, not only in the Northern Territory but right throughout Australia.

The Church has always been a very strong influence in holding our society together. This is probably more particularly relevant when we are in such a fast-paced era of change. The Church has always stood as a vehicle for heeding what God is saying today and, secondly, for recognising the need for tension in a community as being a very creative force. The Churches have the ability to be able to bring tensions together in a time of change as an example to many of us in other institutions.

Over the weekend, I have been reading a book by an American theologian, Alan Brockway, who looks at the reality of change today. The book is entitled "Uncertain Men and Certain Change". I would like to read from the chapter on change in the Church: "The Church is of God and will be preserved for ever, but such preservation does not mean it is exempt from change. As is true of other organisms, the Church would die if it failed to change. Change may at first seem inconsistent with the eternal character of the Church but, in fact, change is essential to that character. The Church changes because the world changes and the actions of God with that world reveal ever new and different demands and possibilities. The whole history of the Church is the history of change as circumstances and needs have changed. If the Church did not change, it would die. Men of Christian faith, therefore, are called upon to welcome ecclesiastical change as they welcome change in the world. In change lies life, the life of God." I support those statements and I believe that the inauguration of the Uniting Church is a living proof of recognition of those statements. I am pleased to support the bill.

Mr KENTISH: I support this bill. My knowledge of the basis of the United Church in Australia and in the Northern Territory goes back quite a long time,

to 1938 when I first arrived in Darwin. At that time, the church was in the little building opposite Suttons Motors in Knuckey Street and the parson's quarters were in an old-styled bamboo house on the corner. My brother was the Darwin minister at the time and the business manager for missions along the coast. I was here for a week before I went out along the coast to serve on missions. I remember hearing some time later that they were building a new mission house on the corner and, next time I came to Darwin, I found it was there. I was outside for several years without coming to town. I can remember a bit of controversy at the time when my brother was roundly criticised by some of the church members for the extravagant expenditure of 1,200 pounds on the new parsonage, "an unjustified and unwarranted expense". The white ants had got into the bamboo place and that was gone.

However, that is going back a while and I have seen a great deal of the development of the Church since that time. The Church is now built on the site occupied by about 4 flats, ground floor and a single storey flats, which were bombed dead-centre by the Japanese during the 1942 raid. That was the American headquarters at that time; they had taken over these flats for headquarters and the Japanese got them dead-centre. The United Church now is built exactly on that site and some of the cement work and foundations of the flats is still visible at the rear of the Church.

The Church did not have a great congregation in those days. Often there were very few attending, but they thrust their work right out into the furthest corners of the Territory. I remember a few of the old timers, the ministers who went out on this work. They were fairly hardy types: Padre Goy who was here during the war, the Reverend Arch Grant, the Reverend Stuart Lang. They were not resident in Darwin very much but mainly worked outside all over the Territory, and there were others like them.

When the new Church was built, it was built because the congregation had outgrown the little Church opposite Suttons and in the meantime they had to move under what was called the club in Peel Street. They met there for quite a long time, a year or more while the new Church was built. An enormous argument went on about the new Church. The architects from Sydney sent up plans of a building with a roof you could step onto from a motor car. It was very modern but quite unacceptable to the local people who were a bit old fashioned, some of them. Then they sent up other plans with central heating and various things like that. We got a variety of plans which were rejected one after another for about 12 months until they finally accepted the plan of the present building. An old family in this town, still represented in the town, the Liveris family, progressive builders, had the building of the Church.

The Presbyterian congregations and Methodists in the Territory had been working together to a degree for many years. They were often meeting and the Methodist headquarters was often the meeting place and camping place of some of the Presbyterian AIM missionaries. When they decided on an official United Church in Northern Australia, they worked for many years on what we called the principles of co operation. And as they had no legal right to own property, any property held by the Church was vested in the United Church Board in Sydney and guaranteed by men there representing the 3 or 4 denominations at that time.

A great deal of time has gone by now. The venture has been very successful and it is very interesting and very gratifying to see that the Northern Territory has led the rest of Australia in this United Church venture. I can often remember church officials and heads from various organisations in the south, from conferences in Victoria and New South Wales, coming up and looking with wonder on this amalgamation of the various sects and wondering how it could survive. Perhaps some of the

reasons might be that in North Australia the United Church was starting from the ground more or less and building up, particularly after the war had destroyed a lot of property. They had no background that might have held them back or been divisive amongst them. Also, they had a minimum of old church people who could be unco-operative and say, "Great grandfather was always the chief steward, my grandfather was the chief steward, my father was the chief steward and if I do not become the chief steward, I will tear this place up". There was none of that hereditary background; it was a Church composed of itinerant people who gave of their best to the building of this Church, not only physically but to its spirit and atmosphere. Those things perhaps gave North Australia an advantage in getting into this field of uniting which has been an example to the rest of Australia. I am very glad now that we have reached the stage where the rest of Australia has taken the cue and we will have a Uniting Church right throughout the country. We are now moving into a new and substantial legal basis of which this bill is the vehicle. I am very pleased to support the bill.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I would like to thank the previous speakers for their sincerity. Their background in the United Church in the Territory is well known and I thank them very much for their words. The inauguration of the Church is a milestone for Christian people in the whole of Australia. It will take place in June 1977 and will bring much joy to the people who have been participating in the basis of the union which was set up many years ago. It has been going on for a long time; it is a little bit like our United Church in the Territory. It started in the very early stages from the Congregational Church in South Australia and spread then with the other denominations. That has probably been the basis of the union that we see today. I am sure that the work that was done in the early days by the early missionaries and the people in the Territory should inspire us. Perhaps Christian-thinking people can continue to fight for something if they see an end in the distance.

I am not going to say much more about the bill. There will be some amendments which will be presented. Some of them are technical and some of them are relevant to the constitution. I would like, before closing the debate, to read the clause 2 from the first schedule which is entitled "The Basis of Union":

The Uniting Church lives and works within the faith and unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. She recognises that she is related to other Churches in ways which give expression, however partially, to that unity in faith and mission. Recalling the Ecumenical Councils of the early centuries, she looks forward to a time when the faith will be further elucidated, and the Church's unity expressed in similar Councils. She thankfully acknowledges that the Uniting Churches were members of the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies and she will seek to maintain such membership. She remembers the special relationship which obtained between the several Uniting Churches and other Churches of similar traditions, and will continue to learn from their witness and be strengthened by their fellowship. She is encouraged by the existence of United Churches in which these and other traditions have been incorporated, and wishes to learn from their experience. She believes that Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries, and to this end she commits herself to seek special relationships with Churches in Asia and the Pacific. She declares her desire to enter more deeply into the faith and mission of the Church in Australia, by working together and seeking union with other Churches.

The persons who put those words together should be congratulated. For those of you who have not read the basis of union, I think I could recommend it to this Assembly, and all the people in the Territory and Australia for that matter.

A member: Hear, hear!

Mr BALLANTYNE: I have every faith that for the first time in probably the history of government we have a statutory body put through similar to all Australian states. I commend those people who have worked on it, and wish the Uniting Church every success for its future Christian involvement and relationship with other people of the world.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mr KENTISH: At the last sittings of the Assembly in March, I made some reference to news items that were coming through from East Timor. Broadly, at that time I rejected the allegations of the communist radio of East Timor, allegations which were so avidly lapped up by the media and accepted by many of their readers.

Mr Pollock: Hear, hear!

Mr KENTISH: They were accepted amongst the great majority, or a lot of people apparently, as matters of fact or truth. I pointed out that in my lifetime I have not noticed that the communists pay any respect to truth and, like the old style of assessing weather prophets, you find out what the weather prophet is saying and you work on the opposite if you want to get on well as far as the rain is concerned. I am a bit like that with communist propaganda. I listen to what they have to say and reckon that the opposite is something like the truth.

It was too much for me at that time to believe that the Fretilin forces which had been the main butchers in East Timor before the Indonesians arrived were now telling us over their radio that they were the champions and protectors of the Timorese people. I am

afraid it was too much for my memory and for my knowledge of communist propaganda. I rejected that. Well, in yesterday's paper we have here that the East Timor delegation of diplomats and whatnot, 3 men, will report tomorrow; that is today. But in the meantime, in yesterday's paper, we have a preview or snippets of what they have discovered. It is rather worthy of note what they have discovered. It fits fairly neatly into what I had predicted the position would be about 2 months ago. It says that a large number of East Timorese fled to Australia 2 years ago before the irregular and regular Indonesian troops intervened in the territory's civil war and crushed the left wing Fretilin independence movement. It goes on to remark that 3 diplomats and acting political section chief, Peter Rodgers, went to East Timor and they were there for 5 days. The report says:

It was the longest visit yet to the province by foreign diplomats who were able to visit about 10 towns in all parts of East Timor, including the former Fretilin stronghold of Bobonaro. Fretilin remnants are still roaming the mountain jungles in some areas of East Timor and are also sporadically operating a mobile radio organisation. Mr Hogue and Mr Rodgers visited at least 2 towns which Fretilin recently claimed to have recaptured. Fretilin said the 2 towns had been heavily bombed by the Indonesian force. It is understood that the 2 diplomats did not see any heavy damage such as could be expected after heavy bombardments. According to informed sources, they were able to talk to a great many Indonesian and Timorese people and responsible officials in the area.

We may have more in today's News about the report if it comes forward as suggested. This is confirmation of what I had suspected for several months and gave voice to at the March sittings, that we were not receiving the truth from East Timor. My colleague, the member for Jingili, also spoke about it. I remember him referring to hearing the truth when Pandora's box was opened but he was inclined to think that something

different was the truth at that time. However, it is a good thing that at last we have had what most people must consider to be a responsible report on the area. I hope that we continue to get more responsible reports about what is happening in the area. It may be possible that Australia may find a way to assist these people for whom we have so much sympathy.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to speak on a couple of topics that are bothering me. The first is the reintroduction of the home sales scheme for government employees. The scheme was reintroduced a fortnight ago after being non-existent since the cyclone and since its reintroduction there has been much confusion and many complaints. One would certainly hope that for the citizens of the Northern Territory, and the Darwin area especially because this is where the scheme has ceased to exist for the last two and a half years, life would be running a little more smoothly. However, it has seemed to get a bit more complicated with each issue. If a person wishes to purchase a government house and it has not been cyclone-proofed, then he can buy that house but he cannot borrow the money from the Government to repair that house, and obtaining a second mortgage to build is extremely difficult and also extremely expensive.

Prior to the cyclone, some government employees were given the choice of a house whilst it was under construction and they were allowed to pick out one or the other. Since this particular scheme has been reintroduced, they do not have that choice and they could be forced to buy something they do not really want. They need it but they do not want it. They may have accepted a house valued at \$60,000 because they were paying cheap rental but now, because they have moved into it, they are forced to buy it; they are not given a choice, and this is wrong. At the same time, a person may have moved into a house that only cost \$43,000 but leaks, the light switches do not work, the vinyl tiles in the kitchen are lifting, the sink leaks, the cupboard doors are falling off and they are constantly

trying to get somebody from the department to fix them. They have been given the opportunity to purchase the house but they do not want to. Nobody in the Department of the NT is coming out with a firm policy in this area.

The other thing that is bothering these people is the different interest scales. In fact, it will probably be better for a fellow to drop back a grade and pay a lower interest rate than to stay in the same job. I do not call that improvement of any kind; I call that going backwards instead of forwards.

Almost the same situation comes into operation with the Housing Commission scheme. That scheme has been out of operation for about 5 years but, after a lot of hard work by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government, the scheme has been reintroduced and we are all very happy to see that. However, there are people who have been sitting out there in damaged houses for two and a half years, who want to buy their houses but cannot. They are told: "You can have another one in the same area but you cannot have that house". The person replies: "I have spent \$1,100 on concrete and I have broken my back weekend after weekend putting in some lawn, putting in some shrubs and watering them and paying excess water rates. Why can't I buy that house? We know our neighbours and the kids go to school over the road. Why can't we buy this one?" Unfortunately, the answer is no. At some future date, the Housing Commission may change their minds. This is causing people more suffering. Why can't they make up their minds now and say, "Yes, if you are entitled to buy a house, you can buy any damn house that you want to"? That offer is not given to them. The Housing Commission must first repair that house and the tenant can buy it. Put yourself in the situation of a person who has the expertise to rebuild the house he is living in and who has several friends who are competent tradesmen and can assist him in rebuilding that house more quickly and more cheaply than the Housing Commission. Still the answer is no, I was hoping that, after two and a half

years in this Assembly, we might have been a determining factor in making the lives of the people in our community a lot easier and a lot happier. Unfortunately, that is not so.

As I mentioned in the adjournment debate yesterday, I have problems with the Nakara Primary School, the Brinkin Subdivision and the Alawa oval. I do not know how other members feel but, looking around this afternoon, a lot of people must be quite happy as far as their electorates are concerned. I am not happy with what is going on in my electorate. I am not happy with what is going on in the immediate vicinity around me. We have a job to do and we try to do our best, but we keep on running into brick walls. We talk about the reintroduction of the home sales scheme for government employees. How do we think those people feel? What are they thinking about us? We are an elected body and we are supposed to be helping them but unfortunately our assistance is not going too far. We are getting caught up in red tape. We are getting caught up with various government departments which will not make decisions. We always come back to the same old story - government departments and the Department of the NT in particular.

There are co-operative people in different departments, like Arch Jones from the Reconstruction Commission, but he is leaving us to take up another position in Canberra. I am very sorry to see Arch Jones go. Arch Jones has been a driving force in the DRC since he arrived and took over the post of General Manager. Things were done and people were happy. We now hear that Mr Redmond, Director of the Department of Construction, is leaving us for another post in Canberra. Why are all these good people leaving? We need them. Is it because of the Department of the NT? Is it because of the hierarchy in the Department of the NT where these blokes heads are constantly being bashed against brick walls and they get nowhere?

We can recall the powerhouse crisis when people in the powerhouse were say-

ing, "Things have to change here; we must improve or we will run into problems". Those problems certainly came to the surface and those people were advising the Department of the NT that things were not as they should be. Their suggestions were put in pigeonholes. Will the policies concerning the reintroduction of the home sales scheme be put in the same pigeonholes? I certainly hope that they will not be. Our town is predominantly a public servant town and many of these public servants, after being here for 2 or 3 years, purchase their houses and become permanent members of our community. We need a permanent community in the Northern Territory; we need it for future development. However, whilst they are continually being humbugged about, why should they stay? Why should they help develop the Northern Territory? Nobody can help them with their simple problem and it is only a simple problem. A decision like this would possibly only take a matter of 4 or 5 good working hours of a committee to determine.

Let us revert back to the Housing Commission. The Housing Commission is aware that it has problems in this particular area and it is prepared to examine it. Why doesn't it come out with a much more definite statement and say, "Look, we want to overcome this particular problem and we will solve this problem by having a special board meeting. There are 25 houses involved or there are 125 houses involved or there are 225 houses involved. We can use the resources that we were going to spend on these houses in another area."? The community would benefit and the people who are purchasing their damaged houses would also benefit.

Mr MacFARLANE: Like the preceding speaker, I am not at all happy about the way things are going either and, as this is a grievance debate, I seize the chance to air my grievances. Mr Richard Hall of the Bulletin called the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr "Robert" Viner, on April 23. This is a fundamental error yet Mr Richard Hall is speaking as an authority on the Northern Territory. This is the same article that was referred to by the

Majority Leader yesterday when he answered a question from the member for Ludmilla. This is the second inaccuracy in the one statement and they are both really the result of ignorance similar to that of the author of the "Terrible Top End". These articles are distressing but even Senator Keeffe agrees that the people down south do not know a thing about the Northern Territory.

Mr Perron: He doesn't know anything about it himself.

Mr MacFARLANE: I think he is very right. It is more and more evident and more and more important that ministers get the right advice. Therefore, it is more and more important that this Assembly should be consulted more and more to get our feelings. This is what we are here for.

Mr Pollock: Get rid of them all Mac; let us take over the show.

Mr MacFARLANE: I couldn't agree more.

Mr Pollock: Sack all the ministers; get rid of the lot of them.

Mr MacFARLANE: You still have to deal in the short term with the people who have the Minister's ear. At Alice Springs, at the industry meeting, I saw one of the Minister for the Northern Territory's advisers nodding agreement with the motion of the Majority Leader. This is ridiculous and uncalled for. I can imagine the same person saying to the Minister, "Mr Minister, Les MacFarlane is completely wrong". You know who I am talking about; I am talking about Mr Mailath. What I am concerned about is that, if Mr Mailath thinks something is wrong - and I am using him as an example certainly - the Minister does not come back to this Assembly and find out. He accepts the advice of his adviser and, after all, that is what it is all about. That is what the adviser is there for. The Minister gets the wrong advice and he makes the wrong decision. I like Sir Henry Bolte's formula when he was Premier of Victoria. He said that the public servant was there to provide the background and supply all the details, but

he was there to make the decisions, and he made them.

Getting back to the industry conference in Alice Springs, I was very disappointed and I thought I should be. I called for this conference in December because I wanted it to be held before Christmas. I thought there was an air of urgency about things; cattlemen were going broke and I thought that, if we had a decision at the very latest in early January 1977, we could make some progress towards solving the problems which beset cattlemen for the 1977 season. However, it was called in leisurely fashion by the Cattle Producers Council, for whom I have not got much time, and held in an orderly, leisurely old place in Alice Springs. I have no complaint about the venue; I would not care where it was held. If they wanted to get to the root of the problems, they could have probably held it in Tennant Creek because that is where the cattle population is.

I had no complaint about the venue. However, the secretary of the Cattle Producers Council said that I doubted his bona fides. When you come to think about it, I do. You have got to make your mind up whom you are representing - the producer, the producer-exporter or the producer-processor-exporter. I have no doubt about whom I represent: I represent the producer and, more importantly, I represent the owner-lessee-producer who is the man with his fingers in the vice at the present time. It was a most impressive program set out by the Cattle Producers Council but it did not achieve anything. When I left at half past 12 on the Sunday, because I had a plane to catch soon after and I could not cancel it, we really had not got anywhere. The most important things were not the Minister but market options and markets. The honourable Majority Leader got a motion through early on the Sunday morning which I thought was most timely and most important. It was that, if beef was consigned to a specific market, it could be killed at abattoirs which were not up to US export standards. I will get onto this later.

Probably the most important item of the whole lot was the reconstruction of the Australian Meat Board. When I left, it had not even been discussed; yet the Minister did hold his hand at our request until after that Alice Springs meeting; he did not declare the composition of the new board until after the Alice Springs meeting.

We got onto carcass classification and, if you really want to hear experts, your want to hear these fellows they send up from down south. They are fantastic. I don't know what they pay them for, their expertise or their ability to get the message over, but they are very good. We did not get on to the NT Cattle Price Stabilisation Ordinance 1975, the one passed here over 2 years ago. We got on to the New Zealand buffer price scheme which was quite interesting. Probably the main thing that people came for was to hear Mr McCanley of the Cattlemen's Union of Australia on the practical solutions. The Queensland scheme of orderly marketing is a practical solution and it tied in with the application to the Prices Justification Tribunal for a fair price for beef. I had to leave halfway through McCanley's speech but I know what it was all about. He suggests that cattlemen approach the Prices Justification Tribunal and have that tribunal set a base price for various grades of meat, and then legislation must be introduced to make it unlawful to buy meat at less than the base price. No matter how you attack orderly marketing, money has got to come from somewhere. If you get into the New Zealand scheme, you are looking for hundreds of millions of dollars. If you get the Northern Territory cattle price stabilisation scheme, I think we were talking about \$5.5m just for the Northern Territory. If you get into any other orderly marketing scheme away from this prices justification kick or the Queensland scheme, you are looking for government help and you are not going to get it. Why would cattlemen be going into their fourth year of depressed prices, of ruinous conditions, if the government would help? Now this Government won't help, and the other one didn't either. As a matter

of fact, they helped a bit more than the government we elected.

Other things which were discussed were, I understand, prospects for a cannery and a whole heap of other things. But we got tangled up somewhere along the line at a 2 day meeting. One of the main problems was disease control. As far as I am concerned, there is only one problem and that is lack of markets, and you have got to find them.

There are markets, but cattlemen up here, including the Department of the Northern Territory, have no expertise whatsoever. We can buy expertise but, firstly, where are you going to kill your cattle? If Katherine killed 40,000 head this year and they never have, if Wyndham killed 70,000 head and they never have, if Alice Springs killed 70,000 head and they won't open until July, you would still have a glut of about 150,000 head of cattle. So what do you do with these cattle? The honourable member for Stuart did make a suggestion last year - and people laughed - about shooting them. You might have to do this but wouldn't it be reasonable to suggest that we put them in tins? Wouldn't it be reasonable to suggest that we look for markets and, instead of having to pay for a 303 bullet, try and get a few bob out of them?

Once again, we come back to the question of the advisers. Who advised the Minister for Primary Industry about this scheme that the Majority Leader had passed unanimously at the conference? That is the man we have to beat. The Meat Board might not approve of this. We are not really beating the Minister, we are beating his advisers. We do not want to beat his advisers either, we just want to get our point to the Minister and get him to agree to it because it is sensible. What do you do about these advisers? They have been worrying me for a long time.

Mrs Lawrie: You have been worrying them too.

Mr MacFARLANE: I have been doing my best to worry the Minister's advisers

for a long time because I think it is our function to advise the Minister. When you are in Katherine, it is hard enough to get the message over to your own people up here in Darwin at times, so how you function when you are trying to get the message over from Darwin to Canberra, I do not know. It is pretty hard.

One of the things we must set up here is a committee to find markets for cattle and to buy the expertise to develop these markets. We must remember that we are 2,000 miles closer to the major population centres than anyone else in Australia. This is the advantage that we have and we must exploit it. I feel sure that, if we find markets, we can then have the cattle killed but certainly not at Katherine or Alice Springs or Wyndham because they are already committed and, as I understand it, all the meatworks in Queensland are killing to capacity. I have no doubt that the same is happening in Adelaide; they have no hope of taking any more cattle than they are now. What do you do? Do you shoot them or market them? It is up to this Assembly to devise some means of helping ourselves. We have not got much going for us in the Northern Territory. I suppose we have minerals in the future but our main population seems to be here in Darwin and they are supporting themselves, or the taxpayer is supporting them. The industries in the Northern Territory are minimal - you have cattle, mining, tourism, a bit of fishing, a bit of prawning, but nothing is going too well. The only thing we can do in the short term is to market the surplus beef. It is not the Minister's direct responsibility, it is this Assembly's responsibility, and the sooner we get down to finding some way out of this morass the better.

Mr POLLOCK: I was not intending to speak this afternoon but, after having listened to some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Elsey, I feel compelled to rise and rebut some of the statements that he made. He has mentioned that he called for the beef industry conference last December and it was not until April that the Cattle Producers Council held this meeting in

Alice Springs. Actually they took up the cudgels after several tries to organise the meeting. If the honourable member for Elsey wanted the meeting in December, perhaps he should have got about and organised it himself, rather than leaving it to the Cattle Producers Council or some other interested organisation to take up the cudgels.

I believe the meeting in Alice Springs which was held over 23 and 24 April was quite a successful meeting and that it achieved a good deal more than a lot of people are giving it credit for. It brought together a large cross section of people involved in the industry: farmers from the northern area, the cattle barons of the Tablelands, the pastoralists of Central Australia, the meat exporters, the slaughtermen, government departments, members of this Assembly. Together they rationally discussed a whole range of subjects and finally achieved, I believe, a consensus and a firm basis to move forward to tackle many of the problems which we realise the industry faces and must overcome if it is to succeed. And of course the success of the Territory and the development of the Territory so vitally depends upon it.

It is all very well to get up and complain, but at times I get very upset when people do not realise that a lot of work is being done in relation to these matters. We hear a lot about a cannery. The meeting went on until 4 o'clock on Sunday because of the rather exhaustive program that occurred on Saturday and on Sunday morning too. The chairman cut out the morning tea break on the Saturday morning to be able to spend as much time debating a wide range of subjects, not only just disease control, but other important aspects to the cattlemen - land rights and the matter of freight subsidies and so forth. All these matters were well and truly discussed and at the finish a well-founded uniform consensus was reached and I believe from that we will get somewhere. It was gratifying to see that everybody was there pulling together rather than everybody pulling

apart as so often we do see in the area of primary production. If in nothing more than than, the conference in Alice Springs was successful in that it brought all these people together to achieve success.

The matters of carcass classification, the Meat Board, price stabilisation, were all discussed and I believe that members attending got something out of discussions. As to the marketing authority, I don't know if the honourable member is aware of it, but there is division within the industry as to whether this would be a success, as the honourable the Majority Leader pointed out yesterday. As a result of discussion at the conference, a sub-committee was formed to look into this matter in depth and put up a firm proposal, if one was warranted, in relation to this subject for the Northern Territory. In the lengthy debate at the last sitting, the prospects of markets in the Middle East and in the Southeast Asia region and what the Meat Board was doing in relation to these markets was mentioned. In the past 6 weeks or so, I have carried out quite a number of inquiries and done a lot of work in relation to this.

While in Canberra on other matters, I took the opportunity of going and seeing the Australian Government representative on the Meat Board. In the last day or so, I received a 6 page letter from the Meat Board - and I gave the honourable member for Elsey a copy of it this morning - detailing quite a wide range of activities which the Meat Board are undertaking in these areas and also detailing areas where they intend to expand because they are aware of the possibility of further expanding those markets. We have also received support from the Department of the Northern Territory in having representatives from the Northern Territory attached to a future Meat Board delegation which might be visiting those areas. At the same time we are...

Mr Steele: Too little too late.

Mr POLLOCK: Whether or not it is too little too late, at least we have got

something moving.

Mr Steele: The industry is dead.

Mr POLLOCK: You go and bury it and bury yourself with it. The point is that we must get moving and do everything that can be done to keep the industry going and to give it new blood and new strength.

Getting back to what I was saying about the Meat Board, those representations have been made and I hope that they are successful. At the same time, we are not overlooking the possibility of a meat sales delegation going from the Territory. What is not realised, and I did not really know about it myself until I had gone into it more deeply, is that the exporters are in those areas practically every week. They are trying to build up markets and sell more Australian produce to the consumers in those areas. The point that has been brought home time and time again, particularly in the Singapore market, is that the producers and the suppliers in Australia have not been able to maintain a consistency of product standards. They are not playing their part at this end of the show by producing a standard grade of meat for the consumers at the other end. Consumers get one particular cut one week and they think it is terrific; they order that same thing again and next time they get something that you cannot get your teeth into.

We heard from the exporters the other day at Katherine that they are prepared to stay open all year round if they can get the cattle. The suggestion was made that a lot more cattle might be able to be brought closer to the meatworks and be supplied during the wet season. But, by hell, it did not take long for a whole string of excuses to come out as to why it could not be done. If it is really examined and tackled properly and a bit of cohesion applied, many of those problems could be overcome. Admittedly, at times, assistance is needed from the Government but also the producers have a part to play. I put it to anybody who cont-

inally knocks the conference that occurred in Alice Springs the other week that he needs to think again.

Motion agreed to; Assembly adjourned.

Thursday 5 May 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

(Ten other members having risen in support).

Mr TUXWORTH: I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent my presenting 3 bills together and (a) the 3 bills being read for the first time together and one motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second reading, the committee report stage and the third reading of the bills together; and (b) the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

POISONS BILL

(Serial 178)

DANGEROUS DRUGS BILL

(Serial 188)

PROHIBITED DRUGS BILL

(Serial 189)

Bills presented together and read a first time,

Mr TUXWORTH: I move that the bills be now read a second time.

These bills replace bills of the same name which were under consideration during the first session of this Assembly. Two of the original bills, the Prohibited Drugs Bill and the Dangerous Drugs Bill, required a considerable number of amendments and have therefore been redrafted. In doing so, it was felt that because of the large number of amendments required to the principal ordinances, it would be preferable to prepare the bills in the form of completely new ordinances and this is the form in which they are now presented. The remaining bill, the Poisons Bill,

is unchanged from the original except for one amendment which I will point out in a few moments.

Honourable members may recall that, when the original bills were introduced, it was indicated that their primary purpose was to incorporate in Northern Territory legislation the requirements of the United Nations Convention on psychotropic substances, this being a necessary prerequisite to Australia's formal notification of the convention. Those bills also provided for increased penalties for offences against the respective ordinances and for an extension of police powers in respect of such offences. The bills now before us incorporate the amendments relating to the requirements of the United Nations Convention which were set out in the original bills. Further consideration has been given, however, to the questions of penalties and police powers and the results of the further consideration are now reflected in the new bills. I will say more about this presently when discussing the content of the individual bills. I should indicate to honourable members that the Executive has given close consideration to the level of penalties and the nature of police powers which are incorporated in the bills.

Turning now to the individual bills, I direct honourable members' attention firstly to the Poisons Bill. This is a simple bill that does nothing more than delete all of those substances covered by the United Nations Convention on psychotropic substances in the first schedule to the principal ordinance. These substances are now to be controlled under either the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance or the Prohibited Drugs Ordinance and their inclusion in the Poisons Ordinance is now no longer required. Earlier I referred to a minor amendment which has been made to the original Poisons Bill. That is to be found in paragraph (e) of clause 4 in the present bill and deletes an item in the first schedule to the principal ordinance which was overlooked when the original bill was prepared.

The Prohibited Drugs Bill replaces the existing Prohibited Drugs Ordinance.

nance. The main effect of the bill is to include a number of new substances on the prohibited list which is set out in the first schedule to the bill. The substances added to the list are all hallucinogenic drugs which the United Nations Convention requires to be subject to very stringent controls. Although the convention allows the use of these drugs for scientific and research purposes, there are no foreseeable circumstances where they would be used for such purposes in the Northern Territory. The simplest method of control therefore is to subject them to a total ban.

The bill also includes a number of police powers which are not included in the existing ordinance. At present, police have to rely on powers included in other legislation, for example the Police and Police Offences Ordinance, and these have proved totally inadequate in dealing with drug offenders. The most significant extension to the existing powers of the police is to be found in clause 11 which enables the police officer to enter and search premises without warrant under certain circumstances. Although it is felt necessary to provide police with this power to effectively combat the increasing trafficking of illicit drugs, the need for some kind of safeguard against the possible misuse of this power is also recognised. This safeguard is provided in clause 12 which requires a police officer exercising the power to report the full circumstances of the case to the Administrator in Council and, most importantly, precludes any evidence obtained as the result of the exercising of this power from being tendered unless such a report has been made.

The penalties for offences relating to possession and trafficking etc are set out in clause 20. Honourable members will note these represent a considerable increase over the existing penalties which are a fine of \$800 or imprisonment for 2 years or both. I doubt whether anybody would consider the existing penalties to be adequate, particularly when related to trafficking offences. The enormous profits in the illicit drug trade are well known

and the simple fact is that the present penalties do not act as an effective deterrent. The penalties included in this bill are designed to rectify this and also to distinguish between offences involving trafficking and those involving simple possession. In addition, honourable members will note that the penalty provided for possession of cannabis is lower than that for similar offences involving more dangerous drugs such as heroin.

The third bill replaces the existing Dangerous Drugs Ordinance. In essence, the bill provides for the control required by the United Nations Convention to be exercised over a group of substances defined in the bill as psychotropic substances and listed in the second schedule of the bill. These controls are set out in clause 8 to 22 and include registration of manufacturers' and wholesalers' premises, restrictions on supply by retail, the keeping of records, safe storage requirements and restrictions on advertising. These matters were all covered when the original Dangerous Drugs Bill was introduced into the Assembly and I do not think it is necessary to elaborate on these matters at this time.

Honourable members will note that the provisions relating to opium and other dangerous drugs, namely narcotics, included in this bill are essentially the same as in the existing ordinance. One group of substances, however, the hallucinogens, are excluded from the bill as they are now covered by the Prohibited Drugs Ordinance.

As with the Prohibited Drugs Bill, the Dangerous Drugs Bill includes extensive provisions relating to police powers which are not in the existing ordinance. The 2 bills in fact contain exactly the same provisions in this regard and I therefore feel no comment is needed other than to draw honourable members' attention to this fact.

Similarly, the Dangerous Drugs Bill provides increased penalties for offences involving all types of drugs covered by the bill and again these are in accordance with the penalties provided in the Prohibited Drugs Bill. The

penalty clauses are clause 5, relating to opium, clause 6, relating to the dangerous drugs and 8, 11 and 12 relating to psychotropic substances.

Since these new bills were prepared, representations have been received from the Law Society concerning mainly the offences provisions in the bill. I must advise honourable members that the Executive is considering the points raised by the society and this could result in a small number of amendments being presented during the committee stage. When the original bills were presented to the Assembly last year, it was admitted that they did not remove all of the faults and anomalies in our drugs legislation. The same must be said about these bills. At that time, it was also indicated that a complete review of the legislation was needed and was in fact being undertaken. I am pleased to be able to advise honourable members that quite substantial progress has been made in that work and that the resulting draft legislation should be presented to this Assembly within the not too distant future. To some extent then, the bills now presented are an interim measure only. Nevertheless, they represent a significant tightening up of the law in this area and, on that basis, I commend the bills to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 201)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

A recent decision of the Workmen's Compensation Tribunal has brought into jeopardy certain compensation payments which have been paid in the past. This bill is to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance to prevent such a decision being arrived at by future tribunals. Section 7(1) of the principal ordinance provides for compensation payments for compensable injuries to be paid in accordance with the second schedule of the ordinance. Section 10 of the ordinance provides that, where a

workman sustains certain specified injuries as prescribed in Part I of the third schedule of the ordinance, then compensation shall be paid in accordance with the amounts prescribed in the second column of the third schedule. The ordinance does not state that either provision is mutually exclusive of the other and practice in the past has been that they are not. A recent decision by the Workmen's Compensation Tribunal, however, ruled that the provisions of sections 7 and 10 of the ordinance are in fact mutually exclusive.

The intention of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance is to provide compensation through the provisions of section 7 without affecting an injured party's rights to compensation for certain specified injuries through the provisions of section 10. A workman entitled to compensation for an injury under section 10 should also be entitled to compensation for incapacity under section 7. This policy is followed in other parts of Australia. In New South Wales, the Workmen's Compensation Act 1926 provides quite clearly that a compensation payment for a specified injury shall be in addition to incapacity payment. The Queensland and Victorian acts contain similar provisions. The purpose of this bill is to amend the principal ordinance to clarify the independent relationship which exists between section 7 and section 10 of the ordinance and to ensure that any claims that have been made will not be adversely affected by the tribunal's recent decision.

I turn to the clauses of the bill. Clause 3 provides that payments made under section 7 of the principal ordinance may be paid in addition to other compensation payable under the ordinance. Clause 4 provides that payments made under section 10 of the principal ordinance may also be made in addition to other compensation payable under the ordinance. Clause 5 provides that a claim for compensation shall not be reduced on the grounds that the provisions of this bill were not in operation when the accident which resulted in the claim occurred. Clause 6 provides that workmen's compensation insurance policies currently in force cover the

provisions in this bill and goes on to provide that insurance companies may adjust premiums to recover additional amounts in proportion to the increase in their liability.

In actual fact, past practice has been that, until the recent decision by the Workmen's Compensation Tribunal, it was always understood that payments under section 10 and section 7 of the ordinance were not mutually exclusive, and I understand that workmen's compensation premiums in the past were always calculated with this in mind. Because of that, I would expect that there would be no movement in insurance premiums as a result of this amendment to the ordinance. However, I have applied for a certificate of urgency to be attached to this bill, Mr Speaker, on the grounds that the matter has to be rectified as soon as possible because injured parties could possibly not receive their full entitlement as was intended by legislators in the past if this bill is not passed quickly and assented to. I commend the bill,

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a request for urgency for this bill from the Majority Leader and, under standing order 152, I declare it to be an urgent bill because I am satisfied that the delay of one month provided by standing order 151 could result in hardship being caused,

Debate adjourned.

ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR INTER- GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Dr LETTS: I move that the Assembly appoint Dr Letts to be an observer at meetings of the Advisory Council for Inter-Governmental Relations and empower Dr Letts to appoint another member as his deputy if he is unable to attend a meeting.

Recently, the Commonwealth Government, in fulfilment of a policy which they announced before the last election, passed legislation to establish an advisory council for inter-governmental relations. This council will be widely representative of 3 spheres of government in Australia and of other

sections of the community. The members of the council appointed by the Governor-General include 22 members made up as follows: 3 members of the Commonwealth Parliament appointed on the nomination of the Prime Minister; 2 members of the Commonwealth Parliament appointed on the nomination of the Leader of the Opposition; 1 member of the Parliament of New South Wales appointed by the premier and so on through the other state parliaments, giving 6 state members appointed by the premiers; 6 persons, not being members of parliament, appointed on the nomination of the Council of Local Government Associations; and 5 persons being Australian citizens but not being members of parliament who shall be appointed on the nomination of the Prime Minister, made by him after consultation with the premiers of the participating states. There is very wide representation from Commonwealth, state and local spheres of government. Later on in the Commonwealth act, provision is made for representation by the territories. Both the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory may appoint one of its members to be an observer at meetings of the council.

The council has not yet met but it will have its inaugural meeting next week. It is necessary for a nomination to come from this Assembly. We note that, in other cases, the premier in the state has the responsibility for the appointment. When I looked at the act and from the correspondence which I have had with the Secretary of the Council, it seemed that it would be most logical for the Cabinet Member of this Assembly who has responsibilities for constitutional development to be the person who ought to attend. For the time being, that falls within my portfolio. At the same time, with the Advisory Council intending to meet 4 or 5 times a year, there may be difficulties on occasions which would stop me from going to every meeting. As the act provides for deputies to be appointed for those people nominated from the states, Commonwealth and local governments, it is desirable for us to have provision for a deputy to be appointed from the Northern Territory. That is

included in the motion. We have checked this with the secretary and administratively there are no problems about our being represented by a deputy in the absence of the normal nominee. Just to place on record my intention should this motion be carried, I believe that if the Cabinet Member with responsibilities for constitutional development is not able to attend for some reason, then the person next in line or most appropriate to act as deputy would normally be the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government. Failing that, other possibilities for appointment of deputies would be the Cabinet Member for Law or any of the accredited representatives from this Assembly to the Australian Constitutional Convention because the work of this council will have some relationship to the work of the Constitutional Convention. It is simply a matter of conforming with the federal act and taking advantage of the opportunity which has been provided to this Assembly. I commend the motion.

Mr PERRON: I rise briefly to support the motion. It is very important at this stage of the Northern Territory's constitutional development for this Assembly to be informed of events nationally that relate to the relationship between the Federal Government, the states and local government as a three-tiered governmental system. It is important that we keep up with events. In the past, we have had representation on various Commonwealth-state ministerial conferences and the information that members have obtained from these conferences - and have also in some cases contributed to these conferences - has been invaluable to the Majority Party in keeping abreast of events and having some influence on the national scene. Too often in the past southern newspapers, when one gets one's hands on them, contain more information than we can get sometimes from local government departments. You will find that there is a major initiative taken down south and we get little information about it through official channels in the Northern Territory, and this is very sad.

In this matter, the Advisory Committee on Inter-Governmental Relations

is an important part of the current Federal Government's policy and I think that is very important that we should keep up to date with events because we are, after all, on the road towards statehood ourselves and I do not think it is sufficient that we should just sit by and let the states and the Commonwealth make all the decisions without our knowing what is going on at their consultations and, eventually when the Territory does get statehood, presumably we just have to fall into line with what the states have agreed. It is perhaps unfortunate that our position in this Advisory Council is only one of an observer. Perhaps it is better to have an observer at the meetings than not to have any representation at all. I certainly support the motion and I cannot think of anyone who could better represent the Assembly than our Majority Leader. He certainly has the portfolio that is most relevant to this field of constitutional development. However, I do believe it is unfortunate, not only for the Territory but perhaps for the rest of Australia, that the Northern Territory delegate will not be a full participant. I do believe that we could contribute because we have quite a different relationship with the Federal Government than the states have. I am sure we perhaps have an insight into some activities that the states do not. I am sure our delegates could contribute very handsomely if they were full delegates. However, that is not to be.

Motion agreed to.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS SUBSIDY BILL

(Serial 200)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Miss ANDREW: I move that this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is concerned solely with a name change, the name given to the Government Gazette. Honourable members will recall the efforts of the previous federal government to remove all reference to the term "Commonwealth". Included in that exercise was the

change of name from "The Commonwealth of Australia Gazette" to "The Australian Government Gazette". So that reference in Territory ordinances would be accurate, such references were also changed to Australian Government Gazette. Such an amendment was made to the Petroleum Products Subsidy Ordinance. The title of the Gazette is now being restored to the "Commonwealth of Australia Gazette". As part of the continuing legislative review of Territory ordinances, references have been so amended as they are stated. The reference in the Petroleum Subsidy Ordinance was recently noted and an amending bill prepared. Coincidentally, the Assembly has recently debated and agreed to the need to reactivate the presently dormant legislation. The sole purpose of the bill is to give the correct title to the Commonwealth Gazette, I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

SOIL CONSERVATION AND LAND
UTILISATION BILL

(Serial 187)

Continued from 3 May 1977.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 10 agreed to.

Clause 11:

Mr POLLOCK: I have 2 amendments which have been circulated. The member for Port Darwin pointed out that the proposed subsection (2A) is confusing as expressed. The intention of the new subsection is that the Administrator's Council retain oversight over every exercise of this drastic power. I believe the wording proposed by this amendment will clearly show the intention of the provision.

I move the amendments as circulated in amendment 8.1.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12 agreed to.

Clause 13:

Mr POLLOCK: Two amendments are proposed in clause 13. Firstly, as circulated in 8.2: omit from the proposed section 16A(5) all the words from and including "and the proprietor".

This amendment also stems from comments made by the member for Port Darwin. As he pointed out, the commissioner would not notify the registrar until he was satisfied as to the performance in carrying out the order. The statement that the proprietor is discharged from the obligation to comply is not relevant and it is proposed to omit it. The member for Port Darwin also raised objection to subclause (g). I cannot agree with his remarks. This is a necessary corollary to the power of the commissioner to vary, amend or repeal an order.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr POLLOCK: I move amendment 8.3.

The member for Port Darwin also found some difficulty in the interpretation of subsection (7) relating to the powers of the Supreme Court in an appeal. I accept his criticism and propose to clarify it by this amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14 and 15 agreed to.

Clause 16:

Mr POLLOCK: As a result of criticism from the member for Port Darwin, I examined the definition of "open land". It must be appreciated that there are 3 classes of land: public land, land vested in an authority and open land which is land under any form of private ownership. The distinction is important as it determines who shall be dealt with when action is proposed in respect of any land. I therefore propose the amendment to the definition of "open land" to clearly indicate its meaning.

I move that clause 16 be amended as circulated in amendment schedule 8.4.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to without debate.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS BILL

(Serial 196)

Continued from 3 May 1977.

Mr WITHNALL: I welcome the introduction of this bill because I think the scheme now proposed is better than the scheme contained in the original ordinance, I think the administration of the scheme by committees constituted by a majority of members from the Law Society is quite an acceptable plan.

I have two comments only on the content of the bill. The first relates to the creation of 2 committees. It seems to me that there may possibly be some difficulty in the Law Society providing 2 different persons on each committee. One committee probably would have been able to do the job in my view. The provision of 2 committees does not seem to have been explained by the Cabinet Member for Law and I would like some further clarification on that.

I would also like to draw attention to the provision of the proposed new section 84A(5) which relates to the payment of interest money by the trust committee, and the payment of moneys over \$250,000 for the purpose of assisting in the conduct of a scheme for the provision of legal aid and to assist and promote legal education and legal research. I confess that this is the existing law, but I wonder whether we ought to be providing for the conduct of a scheme for the provision of legal aid when government schemes to that effect are in force in the Northern Territory. While the government

scheme is in force in the Northern Territory, there may be considerable pressure brought upon the committee to pay the surplus amount to the Commonwealth Government in effect for the provision of legal aid by the office of the Attorney-General or the offices of any legal aid department.

I thoroughly approve of the payment of the excess moneys for the assistance and promotion of legal education and legal research. I think that is a very worthy object and I have not the slightest objection to it. I can envisage the committees providing bursaries and exhibitions for students at law in the Northern Territory and indeed there probably is no end to the good that these moneys could do if they were channelled off in this direction. I suggest to the honourable member that she might have a look at subsection (5) of section 84A with a view to removing paragraph (a) of that subsection,

Debate adjourned.

ABORIGINAL LANDS AND SACRED SITES BILL

(Serial 172)

Continued from 3 March 1977,

Mr MANUELL: I hope that I can make some contribution towards the passage of this legislation through this House. I find that I am still reeling in some shell shock from last night's ABC broadcast that was available to any people who happened to listen. I would like my comments to be constructive about this legislation but I find that I will also have to constrain myself because I find it is simply amazing not only that we should have to tolerate the sort of broadcasts that emanated last night from the ABC but also that there should be the opportunity for such broadcasts to take place in the first place. We are a free country and we advocate freedom of expression but this was a blatant, subversive and biased view that tended very closely towards straightout communism. I really do not know where we are going in this country. If we do not put a stop to it very quickly, we may as well step off

and head in some other direction. The program last night was nothing other than an attempt to have this country move further towards the north and perhaps adopt a different colour for its flag. I am just amazed.

Getting back to the legislation itself, I would like to make some reference to the proposed legislation relating to sacred sites and some of the attitudes that are being expressed in various communities. I would rather not be in the position where I had to support this legislation; I would rather be in a position where I could support legislation that was totally ours and not in fact complementary. I believe that this Legislative Assembly should have had the opportunity of legislating for land rights within the Northern Territory for Aborigines. Land matters within the Northern Territory should be rightfully the responsibility of this Assembly. Admittedly, our Federal Government undertakes federal responsibilities and we come under its cloak at the present moment but we have some rights which are rightfully our own. They stem basically from our land. What are we doing if we cannot at some stage accept some responsibility for ourselves and this emanates from our land.

I have no alternative but to support this legislation because, unless we have complementary legislation to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, some areas of responsibility will not be clear cut and confusion will result. No effort has been spared by the Majority Party in offering the Government advice for framing federal legislation on land rights. I never cease to be amazed that there seem to be opinions offered by people that this Legislative Assembly is not concerned with the rights and the interests of Aborigines but I do believe that what we are attempting to do in this Assembly is to preserve the rights of all Territorians, in balance, in perspective, and not having one group suffer at the expense of another. I believe that what we see through some government departments is a blunt refusal to let this Assembly express its responsibility.

There are some parts of the federal act that obviously need clarification and our bill attempts to provide this. We have not indicated to society and members of the Territory and others interested outside our Territory, the need to bulldoze this legislation through. We have given people the opportunity of sighting it, and we are taking our time in discussing the matter by way of debate, and giving all people the opportunity of discussing it clearly and in the open.

I am concerned about some opinions held by some community members and spokesmen for particular groups about entry onto Aboriginal land. I believe that the proposals contained in our legislation offer the opportunity that is required by the traditional landowners - guaranteed and understood security. I think it caters for what they require as their association with their land and yet there are some people who do not quite clearly understand it. I am concerned to read of reports such as the one that appeared in the Centralian Advocate by Mr Neville Perkins, and I would like the House to hear some of that article in case some members did not read this particular edition of the paper. The headline in the paper said: "Perkins wants the right to bar police with warrant". The article reads: "Entry permits to Aboriginal land should be entirely at the discretion of traditional owners, Mr Neville Perkins said this week". I do not think that really departs very much from our legislation. "No exception should be made for police or other government officials as proposed in the land rights complementary legislation now before the Assembly". I take exception to that, Mr Speaker, "Mr Perkins is the ALP spokesman for Aboriginal Affairs and the candidate for the Legislative Assembly seat of MacDonnell". I do not know, Mr Speaker, whether in fact this article is his as an ALP candidate, whether he is speaking in his capacity as an employee of semi-government agencies. It goes on to say: "He said that land councils should issue the entry permits after consultation with traditional owners. The owners should be in a position to decide whether police should be called to Aboriginal land and

whether a police officer should be allowed to stay on it". I take exception to that.

"Police and other government officials should be required by law to state their case to Aboriginal owners and get their permission before entering", Mr Perkins went on to say. He said: "When search warrants are issued by a court authorising police to enter Aboriginal land, the traditional owner should take that into account. However, the owner should be given the right to refuse entry to police officers even if a search warrant has been issued". Where in the hell are we going? How many law systems are we going to have in this country? "Mr Perkins said, 'The ordinance should stipulate that where there is any possible disagreement between law enforcement authorities and traditional landowners, there should be adequate and proper negotiation to resolve the disagreement'. How many systems are we going to set up? Where are we going?

I go back to my comment earlier on and repeat that we should have had one piece of legislation to deal with this matter and that should have emanated from this Assembly. It should not have commenced in my opinion in the Federal House. "The right of traditional owners to grant entry permits must be guaranteed by law". We are doing that. Here it is in a proposal that, if carried, will be adopted by this Assembly. What is Mr Perkins doing?

I feel very strongly that there are so many people who regard themselves as experts in this matter and that it is getting blown out of proportion. We are having people who claim to be Aboriginal now. Once upon a time, they were not Aboriginal; they were European. They are probably descendants of the Aboriginal race. We are all descendants of aboriginals. The word emanated from Rome; the first occupants of Rome were referred to as aboriginals. There are probably some parts of Australia - I was not around to see it and perhaps neither were you, Mr Speaker - where people could be regarded as being aboriginals of Australia who are not,

as we regard it, of the traditional Aboriginal race, and maybe they have white skin and not black. I could not care less whether in Australia we have black skin, white skin, red skin, blue or spots. We are Australians and if we are going to differentiate between one ethnic group and another, we ought to take a close look at ourselves.

I find it very hard to accept the fact that some of our federal colleagues do not quite clearly grasp the problem; and the problem really is that they are so damn far away from us here that they do not really care, they do not really know, and they do not really understand what problems we have. The problems we have are quite clear; they deal with our domestic scene, and that involves the interests of every other resident of the Northern Territory. Like other members, I would not like to see the destruction or the loss of Aboriginal sacred sites. I fully understand the need for some Aborigines to continue their association with their land and its sacred significance for them.

I have quite a number of Aboriginal friends for whom I have a very fond regard and I treasure their company from time to time. However, I am still confused about this matter because I have here a newsletter published in Maningrida, volume 1, page 6. There is no date on this newsletter but it is of recent origin. I would like to read to you some of what is contained in this article. It is supposedly a newsletter. It is supposedly designed to help the people in remoter areas who do not have the opportunity of reading Hansard. These people are attempting to acquaint people with what we are about. Or do they want to destroy what we are trying to do? I quite frankly come to that conclusion after I read articles produced by people like Mr Perkins and others as to what really they are about. Some extracts from this newsletter read as follows:

1. *The Australian Federal Government Canberra has finally accepted that Arnhem Land and some other places belong to Aborigines.*

2. The Northern Territory Legislative Assembly Darwin is now making laws in a bill about entry permits, protection of sacred sites, control of seas and advisory councils.

3. This bill does not give power to traditional owners to issue permits but wants to have people called authorised Aboriginals to give out permits who might not be the traditional owners. The Town Council could not give out permits unless the authorised Aboriginals asked them to.

4. If an authorised Aboriginal wants the government persons leave the person can say, "I do not believe you are the authorised Aboriginal and I can stay here".

5. In this bill, Dr Goff Letts and his party do not want their government to work with the town councils or the southern and northern land councils. They want to set up a new advisory council of authorised Aboriginals to advise the Administrator but he does not have to take any notice of it either. The Administrator can give out permits to lots of people without asking Aboriginals if they want them to come. The police, members of parliament, and some other people will not even need to get a permit to come onto Aboriginal Land. They are not allowed to do this on white man's land. If the authorised Aboriginal person asks them to leave, they can say, "No, I have not finished my job", and stay there.

7. If there is a sacred site which is not on land which the Government has given to Aboriginals, you will have to tell the Administrator where it is, put up signs and tell him secret things. If the Administrator decides not to look after it, then you cannot take the matter to court.

8. If you want to stop people coming into the sea near your land, you can ask the Administrator to close the waters. If he decides to close it, you can give permits to people who want to come in. If the

Administrator decides not to close the water, then you cannot take the matter to court.

9. Above all, the bill is taking away some of the power and pride of Aboriginal people by giving power to the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

What a load of tripe! How long do we have to put up with this? Okay, so we are fortunate enough not to encounter it in one respect, but I think that on the other hand we are fortunate enough to be able to encounter it now and again, because we can become acquainted with the type of people who are circulating such material and are having an influence on these people, and a very undesirable influence.

In the time that I have left, I would like to get down to a few specifics in terms of sacred sites and entry permits. I think there will be speakers following me who are more able to deal with it constructively, people like the honourable member for Arnhem who has wide - ranging experience with Aboriginals. However, one of the things that does concern me is the question of entry permits. We must have a system that must be well - founded and I believe, in our legislation, we are virtually acknowledging the usefulness of council construction. We are suggesting that there should be a close association between councils and traditional owners and that the traditional owner may delegate authority for entry permits. These permits should emanate from one focal point and, under present circumstances, the councils are the best people to operate this.

If there are other suggestions coming forward, I am sure that we are prepared to listen and heed. But what we want to do is to operate with a satisfactory system. I am certain that the question of entry onto Aboriginal land is perhaps not as hysterical as is being made out by some members of tribes, and some traditional owners, who would have no hesitation in permitting entry onto Aboriginal land. Nevertheless, if traditional land is granted to the Abori-

ginal, the legislation has been framed so that the right is there for the traditional owner to manage this piece of traditional land.

In relation to sacred sites, I am a little concerned about the number of fences and signposts that we may see around the countryside as times goes by. It may be exaggerating a little, but you could get a stampede at night and you might find your ringer in a 6 foot cyclone fence with a sign marked on it. I can remember some blokes riding through timber country down south having to go through those big spinifex spiders between the trees. We could find ourselves in a similar situation. If that was the case by remote chance, I wonder whether the person would be committing a crime by actually going on to the sacred site. I have no objection to the proposals for the identification of sacred sites and their relationship to traditional owners.

This reminds me of the question of the 2 - kilometre limit from the shore. I am led to believe that there are some instances where some of the sacred sites are outside the 2 - kilometre mark. I do not think that we as an Assembly will limit it to the 2 kilometres if in fact the sacred site is 4 kilometres from the low water mark. The object of the exercise is to preserve the sacred site for its sake. I do not think the object of our legislation is to say that we are going to give in excess of 70% of our Northern Territory coastline to the Aboriginals on an arbitrary basis. There must be some reason for it.

Then there is the ever increasing problem of the identification of sacred sites. I am a little confused because it is my understanding that many Aboriginals would not want their sacred sites identified in any case because the very identification of them by sign posting or security fences would be in itself a transgression of their culture. Further, we have vandals in this nation of ours and, once you stick a signpost up, the first thing they want to do is knock it down. If we have signposts out in the scrub, the law ab-

iding citizen is not going to worry because he can see the site is identified and signposted: "This is an Aboriginal sacred site; keep out". But then you get the individual who, having seen that sign put up, will want to knock it down or throw a stone at it or shoot it with a rifle. How many road signs do we see along the Stuart Highway, new luminous road signs, with the 0 shot out of the middle? They are not there for more than a day or so before they are shot at. A similar situation must be considered surely if we put signs up to identify these sacred sites. What happens about their destruction or interference by people who want to meddle and interfere? If it happens, the sign posting has to be replaced at some stage. Who maintains it and on what basis is it maintained? Who maintains the inspection? Is it left to the individual traditional landowner or is it undertaken by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs or some other government body?

If the sacred site is not identified clearly because the sign has depreciated through weathering and somebody transgresses the sacred site because there is no sign left there, what happens then? Does he plead innocence because the site is not identified quite clearly? He might be someone from Melbourne or Sydney who does not know anything about sacred sites. I believe we have to look at all these aspects. I am still not quite clear in my own mind what is the most satisfactory way to arrange it. Again, I wonder whether in fact a lot of the traditional owners would really want their sacred sites widely and clearly advertised.

A member: They do not have to be. It is up to the people themselves. It is optional.

Mr MANUELL: Exactly, and for that reason, our legislation gives them that opportunity. I believe that our complementary legislation is providing the traditional landowner with the degree of flexibility that he requires. I do not believe that it is inflexible but, for some reason or other, immediately we start to legislate in a comple-

mentary manner and within the terms that have been discussed by the Majority Leader and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Ian Viner, we start to be criticised. I do not believe we need to be criticised unless our legislation is not providing what it sets out to do in terms of providing for the interests of all people within the Northern Territory. I sincerely hope that this Assembly will be able to pass this legislation and that it will receive Federal Government assent. If it does not, we should toss the whole thing overboard and forget it but, if we do, we will not be discharging our responsibilities to all residents of the Northern Territory.

Mr KENTISH: I rise to remark upon this bill. It is a little soon yet to say that I support the bill which we all admit may be subject to change from its present form. However, observations so far seem to indicate that the greater proportion of the bill will find favourable reception with the Aboriginal people concerned or, at least, those that I have met. About 2 weeks ago, I attended a meeting at Yirrkala of the Arnhem Central Council where 13 centres met to discuss the bill and other problems that they have. At Yirrkala were 2 representatives from the town councils of Roper River, Numbulwar, Umbakumba, Yirrkala, Elcho Island, Lake Evella, Milingimbi, Maningrida, Goulburn Island and Croker Island. The Oenpelli representative was not at the council.

I explained to the people gathered there that, in considering the bill, they should not regard it as a fait accompli, something wished on them and unchangeable and inexorable, but something that would need their comment, something on which their opinions were required. They seemed to have that idea already and there was quite a lot of opinion given at that meeting, a good deal of talk about the various things.

One of the first things we deal with in this bill is entry onto Aboriginal land which is still a very important question with the Aboriginal people. After a great deal of discussion among-

st the people and some of their misconceptions and misunderstandings had been ironed out, the finding of the meeting was that, basically, the issuing of permits should remain with the traditional owner of the land who would delegate authority to the appropriate town council and to others through the town council. The chain of delegation would be from the traditional owner to the town council and to other individuals, and to the Northern Land Council from the town council. That was the conclusion they reached. The Administrator, they said, can give out conditional permits to certain persons as required in the bill. They agreed that would be necessary, but they considered that the traditional owners should be able to revoke permits if conditions were broken or otherwise at the discretion of the traditional owner,

They took strong exception to the "authorised Aboriginal". I think the main trouble appeared to be that the word "authorised" is a new word to them; many do not understand it thoroughly and it conjures up visions that they do not like. They rejected the words "authorised Aboriginal", I pointed out to them something that was in the Maningrida paper that the member for Alice Springs quoted from. There was a word there about permits and this came out a week or two before the meeting. This paper says: "This is a notice to inform people on how to get permits to enter Maningrida and various outstations around Maningrid. Many years ago there was not any opportunity for Aboriginal people to have a say on who entered their land. Today, I believe that both Aboriginal and Islander societies should know and understand that entering into Aboriginal places is very important. People who want to visit certain outstations should at least ask permission from the traditional landowner of that place. This will make life a lot easier for the outstation people and prevent them from feeling angry and upset." The next part is important: "To get permits to enter Maningrida, you should contact the people who have been elected by the community council. These people were elected to issue all permits for this

area. They are Joseph Mangiyja, Don Weibauanga and Milark Winunguj. If residents of Maningrida want their friends to come to spend holidays here, they should see these people to obtain a permit. This is very important to know and I hope I have made myself understood. Signed, Milark Winunguj".

I knew the situation fairly well in this particular area but I enquired at the meeting whether any of those three were the traditional landowners at Maningrida and they were not. The top man at Maningrida, whose word is law in these matters, is called "Old Willy". He has the final say in these matters but he asked the Town Council to take this matter off his shoulders and to appoint 3 people who would attend to permits for the Maningrida area. These people were given authority by the Town Council. They were in fact authorised Aboriginals. I explained to the people at the meeting that these people were in fact authorised Aboriginals but were not traditional owners. They saw the point but they still did not like the term. It is interesting to find this place has come to its own arrangement without consulting the bill that has been put forward. However, I think that this basically is in accordance with the legislation which has been put forward.

There appears to be no conflict in what the people require and what the legislation has provided. There may be some small variations in different applications that would want revising but the crux of the matter is there, I understand that the committee from Canberra favoured the idea that the initial responsibility for issuing permits be with the Northern Land Council and Southern Land Council, not with town councils or traditional owners. These people have flatly contradicted that idea and it was not due to any oratory of mine. I went there mainly to listen and I only gave advice when asked.

Last night, I listened to something like 3/4 hour of a radio speech. At one point, the question was raised as to what was being done with the issuing of permits. Someone who was being questioned by the compere of the show rep-

lied that the Legislative Assembly was trying to take the issuing of permits away from the land councils and give it to public servants. This is quite contrary to what the bill provides and I would think that the person who made that statement would certainly know that it was a deliberate lie. I listened to 3/4 hour of insidious, malicious and lying propaganda - communist propaganda, I would say, by its insidious nature. It was very detrimental to the Territory and to the people of the Territory. Apparently, we are all racist in the Territory. Why some people should insist on fixing this brand, I do not know. They would have an ulterior motive but it would certainly not be connected with the truth of the situation. After listening to 3/4 hour of this garbage, I came to the conclusion that we have 2 dangerous and poisonous kinds of vipers in the Northern Territory: one is called the taipan and the other goes by the name of Geoff Eames.

We come now to a consideration of the protection of sacred sites. The meeting considered this at great length and talked about all manner of possibilities. They came finally to the very simple conclusion that in the protection of sacred sites and the identifying of sacred sites, the initiative should be left with the traditional owner - a very simple thing indeed.

Looking at some of the commentary on the bill, I read that the "authorised Aboriginal" may also let other people issue permits for him. He may give that right to another person or a body; for example, the land council for that area. If he wishes, he can ask the Administrator to furnish details of the people who may give his permission to enter that area or any restrictions on their power to give permission. In all cases, it will be seen that the emphasis in the bill is on giving to the traditional owner the power to determine who shall enter his land and what conditions shall be applied. The traditional owner is free to decide whether he wants to use this power himself or, as at Maningrida, have another person or body do it for him. We have seen an example of how that has been

done. That appeared to be almost exactly what this meeting at Yirrkala decided.

Regarding sacred sites, again it says: "The emphasis in the bill is on the right of traditional owners to determine what shall happen on their land." That forms a commentary on the bill as presented to this Assembly. It is most interesting to note that the meeting at Yirrkala arrived at exactly the same conclusion. They said, "leave the initiative with the traditional owners". They appear to agree with the bill on that.

It was mentioned to them by the Northern Land Council lawyer who was present there, Mr McGill, that the Museums Board had put up a submission to the parliamentary committee from Canberra that all sacred sites should be listed and a central registry kept of all the sacred sites and their whereabouts and all the myths and legend pertaining to them and so on. That submission was made known to the meeting. However, they rejected it entirely; they would not have a bar of that at all, perhaps for the reason that the member for Alice Springs mentioned this morning, that they do not want their sacred sites to be made public and they do not want a central registry listing them. They are sacred to a point that they want no one to know about them, except authorised Aborigines which would mean that other Aborigines in the tribe had knowledge of these things.

They came to discussion on the sea waters, and that went on for a long time. A great many viewpoints were given on this; it is the most difficult question of all. The other points of view seem to be easily compatible with the bills to hand, but it is obvious that the people have been misled about the meaning of these bills and I was glad that I was at the meeting to put straight some of the misconceptions. While I listened to the show last night, it was easy to pinpoint the people who have been misleading them about the correct meaning of these bills. I have a letter here from Goulburn Island:

We have been closely following the developments over the last weeks with regard to the complementary land rights legislation and cannot help but feel that our case has not been adequately considered. We live on a very small island and the sea is of great importance to us. Its harvest is necessary to our daily survival. Without our fish and turtle and dugong and crab, we would have to change our entire way of living but also we would have to change our place of living. With the products of the sea denied to us or exploited by others for mere financial gain, without consideration for our livelihood, we would be forced to go and live elsewhere. We did not consider that 2 kilometres restrictions on commercial fishing was adequate protection. Even that has been all too frequently ignored by fishermen. We consider it unjust and quite intolerable if any thought whatever should be given to waiving that protection for our community.

I have been instructed by the clan of Warawi Council and the community members to inform you that we would consider it a violation of our natural and traditional rights if any legislation is passed which places our community in jeopardy by neglecting our needs in order to offer others the opportunity for financial gain. We ask that you make the contents of this letter and the determination of our people to maintain their traditional rights known to the members of the Legislative Assembly. We cannot survive without the sea and we will not let it be taken from us and our children to come.

It is signed, George Winungudj, the council president, and Phillip Mugalnir, the secretary. I think that letter is typical of the point of view of most of the people who live on the coast. There is some talk at times about protecting sacred sites, about snakes coming up out of the sea in times past, old legends and myths connected with the sea. But, by and large, I would think that 90 per cent of the talk advanced about the preserving of certain areas for them is connected

with sea food. That is typical of the point of view expressed at the meeting I attended. The question of sea food seemed to predominate.

I did point out to the meeting that the legislation in that respect had a certain amount of flexibility about it so that, although they had to apply for a closure of sea waters to fishing within their area, the determined area and distance from their coast could be flexible because the needs would vary with different places and for different reasons. They seemed to accept at the meeting the opinion advanced by a man from Croker Island, that he did not mind people travelling through the waters because they were open to sea traffic. Leisure craft or sea travellers could use these waters but the thing that they appeared to be most concerned about were the commercial fishermen, some of whom have had very little etiquette in coming into the bays of some of these settlements. They come into the mission bay or settlement bay, lower their nets, clean out everything in the bay and go off. I heard that that has happened on one or two occasions and the people feel very badly about it.

They considered the provision in the legislation for an Administrator's Advisory Council to indicate to the Administrator how the legislation was proceeding. There was some talk about it but there appeared to be little enthusiasm for this provision. The conclusion of the meeting finally was that they would communicate later with the Majority Leader after further discussions. Thus, that question was left hanging till they have gone home and talked to their land councils.

That is all I have to say about this bill except that I feel optimistic that we can reach a satisfactory conclusion that will be readily acceptable to the people who live in the Territory. In its application to the sea, which is the most vexed question, it concerns mainly the people on the coast. It is unfortunate that, in our dealings with the people concerned, we are sidetracked, humbugged and circumvented in many ways by other people who obviously are

out to mislead and misrepresent what is intended in the legislation.

Debate adjourned.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr WITHNALL (by leave): I present the report of the Privileges Committee dated 5 May 1977.

Mr KENTISH: I move that the report be adopted.

Considerable thought was given to this question and a good deal of precedent was heeded. After careful consideration, it would appear that that was the only conclusion that the Privileges Committee could arrive at and I support the finding of that committee.

Motion agreed to.

DARWIN CYCLONE TRACY RELIEF TRUST FUND

Mr EVERINGHAM (by leave): I table the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund monthly reports for October, November and December 1976 and January, February, March and April 1977.

Mrs LAWRIE: I move that the reports be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 201)

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to support the bill and to indicate that the sponsor of the bill had the courtesy to discuss this bill with myself and other members before presentation. It was only introduced this morning and I have always resisted any attempt by this House to introduce legislation and pass it on the same day. However, having regard to the circumstances and the hardship that would be caused if this legislation was not passed immediately, I indicate my support.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS BILL

(Serial 196)

Miss ANDREW: I would like to thank the honourable members who have spoken on the bill. In my reply, I would like to make some observations about what they have said. The 2 committee system was mentioned by the honourable member for Port Darwin this morning. These 2 committees have separate functions and, traditionally, in most states, these functions are dealt with separately. One is for the collection and investment of deposits and the other is to deal with claims resulting from defalcations by legal practitioners. In fact, in the Northern Territory it would be possible for the Law Society to have on these 2 committees the same nominees. Notwithstanding this, I accept that there is much good sense in the comments made by the honourable member for Port Darwin. However, I am anxious for this bill to be dealt with at this sittings as it is proposed to bring the trust fund and fidelity fund schemes into operation on 1 July 1977. The amendments needed to establish one committee would be substantial and would have to be dealt with at a later sittings. However, I will undertake to look at the matter very closely and hold discussions with him before the next sitting.

Regarding his second point, which was in reference to section 84 (A) (5), I think it is going to take a long time before we get \$250,000 in the fidelity fund and I would hope that, by that stage, we would indeed have control of legal aid through this Assembly.

Turning to the comments made by the honourable member for Jingili, a private practitioner has raised for consideration possible difficulties that may arise should a practitioner cease to practise through the occurrence of some unexpected event - for

example, as the honourable member said, on death - as a result of which no one may be available to withdraw trust moneys deposited with the trust fund committee. I understand that this matter has been considered by the Law Society, but where this occurs it will normally be possible for either a personal representative of the legal practitioner concerned or a receiver to be appointed to withdraw the money from the Trust Fund. It is suggested that there may be some delays before such an appointment occurs and I am giving consideration as to whether a further amendment to the ordinance may be necessary to deal with this eventuality. If it is thought necessary, I will seek to introduce legislation at a later date. I would prefer not to deal with this matter in the present bill as I think it requires considerable consideration and I look forward to the passage of this bill and the implementation of these schemes. I commend the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.

New clause 5A:

Miss ANDREW: I move that the new clause 5A be inserted in the bill.

This is considered necessary as it is incorrect to describe contributions to the fidelity fund committee as being payable to the Master.

New clause 5A agreed to.

Clause 6 agreed to,

Clause 7:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 9.2.

This amendment is designed to substitute a new subsection (4) in a new section 79A to provide that the trust committee is to comprise the Master and two legal practitioners appointed by the council of the Law Society rather than just the Law Society.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 10 agreed to.

Clause 11:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendments 9, 3 to 9.8.

These 6 amendments to new sections 84 and 84A are designed to make it clear that the interest received by the trust committee includes income earned from the investment of moneys deposited with the trust committee. It will also delete the proposed requirement that the interest must be paid into a separate bank account as that seems to be unnecessary.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 9.9.

This amendment to section 86 is in relation to the fidelity fund committee, a similar amendment to that under 9.2 in relation to the trust fund committee. It provides that 2 legal practitioner members are to be appointed by the council of the Law Society.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 13 and 14 agreed to.

New clauses 14A, 14B and 14C agreed to without debate.

See Minutes for text of new clauses.

Clause 15 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

AYERS ROCK - Mt OLGA NATIONAL PARK

Continued from 4 May 1977.

Mr POLLOCK: This report was tabled in the House of Representatives and I believe that Cabinet will shortly be considering many aspects of the report. The Ayers Rock-Mt Olga National Park is one of the world's and definitely one of the Territory's most significant national parks. It is very important that this significance be recognised and that the environment and characteristics of the place be cared for. At the same time, the public should have the opportunity to be able to visit the area and be provided with appropriate services.

The Ayers Rock-Mt Olga National Park was dedicated to the care and control of the Northern Territory Reserves Board in 1958, when visitors were estimated at about 2,000 persons per year. Numbers have increased over the years and, in the 10 years from 1967, it is estimated that some 423,000 people have visited the national park. The Reserves Board estimates that, in the forthcoming 10 years, a total of 1,423,000 people will visit the national park. In the 10 years or so that I have been going to the park - 21,515 visited the park in 1967/68 and it is estimated that some 64,000 people will attend this year - I do not think the facilities have greatly altered, particularly motel accommodation. There has been an improvement in camping area facilities but, in general, the matter has been not so much in a state of limbo as in a state of inaction.

The problems grew along with the number of people visiting. In 1968, consultants were engaged to study and make reports on the future of the park. At the time, we had huge reports on what could be done in the area - proposals for a new village complex and the long-awaited road, which do not seem to be any further advanced than in those earlier days. We have had many proposals and schemes put forward and it looked as if some of these might really get off the ground and that the area would be developed. But, alas, that has not been the case and things have continued to stagnate. There is growing concern amongst Territorians and people so vitally concerned with it, like the Reserves Board and the tourist industry and, as a result of discussions which

were held between various people, a proposed essential interim works program was prepared by the Northern Territory Reserves Board. This was prepared in November 1976. This report outlined many of the problems confronting us at Ayers Rock, some very important problems too. It pointed out the problems in relation to the access roads, the feeder roads, the circuit roads to the Rocks, the Sunset Strip road, the pedestrian tracks, if you can say there are tracks there - I think that the people walk anywhere and cause a lot of damage to vegetation over extensive areas. It referred to the electricity situation where we have everybody there generating their own electricity with a great number of generating sets. At any given time, 10 diesel generators can be operating separately and at night the noise pollution from that is significant. There is also visual pollution from the extensive overhead fuel tanks in the area. The problems in relation to the high maintenance cost of each of these generating sets needs to be seen to be believed.

The sewerage system at the Rock is ineffective and inoperative. Inoperative septic systems require pumping, generally into adjacent ground and this causes health hazards. Every facility at the Rock is operating its own septic and sewerage system and of course they tend to break down. The water supply has always been a terrific problem at the Rock, whether it is the bores, the water quality, the insufficient surface storage or the lack of management in the use of the water which has been a continual problem over the years. This will be a serious problem when we get the number of people it is projected will be going to the Rock. It is a major problem which must be solved.

More and more people are going there by road. Whether or not they believe the standard of the road is sufficient to get them there or not, they travel to the Rock and they camp there. The camping areas have been a problem because of the lack of facilities that can cope at peak period times such as during the August-September school holidays. To effectively operate the park, you need staff. If you have staff

in a locality such as the Rock, they need to be housed and the existing staff accommodation at Ayers Rock principally consists of caravans and bungalows of a standard in which, in many respects, you would not want to have to put your dog. The solid waste disposal in such an area is also a problem.

All these problems are recognised by the Reserves Board and many other people connected with the facility and they have been working to find a solution. Many of the problems, if not all of them, can be solved with rational thinking, but all this requires an amount of money. Among things to be considered is a central power station which would provide all the facilities at the Rock with electricity at the one central place and would be a much more effective and efficient operation. Sewerage could be treated in much the same way. The water supply problem could be overcome by more production bores, better storage and new management procedures for usage. The camping areas could be upgraded with more cooking facilities and ablution blocks. Staff housing could be improved. The roads in the area around the Rock could be perhaps sealed and better constructed so that they do not have a terrific dust problem and the roads do not just go anywhere and everywhere, damaging the general environment.

The ultimate village complex is at least another 10 years away. Of course, if they have to wait for another 10 years, the existing facilities at the Rock will not be adequate to cope with the growing visiting population. Recognising that, the board prepared an essential interim work program. It believed that, to carry out the program which it has prepared, it would require \$3,561m but it could get away with \$2,280m. It proposed a quarterly allocation of expenditure, with a total expenditure in the 1977-78 financial year of \$1,611,000 and the remaining \$669,000 being spent in the following financial year. This money was required for the upgrading of the sewerage, electricity, staff housing, camping, garbage, tracks, roads and communications. Communications with Ayers Rock are always a problem. The radio tele-

phone system is perhaps much better than a message stick but it is still not the optimum. The money is also required for rehabilitation of the area which has been damaged by actions of people because the Reserves Board did not have the physical resources to control some of the things that have happened there. Money is also required for water reticulation, the control station, the display area, and to adequately care for and advise the visitors to the area. All this comes to some \$2,280m.

Having prepared all that and submitted it to the Government, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation came onto the scene. This committee examined the report and a subcommittee came to the national park. The standing committee examined the Reserve Board's lengthy report and virtually adopted it holus-bolus. It recommended to Government that it take appropriate action to implement the report. The recommendations of the committee were: the Northern Territory Reserves Board commence during the 1977-1978 financial year essential interim work at the park; the Australian National Park and Wildlife Service devise and implement quickly a comprehensive management plan for the park during the 1977-1978 financial year; the commencement of the new airstrip outside the park boundaries; and, during the 1977-1978 financial year, the commencement of the sealing of the Eridunda-Ayers Rock road.

If there is anything to be disagreed with there, it perhaps is only in relation to the new airstrip. The removal of the airstrip some distance from the existing facilities will cause problems. Perhaps the committee has not entirely recognised that the closeness of the present airstrip to the present facilities does result in a considerable saving to all the local operators. If the airstrip was removed some 15-16 kilometres away, this would cause problems, especially if there was no communication between the existing facilities and the new airstrip.

Despite these recommendations, we have the disturbing news that one of

the senior officers of the Department of Housing and Environment went to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Conservation and gave the view just off the top of his head that the Reserves Board could get by with \$500,000. The Reserves Board has detailed, right down to the very cent, that it needs \$2.281m and we have some government official in Canberra telling the committee that the Reserves Board can get away - without any reference to anybody; no discussion, no figures, no feasibility - with half a million dollars. How ridiculous!

At this very time, when these remarks are still so ingrained into the feelings of anyone who has anything to do with this report, we have this submission going to Cabinet in relation to what moneys will be allocated to the Northern Territory Reserves Board for the implementation of that essential works program. It is of great concern that the Department of Environment will in its submission to Cabinet through its senior officer - he is the senior officer who is advising the Minister and is not likely to change his mind overnight - will not support the Department of the Northern Territory and others in the application for the \$2.281m, but only for half a million dollars. Now half a million dollars in the next financial year is not going to achieve anything. The situation at Ayers Rock is not going to be any better in 18 months time than what it is now unless the Reserves Board is provided with the money to get on with the job of upgrading the facilities.

I went out to Ayers Rock on Anzac Day. The morale of operators and people there is getting lower and lower. In fact, one of the operators has put his place up for sale because he is heartily sick and tired; he has given up hope that anything proposed in relation to the improvements at the Rock will ever be implemented. You cannot blame him when you have these officials advising the Ministers and the departments that the Reserves Board can get away with some 20 per cent perhaps of what the board estimate they really need. Somebody has just not got his priorities in the right place. I know for sure that it is not myself and the

people involved in the program who have not got themselves in the right priority structure. When we look through the committee's report and its conclusions, we find that it backs up the chapter and verse of everything the Reserves Board is saying needs to be done. The committee considers that the Reserves Board should continue to be directly involved when park administration and policy formulation become the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. "The prime responsibility is to ensure that the Ayers Rock-Mount Olga National Park does not deteriorate for want of attention and tourists are not discouraged through the absence of reasonable facilities". It believes that the relocation of the village is some 7 or 8 years away but the Reserves Board has a prime responsibility to ensure that the park does not deteriorate for want of attention. It will deteriorate if the funds are not provided.

One important aspect of the committee's report and recommendation is in relation to the Erldunda-Ayers Rock road.

Mr Vale: Not as much traffic as Yuendumu.

Mr POLLOCK: A lot more traffic than Yuendumu. The Ayers Rock-Erldunda road is referred to in paragraph 44 of the report. "Access to the park from the Stuart Highway is by Erldunda-Ayers Rock Road. Parts of this road have been described as the most dangerous in Central Australia. The sub-committee was told that conditions have led to injuries and costly damage to vehicles. The Reserves Board claim that park management was made difficult because many visitors, after driving on the road, arrive at the part in an irritable condition. Many bus-borne tourists arrange to fly out rather than travel on the road again. There is no doubt that the existing road makes travel to the Rock difficult and unpleasant. The Department of Industry and Commerce urge that an improved road may increase the number of tourists and exert pressure on the already inadequate facilities at the Rock. The committee's view is that many tourists are unaware of the real nature of the road until

they have completed the forward journey. An upgraded road would not influence numbers greatly." Whether it would influence numbers greatly or not, I can assure this House that it is at times quite a torturous journey from Erldunda through to the Rock. Anything that can be done to implement the proposal to upgrade that road and bituminise it would be appreciated. "The Committee considers that there is no alternative but for the road to be sealed and rerouted so that it passes near the proposed new village and air strip. The committee believes the construction of this road would encourage commencement of the air strip and the village." We all hope for the new village but whether the new road will bring that more quickly or not remains to be seen.

"The committee re-examined proposals to move the ring road away from the Rock and considers that such proposals are of low priority. The committee is sympathetic to the arguments advanced in favour of leaving the road alignment unchanged. These are that the existing alignment provides the greatest visitor satisfaction and that there is a danger of people driving off the road if the road is moved several kilometres from the rock."

Mr Steele: Why not move the rock?

Mr POLLOCK: We had some peanut the other week wanting to use it as an uranium dump.

What we really get down to in the report is the recommendation which I read earlier: "The committee therefore recommends that the Commonwealth Government provide the necessary finance to enable the Northern Territory Reserves Board to commence during the 1977-78 financial year essential interim work at the park". Having said all that, it leaves me little more than again to call on the Government and the Ministers and those responsible to act responsibly and ensure that no harebrained ideas of cutting expenditure in relation to proposed essential interim work at Ayers Rock-Mount Olga National Park are entertained in any shape or form. I know the Reserves Board itself is very concerned about the matter and yester-

day telegraphed the Minister expressing its concern and no doubt that matter will be referred to in later debate.

Just before closing, I should display this cartoon. It has been prepared by staff of the Reserves Board or somebody associated with the system and shows a set of scales. On one side it has voluminous copies of reports and investigations all weighing down and on the other side we have: "Progress - SFA".

Mr MANUELL: I do not wish to occupy this Assembly's time by emulating the Cabinet Member for Resources but I feel compelled to rise and lend my support to the motion. I would strongly recommend that this report be adopted and that works to commence upgrading of the Ayers Rock - Mount Olga National Park be implemented as soon as possible. I do sound a note of warning that, unless the work is conducted in a organised manner, we will find some difficulty being experienced at the Rock by operators. I note that one of the recommendations is that the airstrip be re-sited some considerable distance from the Rock. That means that it will be quite a way from the existing accommodation facilities. This in itself will create some disenchantment among the operators and frustration for people visiting the Rock. I do hope that this report is adopted and that there is no follow-up report by any other committee to confirm the reports that have already been made by various organisations and departments to the various houses of parliament.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is not often that I stand in this place to express satisfaction at the fact that a report of an inquiry is being discussed. This is one of the exceptions. When the committee of the 28th Parliament made its recommendations on 17 March 1976 and the subcommittee decided to make its investigations on 23 September 1976, we really couldn't expect miracles to transpire within that time. What I do find encouraging is that a Parliamentary committee is inquiring into the results of its own recommendations. This not only brings to the attention of the Parliament the progress or otherwise of the standing committee but also brings

it to the attention of the public and can result in debates like this and in the wide publicity given to this subcommittee report in the Northern Territory press. I would hope that this particular committee of the Federal Parliament will continue periodically to review its own recommendations and to make comment upon what has been done in respect of those recommendations. It is a rather magic pressure group. The report itself doesn't really give us great deal of room for optimism. Probably the honourable Cabinet Member for Resources wasn't bearing in mind in some of his comments the very brief period between the original report and the subsequent report.

Having made general comments, I would like to refer to a couple of sections but there really is not a great deal left that has not been covered. I have crossed most of mine out so, if I am somewhat hesitant, it is because I am trying to catch up with what is left of the debate. Perhaps we might tie recommendations 12 and 17 together as they relate to planning. It is interesting to note that, in this particular financial year, not only haven't we seen any implementation of the planning side of the recommendations, we have not seen any funds for the actual formulation of those plans. There again, we all wonder exactly who will authorise the plans. In the same manner, I suppose we will wonder who will authorise the routing of the roads. While I welcome this committee, I think that, once again, we are seeing proliferations of various views and opinions put forward without anyone finally taking the bull by the horns and saying how it will be done.

In respect of this particular report, I cannot see who will make the final approval of the plan required under the National Parks and Wildlife Services Act and the plan in relation to the roads. We have the Ayers Rock Advisory Committee on the one hand and the Reserves Board on the other. The latter will be somewhat weakened in its role in the Ayers Rock-Mt Olga National Park area upon the gazettal of the national park complex under the federal act. We also have the Department of Northern Territory and, looking back through a

number of submissions put forward to the various committees on Ayers Rock, we notice the proliferation of departments and committees. Once again, we will find ourselves wondering who will make the final decision. Will anyone be game to make decisions and, if so, when?

The honourable member for Alice Springs mentioned the airstrip. He would be far more familiar with the nature of that than myself. I doubt if it could be described as dangerous and I do not think he would suggest it was dangerous. If the Department of Transport, or in earlier days the Department of Civil Aviation, considered it was dangerous, then it simply would not be licensed, and I am quite sure the honourable gentleman and myself would not be flying into and out of it either. Nevertheless, it is generally conceded by people in the tourist industry and by people in the airline industry that larger aircraft could be operated in and out of that strip. The logical start of course is an F27 service, but there is no real reason why we could not eventually get into 28s and even 29s. That, somewhat in contradiction of what the honourable member for Alice Springs said, would necessarily require a considerable removal of that airstrip from the proximity of the Rock itself. He expressed the concern that there would be considerable travel between the airstrip and the actual Rock. What is significant is that the village itself will not be adjacent to the Rock and, as such, the actual travel will be between the airstrip and the village and I do not really think that that problem will show itself.

We have earlier today - and I am not reflecting on the debate - but we have earlier today been discussing the Aboriginal land rights legislation in its various forms and I notice that recommendations 20 to 24 deal with the involvement of Aboriginal people. The difficulties of the Aboriginal people derive from a lack of motivation, a lack of involvement and, in many respects, a feeling of being unwanted, not needed, not useful. This is the type of area where we can actively involve them, where government should involve

them, where indeed they can become some of the principle prime movers of tourism. This is within the framework of the recommendations apart from the actual physical requirement of money. Recommendations 20 to 24 ought to have very great regard paid to them.

We note from the report that, because of financial restrictions and staff ceilings, they are unable to recruit the Aboriginal people that the Reserves Board itself wants. Apart from the necessity of expertise, I would suggest to this House and to the authorities that, if we are going to give priority and emphasis to any type of employee in that area, then first priority should be given to the Aboriginal people, to overcome the problems that have been created around them. In this matter, the state can contribute something to their welfare and they can contribute to ours by encouraging tourism.

Dr LETTS: I am grateful to the honourable Cabinet Member for Resources for giving us the opportunity to have a debate on the report on Ayers Rock and the Mount Olga area. He did draw attention, during the course of his remarks, to the unsatisfactory level of finance that appears to be forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government to meet the recommendations of their own committee on this area, finance which will fall far short of even the minimal requirement to keep Ayers Rock going as one of the principal tourist attractions in Australia and a place of considerable importance to the economy and development of the Northern Territory.

It is important that we look at the kind of arrangements that exist between the Commonwealth and the Territory for this particular area and this particular project. Ayers Rock, like all of the other national parks in the Territory, was established under the Northern Territory Parks and Gardens Ordinance and about 3 years ago, under the former government's administration, we saw a bid by the Commonwealth to enter into the business of running national parks in Australia starting, as always, with the only place where they could directly take hold of the reins, the Northern Territory. There is no doubt at all that public servants ad-

vising the ministers of the government of the day, at one stage at least, intended to take over the whole of the national park and wildlife function in the Northern Territory. That is a matter of history, a matter of record.

However, we have always reasoned - and I suppose we were trying from our position of weakness to do a bit of horse trading in a way on this matter - that we could see some merit in the Commonwealth declaring Ayers Rock and the Kakadu National Park as national parks under Commonwealth legislation to give them that status and international recognition which they deserve, but that the Commonwealth should not go on to take over all the bits and pieces like the Katherine low-level and the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and all the other parks in the Northern Territory. In the event of their declaring the major park, Ayers Rock, under their legislation, we reasoned that they should at least recognise the Territory authority in the administration and the preparation of plans of management of all parks here included under their act.

With the change of government, there was a considerable withdrawal from the position which the previous government had attempted to establish in relation to national parks and the extent to which the central government should intrude into this field. Discussions which have been held at the conservation ministers council meetings, which I have attended, have established a reasonable line to be drawn between the proper functions of the Commonwealth in this regard and the state governments and the territory administrations. I believe that we had agreement at those meetings and in discussions which I have had with the various ministers for the environment.

In the agreements which have been reached between us and the Commonwealth ministers and their departments to go ahead with the declaration of Ayers Rock, and eventually Kakadu, under the act, the carrot which was held out and which we were prepared to accept, was that, by gazettal, by declaration under a Commonwealth act giving the Commonwealth Minister and the Commonwealth

Government a real role and significant position in relation to Ayers Rock, we could expect that the resources of the Commonwealth would be placed behind reserves such as that, that their manpower resources in planning, that their financial resources, would be more readily forthcoming to assist the poor little Territory than if we had to do it all ourselves. This was a reasonable argument and we accepted it; otherwise, there would not be any point in the Commonwealth intruding. We would be quite happy to run the thing ourselves in the future as in the past and struggle along. But that was the definite kind of undertaking that was given. Now, from what the honourable Cabinet Member for Resources said, I believe we are seeing some withdrawal, some reneging, some welshing, even at this early stage in the matter.

If this Commonwealth Government is not prepared to put its money where its mouth is in relation to Ayers Rock, then I say, let them get to hell out of it and leave it to us to administer altogether. If they want to have a stake in the thing, let them put some money into it too. I have become somewhat disenchanted with the officers of the Department of Environment with whom I have had to deal over the last 6 months. Their policies, the alacrity with which they have dealt with what I regard as fairly easy problems the matter I alluded to yesterday of the assent to the Territory Parks and Wildlife Ordinance - leave a lot to be desired. I suggest that in the whole of their work, and in particular in relation to the recommendation upon Ayers Rock, they pull their socks up.

Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA BILL

(Serial 194)

Continued from 4 March 1977.

In Committee:

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendments number 7.1 and 7.2.

The reason for these amendments is that clause 19(2) concerns the vesting in the trust of property formerly held by the Presbyterian Church. A separate commencement date for that clause was provided to allow for more time for agreement on which properties were to be transferred. This matter has been resolved and a separate commencement date is not necessary.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.3.

This amendment is to correct a typographical error.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.4.

This subclause has been inserted to ensure that the usual effects of the repeal of an ordinance apply to the South Australian acts which are repealed by this ordinance.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.5.

This amendment defines the Uniting Church by reference to the basis of union and is consequential to the proposed omission in part II of the bill which will follow.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 10.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I invite defeat of clauses 5 to 10.

The reason is that Part II of the bill conforms with the legislation

which is being passed in all states but the Attorney-General has advised that in relation to the Territory this part would be in contravention of section 116 of the Constitution. Section 116 provides, basically, that the Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion. This opinion has just been given and the text of it has not yet been received from Canberra.

Mrs LAWRIE: I am not wishing to be destructive, but as the honourable sponsor of the bill has just received this information from the Attorney-General's Department, can he indicate to the committee if another form has to be instituted in the legislation to provide for the inauguration of the Church, or is it to be omitted completely with no further reference? I appreciate his difficulty if he has just received this from AG.

Mr BALLANTYNE: The amendments which follow will clarify that.

Clauses 5 to 10 negatived.

Clause 11:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.7.

This amendment is made to conform with the form of name used in that proposed constitution of the Church and to ensure uniformity with the legislation in the rest of Australia.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 11, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.8.

The proposed new subclause (1) is designed to give the trust the usual powers of a body corporate in its dealings with its property. The new subclause (2) is consequential to the omission of Part II and was formulated by the Attorney-General in consultation with the solicitors for the Church.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clause 14:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.9.

This amendment is necessary because the clause as introduced refers to the proposed Mental Health Ordinance which at this time has not yet been passed.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.10,

This amendment is to correct a typographical error.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 15 and 16 agreed to.

Clause 17 agreed to with amendment.

Clause 18 agreed to.

Clause 19:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendments 7.12 and 7.13.

These amendments are designed to reflect the correct name of the Methodist Overseas Missions Trust Association and to reflect the arrangement made with the transfer of properties held by the Presbyterian Church. It has been agreed that all properties in the Northern Territory held by the Presbyterian Church, with the exception of the John Flynn Memorial Church in Alice Springs, are to be transferred to the trust. The John Flynn Memorial Church is to remain registered in the name of the Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust for the time being, pending further negotiations taking place. This will not preclude the continuing use of the church as presently occurs,

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 19 agreed to with further amendment.

Clause 20:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.15.

This amendment is necessary to correct a typographical error.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.16.

This amendment is designed to ensure that wills and other instruments made in favour of the United Church can be interpreted as being in favour of its successor after it goes out of existence.

Amendment agreed to.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Chairman, I was asleep when you gave us the opportunity to query amendment 7.15. Could I just draw the sponsor's attention to the fact that it certainly does not seem to be just a typographical error. Although we have now passed that perhaps he could clear it up in speaking to the clause itself.

Mr CHAIRMAN: Is the honourable member able to assist the committee on that?

Mr BALLANTYNE: I would need a little time, although it has been passed in the committee stage.

Mr CHAIRMAN: The question that the clause stand as amended has not though. The honourable member is quite entitled to request deferment if the committee agrees with that course of action. I do not know whether it is appropriate to suggest this but it would seem to me, and the committee may agree, that it is unnecessary repetition of what is already stated.

Mr EVERINGHAM: If that is the way it is wanted by the sponsor of this bill, as far as I am concerned he can have it that way. It may not perhaps be the best way, but it seems to me that there is nothing wrong with it.

Mr POLLOCK: Words are repeated twice. It is the operation of the electric typewriter ...

Mr CHAIRMAN: Order! I understood the honourable member for Jingili was on his feet.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I am sorry, Mr Chairman; I have sat down.

Mr POLLOCK: My understanding is that the words that have been deleted are repeated. The automatic typewriter printed them twice in the original draft of the bill and it was not picked up until this stage.

Clause 20, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.17.

This amendment is necessary to ensure that the trust will be subject to the covenants and conditions embodied in a grant of crown land after that land is vested in the trust. It also ensures that the vesting of land in the trust will not be invalid because of any branch of these covenants by its predecessor.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.18.

This amendment is designed to provide that the certificate given by the trust to the effect that you hold certain property is given no special evidentiary value.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 23 agreed to.

Clause 24.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.19.

This is to ensure conformity with the wording of other sections.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.20.

This amendment is made on the advice of the Attorney-General. It is felt that a provision that the

Registrar-General should not charge a fee would set an undesirable precedent.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.21.

This amendment was also requested by the Attorney-General for the same reason as I have just outlined.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 25 agreed to.

Clause 26 agreed to with amendment.

Clause 27 agreed to with amendment.

Clause 28 agreed to.

Clause 29 agreed to with amendment.

Clause 30 agreed to.

Clause 31:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendments 7.25, 7.26 and 7.27. These amendments are necessary to remove any ambiguity between regulations made by the assembly of the Church for the internal government of the Church and statutory regulations.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 31, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 32 agreed to with amendment.

Clause 33 agreed to with amendment.

Clauses 34 to 36 agreed to.

Clause 37:

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.30.

This will bring the clause into conformity with the terminology used in our legislation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 37, as amended, agreed to.

First Schedule agreed to.

Second Schedule.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.31.

At the time the bill was introduced, this property was subject to a transfer to a new group of lessees which had not been registered. Registration has now been completed and the reference to the former lessees to the transfer can be omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendments 7.32 to 7.35.

These amendments are necessary to ensure conformity with the wording of the leases concerned.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.36.

This relates to land contained in the Gove townsite lease. The amendment is required because the legal description given in the bill relates to the whole of the Gove township lease and not just the sub-lease of the church land,

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.37.

This amendment is required to conform with the wording of the lease.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I move amendment 7.38.

On the instructions of the Uniting Church, this property was to be dealt with in the same way as the property held by the Presbyterian Church and hence it was included in the third schedule. As it has now been agreed that all Presbyterian Church property, with the exception of the John Flynn Memorial Church, is to be vested in the trust, this property can be included in the second schedule.

Amendment agreed to.

Second schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Third schedule agreed to with amendment.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

DAFWIN CYCLONE TRACY
TRUST FUND REPORTS

Continued from 3 May 1977.

Mrs LAWRIE: I have given notice that I wish to debate the 2 sets of reports which have been tabled during this sittings. This debate concerns the monthly reports of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund for July, August and September 1976. Although these were tabled in the Federal House some weeks ago, we have only seen them tabled this week in this Assembly through the good offices of the member for Jingili who has been a representative of this Assembly on that trust fund since its inception.

I shall base my remarks on the September 1976 report which was to have been considered as the basis of a final report. If we look at that monthly report, we see: "The trustees, being of the opinion that there were no other persons in need of further financial assistance, unanimously agreed to terminate the activities of the trust and directed that arrangements be made to have a final audit of the funds carried out and the final report prepared". At that time, I criticised the decision of the trustees to wind up because I believed they had not paid sufficient attention to article 17 of their deed of trust which required that they had to satisfy themselves that there were no further hardships likely to be suffered by any person. I do not wish to rehash that, but I do ask that, in re-considering the allocation of the trust funds, the trustees will take my remarks in good part and pay attention to article 17 and ensure to the best of their ability that there are no further people deserving of money from the trust before the funds are finally disbursed.

One of the things that has happened subsequently has a direct bearing on this question and the trustees' decision.

ion to wind up the trust cannot be criticised in this respect because they had no forewarning of what was to come. I refer to a ministerial statement by the Minister for Social Security. I am quoting now from Senate question No. 224 placed on notice by Senator Robertson. Senator Robertson asked if the Director-General for Social Security was reported as saying that payments to victims of Cyclone Tracy made under the guidelines provided by Labor's National Compensation Bill are to cease, and whether the Minister would provide details of payments made and indicate the savings made by the cessation of these payments and the introduction of payments under other schemes. The short answer was that the Minister, Senator Guilfoyle, had made a decision that these special benefits were to cease as the legislation introduced by the Labor Government had not been proceeded with by the incoming Liberal-Country Party Government; and as there was no legislation backing for the payments to continue, they would cease on 31 March 1977. Let me reiterate that this announcement on March 2 was well after the trustees' initial decision to wind up the trust and they cannot be held responsible as they had no forewarning.

This decision having been made, I specifically asked the trustees to ensure that none of those people who had been receiving the social security special benefits needed to receive some other money from the trust because of the cessation of that benefit. The answer provided in the Federal House is fairly extensive and I assume the trustees will receive a copy. It does point out that 30 people were in receipt of special benefits. The Department of Social Security has advised the people who were receiving benefits, and whose benefits had ceased, to enquire whether they were eligible for some other benefit from the Social Security Department. That may be a fairly lengthy exercise but it needs to be done because, if widows and pensioners are eligible for some continuing social security benefit, they may not necessarily need funds from the trust fund. However, they may need them. It is points like these that I ask the trustees to consider most carefully before the final disbursement is made.

People on social service benefits enjoy a high degree of confidentiality. The trustees would have to ask the Department of Social Security to contact those people on their behalf, indicating that the trust was to be wound up and asking if those people needed assistance. I doubt very much if the Department of Social Security would be willing to give the names directly to the trustees, having regard to the Minister's insistence on confidentiality. However, the machinery is there to go to these people and to ask whether they find themselves in special need.

Returning to the September report, I note that the Mayor of Darwin received \$5,861 from an overseas donation which I expect will go to the city council to be used in its wisdom. We find further down the contentious issue of the Mayor's trust fund of \$335,000. When I raised this matter on Wednesday 17 November, I was critical of this amount having gone across with what I believed to have been insufficient detail as to the manner in which it was to be spent. Details have not been forthcoming but I was assisted by a speech made by the member for Jingili who on page 798 of Hansard of Wednesday 17 November 1976 said: "Out of \$8,124,879, the trustees with a balance of \$872,752 have decided to give to the city of Darwin, not for the Mayor's cultural centre specifically at all but for the restoration of the community recreational and cultural facilities in the town of Darwin, the sum of \$335,000". He is the delegate on the trust of this Assembly and I accept his assurance that that is the reason for which the money was given.

I would still ask that, perhaps as an addendum to reports to this Assembly and to the Corporation of the City of Darwin, that some indication be given as to the manner in which that \$335,000 is to be spent by the corporation. Clearly they must have put to the trustees some schedule giving an order of priority and an indication of how they were going to spend the money. However, this does not appear in any of the reports and the information has not been subsequently supplied.

Subsequent to this September report, the Minister directed that 2 amounts be returned to the trustees, and these appear in the September report - the money given to the Mayor's trust fund, of which I have just spoken, and to the Darwin and District Spastic Paralysis Association which was to receive the balance of the funds remaining in the trust. I do not know why this second lot was returned. All we do know is that it was on the basis of a report from the Solicitor-General to the Minister. I would also ask that the delegate from the Assembly to this trust ask the chairman of the trustees if an explanation of the reasons for the return of that money can be made available to honourable members. It is a considerable amount of money. At the last sittings of the Assembly, I said that, as far as the Spastic Paralysis Association was concerned, the first I knew of the money being returned was when I read about it in the paper. I would have thought that the association would have been one of those eligible to receive the money in accordance with the schedule to the Income Tax Act to which I referred in the previous debate. Therefore I am asking the trustees, 2 of whom are here, what was the basis of the Solicitor-General's report on which the money was returned from the Spastic Association and the Mayor's trust fund.

In last night's paper, there was a little article appearing on page 2 headed, "Fund to be closed". I quote: "The cyclone relief fund will be closed by the trustees and a decision will be made on the allocation of the remaining money in June or July, according to the Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Evan Adermann. Mr Adermann said yesterday that he would be coming to Darwin when he could find time between sittings and committee meetings in June or July to attend the meeting of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund. He anticipated that a decision would be made on the distribution of the money and the fund closed". That is the announcement we have been expecting for some time although it is not very specific and it does not appear to have been discussed at length with the trustees if the news report is accurate.

In conclusion, may I ask that the trustees please consider the points I have raised at that meeting in June or July, which may occur before we have time to debate the subsequent report. Firstly, there is the matter of the \$335,000. I would like some information as to how the corporation was expected to spend that money. As far as the Spastic Paralysis Association is concerned, why was it necessary to return the money? Most importantly, it is necessary to determine that none of those people receiving the social security special benefit now need assistance from the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund. I think that the investigation into that matter may take some time and will have to be done very carefully and with the cooperation of the Department of Social Security. Until those questions are answered, particularly the last one, I hope the trustees will not quickly wind up the fund.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I would like to make a few remarks on these 3 reports and I hope to relieve any anxiety that might be felt by any members of this House in relation to the disposition of the balance of the trust funds. I might say, and I think the honourable member for Nightcliff has conceded this fact, that the trustees, when they attempted to terminate the trust in September 1976, were themselves satisfied that there were no really deserving claims outstanding. The position has now changed in that we have heard of the problems relating to the 30 special cases who were receiving moneys from the Department of Social Security and have had those payments cut off apparently since March of this year. I cannot speak for the trust but personally I would be most anxious to see that applications from all of those 30 people were considered. Perhaps, at this late stage, the trust should once again advertise in the Darwin and Alice Springs newspapers, and perhaps in the "Australian" newspaper, for any possible claimants to come forward. However, people with what I would call "shonky" claims should expect short shrift. If one listened to the honourable member for Nightcliff, one might get the impression - and I am not being critical of

her - that claimants were all lily-white. However, there are some pretty crooked people around and, when there is free money going, it really makes you cynical to see some of the tricks they will get up to. Undoubtedly, when we advertise, we will receive a lot of attempts from people to get onto a bit of free money. We will get a large percentage of genuine applicants but there is always that 20% who turn you off this sort of thing.

I turn now to the matter of the monies being refunded by the Mayor of Darwin's trust fund and the Darwin District Spastic Paralysis Association as a result of a request from the trustees following their receiving an opinion prepared for the Minister, as Chairman of the Trust, by the Solicitor General. The straightforward position is that, at the time the trust was constituted and at the time that Cyclone Tracy happened, there was no Mayor's trust fund and therefore it was not possible for the trust legally to give those moneys to the Mayor's trust fund. If they had been given to the corporation for the restoration of buildings and recreational centres, that would have been quite in order but they were inadvertently given to the Mayor's trust fund so obviously they had to come back. I do not think I am giving anything away in saying that the final payment was to the Spastic Association and, being the final payment, it was dragged back because the trust had been reopened. There is nothing secret or sinister about it; it is just one of those legal hairsplittings except that as it is a large amount of money one has to be very careful that one goes about the disposition in the right way.

I think I have answered the points raised by the honourable member and I can assure her and all members of this House that the trustees are very concerned about their obligations under the trust. It is a great worry to most of them. They are ordinary people and they worry about the responsibilities that have been placed on them under this trust. Even for me it is a bit worrying because you will realise that if a trustee makes a wrong move then he could be personally liable. We want to do the right thing and I am sure that,

before the end of this year, we will have succeeded in doing the right thing and our most ardent desire will have been realised in that the trust will have been terminated,

Motion agreed to,

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Dr LETTS; I move that the Assembly at its rising adjourn until 10 am on Tuesday 7 June 1977.

The Assembly normally meets at somewhat longer intervals than the date which I have now proposed. This meeting would normally have been expected to go for 2 weeks; however, circumstances have changed the program in a couple of ways. There have been some delays with material which we expected to come from the printer so that we would not have had the volume of material necessary for a full week's sitting next week. On the other hand, in June this year, for the first time, we will be required to produce a Supply Bill in anticipation of the Territory Budget for 1977/78. This will meet services and payment by way of salaries to officers of the Northern Territory Public Service for the period between the beginning of the financial year and the passing of the budget and the appropriation bills arising therefrom. Our supply bills are expected to be introduced around about that period. Thus, the timing of our meeting is fairly critical. All the factors considered, it would appear that the early June meeting will suit these needs. I anticipate that we will meet on 7 June for that week and the following week. This will also mean that, under our standing orders, new material that was introduced at this sittings will be eligible for passage at that meeting.

Motion agreed to.

INTERPRETION BILL

(Serial 190)

Continued from 3 March.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

I would like to allude briefly to a comment I made today at question time in relation to an ABC broadcast which I heard last night and which several other speakers mentioned today. I had hoped to get a full transcript of that talk because I am concerned about remarks made concerning this Assembly and individual members of this Assembly. These should be closely examined and brought to your further attention, Mr Speaker, I have not been able to get a fair copy of the transcript from the tape which was taken. There were too many gaps in it, some of the words are not sufficiently clear and I would not like to proceed on that basis. However, I am trying to obtain a fair copy of the transcript from the Australian Broadcasting Commission, I believe that there has been some reluctance to supply this but I am sure that the chairman of the commission will provide us with one. On receipt of that transcript, I will make a careful analysis of it and have some discussions with the Clerk, If there appears to be anything which should be brought to your attention, I will certainly do so.

Mr PERRON: I would like to raise this afternoon the question of a new powerhouse for Darwin. Only today, I received a copy of a question on notice asked by the honourable member for Casuarina and the reply from the Department of the Northern Territory. The reply concerns me somewhat. One of the questions was: "Has the Department of the Northern Territory suspended work on the environmental impact study for Darwin's second powerstation?". The answer is: "Yes, pending receipt of the final report of the inquiry into the public electricity supply in the Northern Territory". The second question was: "Has the Department of the Northern Territory shelved the plans for a submission to Cabinet so that funds could be made available to allow preliminary design work on Darwin's second powerstation to proceed?" The answer is: "Any such decision will be taken following the receipt and evaluation of the final report of the inquiry into

public electricity supply".

The department have more or less said that they have stopped all work on looking at a second powerhouse for Darwin for the time being because there is an inquiry into the electricity supply. If the department was thinking a little bit more rationally about this, they would realise that the committee is in the same dilemma as other people in the department are about a new powerhouse for Darwin. It is not a question of assembling experts to look at whether or not we should have a new powerhouse; everyone realises that we should have one; the question is when. That question can only be answered by predictions on the load growth of electricity demand. Whilst the experts conducting the inquiry will no doubt give an opinion on this matter, they do not have any better crystal ball predicting load growth demand than the Department of the Northern Territory has. As a matter of fact, they will be getting their predictions of population and electricity demand growth from the Department of the Northern Territory.

The Department of the Northern Territory has stopped all its efforts towards getting us a new power supply because there is an inquiry taking place. This is folly, and I think that they are just trying to find an excuse to delay making a decision on a second powerhouse for Darwin. The very information that this decision will be based on will come from the Department of the Northern Territory and the inquiry, other than offering an opinion, will not really be able to help the department at all. The nature and location of Darwin's next electricity generating station is such that the initial expenditure will be extremely high because it will be necessary to install all the equipment associated with a new powerhouse just to get the first generator going, even though that same equipment will be there for subsequent generators as they are installed. There is a very high expenditure in getting the basics set up so we can have electricity generated from even one more small or large, however we look at it - 30 megawatt generator. This is why the department is hedging in making a decision, because it is going to mean the

outlay of an enormous capital sum, and they are trying to delay that decision for as long as they possibly can.

The Department of Construction has done a lot of work on predicted load growth for Darwin. For the 10 years up until the cyclone, we had an electricity load growth of about 16% per annum compounding. Of course, the cyclone threw everything amok there for a while and we were not sure how Darwin was going to settle down and grow. Apparently sufficient time has not elapsed to get a true indication of future growth rates. Still, a decision had to be made. So the Department of Construction which worked on a figure of around 15% compound load growth rate, using that figure, came to the conclusion that preliminary design work on a new powerhouse should start in 1976 and the program would have led to the output from a new powerhouse in about 1984, hopefully sooner. This growth rate is far beyond our current capacity to hold until 1984, and therefore they recommended the installation of a 30 megawatt gas turbine around about 1981 to get us over the hump until the new powerhouse could be producing. Although the department recommend strongly against the installation of gas turbines for base load power generation, they have said that we have got to do it because we are going to miss the boat. That was as if they had started in 1976. It is now 1977 and we find that the Department of the Northern Territory have even suspended the small amount of work which has been going on on the environmental impact study because the committee of inquiry is doing its work. I say to the Department of the Northern Territory that the committee of inquiry's findings really have no bearing on the future powerhouse for Darwin, inasmuch as they will be attempting to make a judgment on future load growths and it is really a departmental responsibility to make that decision and judgment.

What worries me somewhat is that we have lost 12 months now on a 1976 start date for a new powerhouse, so we are probably looking at 1985 as the earliest possible completion date. And no doubt we are going to be looking at, not one 30 megawatt expensive gas tur-

bine but two, maybe even more if we delay a decision much longer. The decision to be taken at this stage will not involve an enormous amount of expenditure in the near future; it is a decision in principle which Federal Cabinet would have to make on an expenditure of this size. But for the first couple of years there is something like \$300,000 per year to be spent on design work and site work. If that decision is not taken shortly, we are going to be in an awful knot in the very near future, because we are just delaying it more and more. According to Department of Construction figures, the greatest load growth in Darwin would occur if the uranium province was given the green light - it is hoped the electricity for that area will be supplied from Darwin - and for our load growth in Darwin itself to remain fairly high; it is growing all the time as consumers use more and more electrical appliances, the individual consumption of electricity grows constantly. But if this happens and we reach a 17% load growth in Darwin - and I believe, Mr Acting Speaker, we well could be on a 17% load growth factor - then we are going to be in a awful knot because the lights could go out in 1980 and that is 3 years away. Therefore they are going to have to get themselves into an awful flap and the only option is to install a couple of enormous gas turbine generators which, although capital wise are cheaper than a powerhouse it is frightfully expensive to run them, particularly as we know what is going to happen to world oil prices and is already happening to them.

I leave it at that. I just want to bring to the attention of this House that I am deeply concerned that the planning that should be done for Darwin's future generation capacity is not being done and, as a matter of fact, is being delayed. We will be left with the can and, in the early 1980s, Darwin will be in severe difficulties as far as electricity is concerned.

Mr TAMBLING: Yesterday in answer to a question relating to city council by-laws, I stated that Cabinet had issued drafting instructions with regard to new legislation. I would like to cor-

rect a misapprehension that I may have given in that answer. Drafting advice has been given to the Legislative Section and that section will issue instructions. I am sure that high priority will be given to those drafting instructions.

I would also like to comment on an article in today's NT news by the supposed leader of the ALP team of candidates for the coming elections, Mr John Isaacs. It is similar to a press comment that Mr Isaacs made last week with regard to the action taken by the Majority Leader and myself in appearing before the Remuneration Tribunal in Canberra concerning the level of salaries and conditions of members of this Assembly. Obviously, Mr Isaacs is just blowing wind. At the same time, he is accusing us of a number of things, including hypocrisy and calling for our resignation. I really question what this man is up to. He must be simple if this is the only stance that he can take. If he is talking about hypocrisy, let us really know the stance of the ALP and the unions to the wages and prices freeze. I don't believe they would have the guts to come out and take a stand. I have not heard any comment from Northern Territory unions, Mr Isaacs or the ALP with regard to their attitude about wages and prices. I cannot see any relevance in linking this to a 45-minute meeting when Dr Letts and myself presented a submission that had been prepared some time ago at the request of a tribunal that has to report annually to the Parliament on salaries and conditions. I am sure that members of the Australian Labor Party would be continuing to make representations to that tribunal on a regular basis with regard to the Federal House. I am sure that Mr Isaacs is just puffing away. He is obviously looking for more space in the newspapers because he cannot get it on realistic and proper issues.

Mr MANUELL: I would like to make some additional reference to the ABC program, "Broadband". I would like to refer to an extract from the Broadband program which was broadcast on 19 April 1977 and which was entitled, "Aboriginal Artifacts". My comments will lend weight to the argument that will

probably follow as a result of the broadcast last evening. This transcript, whilst I cannot vouch for its authenticity by way of signed statement, is, I can assure this House, an accurate transcript taken down by tape recorder and then transcribed in typing. I will read some of the relevant extracts:

Aboriginal artifacts, clap type beating or music. In white Australian society generally we know little of the spiritual beliefs and practices of the Aboriginal people beyond, say, the most rudimentary understanding of the significance of the dream time. The little we do know often comes our way via the researches of academics, particularly anthropologists. As Aborigines claim little political voice in our white culture, they are claiming frequently that the special close relationship between anthropologists and tribal people has led to the exploitation of the Aboriginal culture. Right now it is a burning issue in the Alice Springs area where Aborigines from the western desert region have decided to initiate legal action against the distinguished scholar and expert on Aboriginal secrets, Professor T.G.H. Strehlow. The action is for the recovery of Aboriginal sacred artifacts, notably tjuringas, sacred stones, which form part of Professor Strehlow's collection of Aboriginal artifacts in his Adelaide home. In a short while, there will be relationship between anthropologists and tribal aborigines, but first I have recorded this telephone conversation with Neville Perkins, Director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice Springs. The congress is backing the Aboriginal group in this case and I have asked what is behind the demands, why it is necessary to consider this kind of action.

Neville Perkins: "Well, the people who have a right to the actual tjuringas being held by Mr Strehlow are asking for the return of the tjuringas back to the lands from which they were taken. We have been trying for 12 months to assist tribal people to regain the sacred tjuringas but without any success. Therefore the

tribal people have asked for the assistance from the lawyers to take legal action as a means of being able to get the return of the sacred objects. We are now in the process of actually issuing writs to try and recover the objects altogether".

Mr Deputy Speaker, it goes on. I don't want to impose upon this House but the point in reading that part to this Assembly is this, and I refer to a personal letter that I have received from Mrs Strehlow dated the 25 April in which she says:

I regret I have been so long getting this away, but time is of the essence and what with the various onslaughts by spoilers coming our way thick and fast, we haven't had a moment to breathe even. The highlight came when the ABC forced my sick and beleaguered husband on camera with Mr Neville Perkins by threatening that if he didn't go they would give Neville Perkins open slather at him. My husband did the brave thing and, from what I can see, he accommodated them.

What in fact happened, as it appears to me, was the ABC laid down a threat to Professor Strehlow that, unless he accepted their invitation to go on television with Mr Neville Perkins and discuss something on TDT, they would give Mr Perkins open slather. Be that as it may, what I am questioning is the tactics that the Australian Broadcasting Commission are employing through their officers and their agents in the treatment of material of this nature and in the treatment of some of the people who are well able and well versed to offer great assistance and opinions, through knowledge, on this matter of Aboriginal land rights. It has been of close personal interest to me to follow Professor Strehlow's wishes to establish a trust that can keep for all time the knowledge that he has been able to accumulate over approximately 40 years of study of Aboriginal culture and law. Recently, when I made a public announcement in Alice Springs that Professor Strehlow was going to establish a trust fund, it was immediately misconstrued as being a museum established to exhibit articles of his

collection. That is not the prime intention of Professor or Mrs Strehlow or any of those people who are prepared to support his work. It is purely and simply an acknowledgment of the value of Professor Strehlow's work, to establish a facility that will be able to record for all time this valuable work of his. I suggest, Mr Deputy Speaker, that we as an Assembly, and others, should seriously question not supporting such a man as Professor Strehlow because, with his demise, will pass a considerable amount of knowledge which he has been able to accumulate through considerable study and integrity over many years.

There are certainly a good number of knockers around who would question the ability of Professor Strehlow. Nobody who knows him would disagree with me that Professor Strehlow must be regarded as one of the leaders in the world on Aboriginal culture, particularly in the Central Australian region. I have here a certificate acknowledging Professor Strehlow in the "International Biographical Centre in Cambridge in England and it certifies that Professor Strehlow is included as an intellectual in recognition of his distinguished achievements which are recorded in the "International Who's Who of Intellectuals". It is signed and sealed at Cambridge in England by authorised officers of the International Biographical Centre. There are many such pieces of acknowledgment that I can illustrate, but I do not feel it necessary.

Professor Strehlow is able to offer our community and the Aboriginal people a considerable amount of help in this question of Aboriginal land rights. What must be seriously considered by our society and our government is that Professor Strehlow is ageing very quickly. He is now some 68 years of age and retired. He is suffering a diminishing state of health and there is a distinct possibility that unless some quick action is taken we could lose his valuable work for all time. His wife has been a tremendous support to him and has actually understudied him, so that if he suffered an untimely demise she would be able to offer as much assistance as practically possible.

The question as to whether or not Professor Strehlow holds items of Aboriginal culture which are of value and significance to aborigines, I believe, can only be answered by Professor Strehlow. I know, from personal conversations that I have had with him, that there is absolutely no doubt in his own mind and in the minds of those Aborigines who gave him these items that they are his. They are his for a number of reasons. In some instances, I understand, he has negotiated for them; in other instances, they have been given to him as gifts. In some other instances, I understand, he has actually adopted these items because of succession through surrender ceremony. Professor Strehlow is probably one of the more fortunate people in as much that he was able to view a great number of Aboriginal ceremonies over many years and has been privy to these ceremonies possibly far more than any other white man. It is perhaps not known by a great number of people that Professor Strehlow was brought up in the Hermannsburg area by Aborigines and it was only when he arrived at a secondary education level that he left the Alice Springs district and travelled to Adelaide for further education. I hope that this Assembly will offer Professor Strehlow and his foundation the support that it needs and deserves.

Mr MacFARLANE: Yesterday, the honourable the Cabinet Member for Resources said I was completely out of place in attacking the conference at Alice Springs. During his speech, he said, "The point is that we must get moving and do everything that can be done to get the industry going and give it new blood and new strength". I agree with him entirely; that's what it is all about; and the only way to give any industry new strength is to get rid of its product.

One criticism I had of the conference was that it was delayed too long. At the time it opened, the Katherine meatworks was opening and we had a motion calling on the Government to make sure the meatworks did keep going. That was one of the things I was worried about. Another criticism was that the agenda was too crowded and the most

important items were jammed into the afternoon on Sunday. If you read the agenda, they said that the meeting would continue on into the Sunday afternoon if necessary. That is another thing which is in my favour when I say that I was disappointed with the meeting.

I think the Cabinet Member is concerned that the Labor Party may take up my remarks and endorse them because I have criticised the conference. The only Labor Party man I saw there was Mr Wesley-Smith and he did not declare himself until the Sunday. The Shadow Minister for the Northern Territory was not there, nor was the Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, nor the Labor Senator for the Northern Territory. If they were there, I didn't see them, I don't think we have to worry about the Labor Party criticising the effectiveness of the conference.

I did feel the Cabinet Member was a bit out of place in some of the things he said. He seemed to direct many of his remarks towards the Cattlemen's Association of North Australia and the Katherine area. This is fair enough too. The Cattlemen's Association, as I understand it, was represented by Messrs MacFarlane, Tilley and Dyer. I did agree to make up the number although I am not a member of the Cattlemen's Association. Mr Tapp, the president, was busy mustering and this is where I think the Cabinet Member for Resources was a bit out of place. In the Top End, the Tablelands and probably in the Centre too, these people are fighting for survival and they haven't the time to go to these conferences. Quite apart from not having the time, they probably haven't got the money. If they have a hundred dollars to spare, they put it into paying a bill. Mr Tapp was busy mustering: he has six thousand head this year and you all know his particular financial circumstances because they were published in the Australian. I feel that Mr Tapp is one of the first people who will come back into solvency. I say that because I have been to his place and he has no improvements to do; they are all done. I spoke to his carpenter whom I have known for many years and I said,

"Well, I suppose, Tom, that now you are on maintenance" He said, "There is no maintenance to be done, Les. I built this myself". That is the kind of improvements that are there. When you talk about people like Mr Tapp, you can be assured he is working and he has got the stuff to work with.

Mr Vandeleur is another member of the cattlemen's executive. He has sold his place and he is not all that interested at the present time and at that particular time he too was very busy. Mr McLeod, the manager of Delamere, he was expecting his pastoral manager, Mr Peter Morris, who was at the meeting and he couldn't get away. Mr Bisley, the manager of Mountain Valley, was in Singapore trying to arrange markets. If you listen to what the honourable Cabinet Member said about the Meat Board, you wouldn't think that you would have to worry about the markets because they are doing a fantastic job; that is what they are there for, too. Mr Bisley was in Singapore trying to arrange markets for Mountain Valley beef, I think that the Cattlemen's Association comes out of this pretty well. The meeting was badly timed, and, as far as I am concerned, my criticism sticks.

The honourable Cabinet Member talked about the morale of the operators at Ayers Rock. I can assure him that the morale of the cattlemen is pretty bloody low, lower than the operators at Ayers Rock, because they have got a lot more at stake and they are going into their fourth year of depressed prices with little government assistance.

Another remark which I think was completely wrong was to blame the producers for the failure of the exporters to maintain a consistency of product standards in Singapore. This is exactly what the producers are fighting. They say that the exporters are ripping them off. We are fighting to get an orderly marketing system, yet we have the honourable Cabinet Member blaming the producers for not sending good meat to Singapore. The producer has nothing to do with it. He produces the beef. He spends 3 or 4 years doing this. Then the exporter and the processor get it and within a couple of days they make the profit. This is history; this is

fact. So to blame the producer for poor quality beef is fantastic.

His last paragraph - and I am not being at all nasty about these things - was about the meatworks in Katherine: "The exporters are prepared to stay open all the year around if they can get cattle. But, by hell, it did not take long for a whole string of excuses to come out as to why this could not be done. I have my own reasons of course. You cannot get over the King River Bridge on the Victoria Highway. One of the main reasons is, and the honourable member knows this from his stay at Maranboy, that in that country at various times through the wet - it is a monsoonal country - you cannot move. So how are you going to stay open for 12 months anyway? I don't know. Cattlemen are aware of the problem and they are talking of building paddocks to hold meatworks cattle near beef roads or "Sukarno highways". This will enable them to keep the meatworks open longer. But where are you going to get the money from? The producing cattleman can't pay his bills now. You have a motion here about carry on finance in March. What are we in now? May. I haven't heard of anyone getting any money yet. This is what it is all about and I feel it is just a matter of survival. To the practising cattlemen, markets are the answer. Give us good markets and we don't want the subsidies. All we ask for is a chance to sell our beef at a reasonable price.

I feel the main item on the agenda at Alice Springs was to hear McCanley's ideas on the scheme which has been adopted by the Queensland Government, to hear Cameron's scheme for the Australian National Cattlemen's Council and have the meeting weigh these schemes up and go one way or the other and give the Australian Government one national voice. The public servants and the ministers in Canberra are laughing their heads off. They say, "Come back to us when you have one idea". Since the meeting, I wired Mr Tapp of the Cattlemen's Association and Mr de Vos, the Secretary of the Cattle Producers' Council, to try and get them to back McCanley or to back some other national association to lend weight and to cut one more decisive factor, I have had no

reply from either and this is one of the problems.

If these important things had been on the agenda early and had been discussed, we would have been that much further on. My criticism is not of the agenda but of the way the agenda was handled. What is the use of having a disease control program for fruition in 1984 if you are going to have half your producers broke before that? It is a matter of priorities and that is all I am saying. McCanley made the same point. Somebody said, "Next year". He said, "A lot of my men won't be here next year". That is in Queensland where things are a lot better than they are here. You do not have the extra freight costs, the lack of markets and the poor prices so much in Queensland yet they are screaming for mercy over there. We get down there to a meeting and we are worried about criticism.

I have carefully read my speech of yesterday and I have nothing to apologise for. I also read the honourable Cabinet Member's speech and I think he has taken the wrong view about some of these things. He says the Cattle Producers' Council took up the cudgels after I suggested the meeting. The fact of the matter is that neither I nor this Assembly has any authority to call a meeting. It is a cattle industry problem and I couldn't get the backing of the Cattlemen's Association before the meeting.

That sums up my feelings. My main criticism was that the meeting was so delayed and that the agenda seemed to get bogged down. It was probably a good meeting and I would like to have been there for the rest of it but that is what I think. I think our main problem is markets and all the other things run second to that.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise tonight to discuss a matter which was brought up at a previous sittings by the honourable member for Nhulumbuy and which was referred to by myself at this sittings in question time. I refer to the vexed position of the Northern Territory Museum which hardly has a home. On Tuesday 3 May, I asked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government what steps had

been taken by the DRC to provide a suitable site and funding for the Darwin Museum. He replied, "I will have a statement prepared that lists the actions that have been taken over a long period". Today the honourable member supplied that statement.

It certainly has been a long period but I think there has been precious little action by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I remembered vividly that when the member for Nhulumbuy raised this question there were interjections from Cabinet Members to the effect that the DRC had been concentrating on housing. That is fair enough. We have concentrated on houses; that had to be the number 1 priority. But remember that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission was not simply a group of people building houses; that could have been performed by the old Department of Works. Here we had a commission which was to restore community facilities in Darwin and in fact we have had a chairman of the commission who has had flying visits to the powerhouse and has come back and given press releases on how he is going to fix our power problems. I have not seen any signs of that happening yet but it is an indication that the DRC, or at least the chairman, had a wider role rather than simply building houses.

Questions have been put to the chairman through the media by interested people and by reporters, concerning the museum and today we had a reply tabled in this House which I find totally unsatisfactory. If I may quote from it, it starts off by saying: "Background. The following is a resume of recent key events in the long history of attempts to establish a performing arts centre and a museum and art gallery in Darwin, and the actions to obtain a suitable and appropriate site for these facilities". I assume this came through the DRC. They talk about a feasibility study in June 74 the need for cultural facilities. This was at the request of the Arts Council of Australia, of which I am a member. At that time I was a member of the sub committee set up to specifically explore this avenue. Mr Colin Hassell, the architect of the Adelaide Festival Hall, and Mr Tom Brown, a theatre consultant, were eng-

aged and did in fact present a comprehensive and down-to-earth report. That was June 1974. "In October, the Federal Minister for the Northern Territory expressed his support in principle to the concept of a performing arts centre for Darwin". This is as distinct from the museum. Then came Tracy. The DRC advises in this statement that the replacement costs of the facilities of the museum building in Smith Street had been assessed at \$1m and the collection cannot currently be housed nor displayed adequately. That is a very simple and straightforward and totally predictable assessment. That was 1974. We jump then to May, '75 and we find that another sensible step was taken. "Mr Colin Hassell, architect of the Adelaide Festival Hall, was commissioned by the DRC to investigate potential sites for both the performing arts centre and the museum and art gallery." That was a sensible decision. The gentleman had done a tremendous amount of work prior to the cyclone and was merely invited back to expand on that, given the fact that we now needed a museum as well.

The final part of that May 1975 resume is: "The Esplanade was recommended as the most suitable and appropriate site". The recommendation was that the performing art centre and museum-gallery should be close together but the library could be separate and that a city location was preferable. The Esplanade/Darwin Oval was the preferred site. "The report was widely circulated for comment but not endorsed by the commission." That was May 1975. The next action is in July 1976. That is 14 months later and for the DRC to assert through its chairman that it has been active in this regard is hard to believe. We have a gap of 14 months when nothing happened.

To return to the recommendations of May 1975, once again the attitude seems to be: "There's a nice green belt along the Esplanade. Let's stick something on it". I spoke to one of the people engaged in the preparation of this report and said that, if public comment was invited, I would oppose the proposal. Every time we have an open space and a green belt, they want to stick something on it. There is not a lot of

green foreshore area left in Darwin, certainly not in the city proper. I will continue to resist the placing of buildings on the Esplanade and on the foreshore of Darwin where none exist already.

Let us now jump to July 1976 and we see that 7 sites were investigated - East Point, Fannie Bay Gaol, Bullocky Point, Gardens Hill, Larrakeyah, Civic Square and Esplanade/Darwin Oval for a complex comprising a performing arts centre and a museum art gallery. Here we go again: "Darwin Oval was considered the most suitable location in the paper". It continues: "Resolved to obtain further views of relevant organisations - corporation, chambers of commerce and industry, the member for Port Darwin and the public via press coverage". I don't believe that the public were ever invited to express their views. If we are asked, I will express the same views that I have here. Now that was in July '76.

In August 1976, one month later, we find that, during discussions within the DRC, north Esplanade was added to a list of sites and we still have recommendations for the Darwin Oval and Bullocky Point. They decided to defer the matter until there was comprehensive canvassing of public opinion via a public meeting chaired by the chairman of the DRC. This meeting was never held.

In March 1977, 6 months later, the Department of the Northern Territory took over investigations of sites for a museum and there the matter apparently rests. When the honourable member indicated this morning that the Department of the Northern Territory was now investigating a site for the museum, I think there was the collective sigh of despondency or: "Oh God! What now?" I don't think the DRC, or some section of the DRC, has applied itself very seriously to what is quite a problem, the fact that we have no museum facility in Darwin - other than the two very sensible steps I have mentioned, especially the re-engaging of Colin Hassell to provide expert advice to the commission. I have not seen his recommendations. Knowing the gentleman through his original assignment on

designing a performing arts centre, I would think it would be a pretty good design and one suitable for our needs and, hopefully, for our purse.

I must take issue with the continued recommendation that such a centre be located on the Darwin Oval. I most definitely disagree with that. I assume that the north Esplanade referred to is again on the seaward side of the Esplanade; it must be approximately opposite the Travelodge or the YMCA. If that is correct, if that is what is meant by north Esplanade, I have the same comment: "Please, hands off our foreshore areas".

I may have felt a little kinder towards the DRC - and I appreciate the fact that their first priority was housing - had it not been for their chairman's insistence on buying into a variety of issues, including the powerhouse. If they were to operate for the benefit of us all, surely something a little more positive could have come from the DRC concerning a museum, and not this rather nebulous nonsense which, through the good graces of the member for Fannie Bay, we were presented with today.

Mr RYAN: It is nice to follow the honourable member for Nightcliff, but today I am not going to take advantage of that situation, just to show that I can be benevolent at times. I do have some other important items which I think should be commented on.

First of all, I support the comments made earlier in the debate by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government concerning a call by the erstwhile leader of the proposed opposition, John Isaacs, concerning the increase in the salaries of MLAs. Certainly I am sure, if Mr Isaacs, in the unlikely event that he or any of his colleagues make the grade at the next elections, and I have certainly doubts about this, that they would be only too happy to accept any rise which may come about from the actions the honourable Cabinet Member has taken. I would just like to point out one thing that I do not think he mentioned with regard to the Cabinet Members who have had executive responsibility since the 1 January. We

are not seeking an increase in salary, Mr Deputy Speaker, we are seeking salary. It would appear that Mr Isaacs and some other people in this community expect people to take responsibilities and not be paid for it at all. So I have no hesitation in adding that I am fully supporting the Leader and Deputy Leader in their approaches to the tribunal. Obviously, this matter is not something that will be resolved immediately and we have to make sure that the information is put before them so that they can act.

The headline in today's News could cause some division among the people of the Northern Territory. It was announced that third party insurance premiums need to double to bring them into line with the southern states. This indicates just how far the Territory gets behind in some of these items. I would like to point out that any increases in motor vehicle registration or third party insurance does have to be agreed to by the Cabinet. It is obvious that we would only be burying our heads in the sand to say that we can let the situation continue as it is. It is obvious that our rates on insurance are too low. We can't expect companies to subsidise the industry; a loss of \$3m is a lot of money. We will have to look at the question of an increase. However, I would expect that this would be done over a period of time. That is a decision that will have to be made after due consideration by the Cabinet and figures have been given by the actuary. We will have to take action to see that the situation is corrected over a period of time. I can assure people in the Northern Territory that there will not be a sudden 100% increase.

Another item on the front page concerns the threat by owner drivers of transports to boycott cartage in Darwin. It does appear that the situation has come to a head and I believe that the Transport Drivers Association has advised the operators to cease carrying as from today rather than wait until 16 May. I do not know whether or not the attempt to bring this matter into the light will be successful. Quite frankly, I think the problem lies in the fact that it is a competitive situat-

ion. On the one hand, we have the transport companies and, on the other hand, we have the subcontractors, the owner-drivers. Both these groups are in the business of carrying goods. Obviously, the transport companies try to get the best price possible. On the other hand, the subcontractors are also trying to get the best price possible. However, I am pretty sure that the industry is overstocked with truck owner-drivers and this obviously makes it easy for the transport companies to apply pressure and get the best price possible. In the competitive nature of our system, this is what happens. It does not matter what sort of industry you are in. We saw the situation after the cyclone where the building industry received a tremendous boom because there were not enough builders to do the work required and prices went up drastically. We are now seeing the situation, after 2 years, where prices are starting to stabilise and possibly even drop in some areas because the market has dropped.

In the case of the transport operators, we had the opposite situation. There are too many operators for the work. Therefore, the prices are highly competitive and I have no doubt that a lot of the operators find it very difficult to make ends meet. The only solution that I can see is that the industry will have to be thinned out so that there are a fair number of owner-drivers who can compete for the work available. This will result in better prices for the owner-drivers. Subsequently, I would expect a higher price for freight for the Northern Territory. So there is no good news in that for the people of the Northern Territory. But in talking on the industry itself and the problems they have, whether they have the support of enough owner-drivers to cause a serious problem in Darwin if they cease to come to Darwin, I do not know. I have my doubts whether they will receive support because there are too many operators who are hungry and I am sure there will always be somebody prepared to come to Darwin. In fact one of the large companies I have spoken to has assured me that of the 46 sub-contractors they have working for them, none are likely to take this action.

I do feel sorry for the owner drivers, I appreciate that they have a problem. I think one of the causes of the problem is that it is too easy to get into a truck. The methods they use to finance a person into a truck, a rig worth \$100,000, are ridiculous. I do not know of any other business where you have capital equipment worth \$100,000 and you can get into it with so little money to start off with and with a lack of business experience. This is a problem that is plaguing the industry. You have all these people who have been financed into expensive plant. There are too many of them and they are being forced to operate at low prices because of the competition.

One other side-issue concerns the unions who have from time to time made noises about support for the owner drivers. A lot of the owner drivers are in fact members of the Transport Workers Union. The Trades and Labour Council were involved in it a couple of months ago when I was trying to get a meeting between the owner-drivers and the transport companies, I could not arrange that. Nobody has been able to arrange it and I don't think anybody can force the issue. I would have liked to have seen that meeting because it could have led to a better understanding of the situation. However, the unions have said that they will support the owner-drivers in their action.

I read a report that was put on the ABC yesterday by Eric Short who is the secretary of the Transport Workers Union in the Northern Territory. It is somewhat ambiguous because in one sentence he says that they will not unload any road trains coming into Darwin, and in the next sentence he says that this means that any non union sub-contractor coming into Darwin will not be able to be unloaded because they will tell their members in the various depots not to unload non union owner-drivers. I took this statement to mean, when I read it initially, that the first sentence said they will support the owner drivers and will not unload any trucks, I thought that was serious because, if that takes place, Darwin without any doubt could have a serious

problem. But when I read it again, what does he mean? I have been trying to contact him, I have spoken to other people who are involved and the consensus seems to be that they will unload those trucks which are being operated by union members; if a truck does not have a union driver, they will not unload it. That is quite a strange situation when you think about it. They said that they will support the owner-drivers by not unloading non-union operated trucks. This means that a union sub-contractor can leave Adelaide and a non union guy can leave from next door and they are both defying the ban which is being called to support owner-drivers, yet only the non-union bloke is affected when he gets to Darwin.

As far as I am concerned, the Transport Workers Union is not supporting the move. The union is using this particular situation to try to force those owner-drivers who currently are not members of the union to join the union. What they are doing will not help the owner-drivers one iota, I hope to be able to clarify that situation because I could then possibly be a little bit more outspoken in my criticism. I am only working on the assumption that that is what they mean. I base my assumption on the comments of the people that I have spoken to: the union is not supporting the owner-driver; the union is trying to boost its membership.

I do not know what will happen but I do not think that a solution can be found by the action that is being taken. We will have to wait and see what support they get. I have spoken to the secretary of the Professional Transport Drivers Association and he certainly seems to have a reasonable grasp of the situation. He is behind the action being taken because he feels that the problem has to be brought to the attention of the people. He has some good ideas to try to overcome the problems in the future and to control the industry.

There has been criticism of Peter Nixon. This is completely out of his jurisdiction. This is not a transport problem as such but a dispute between

two companies. Therefore, the problem has to be solved by them and I hope that in the long term it can be fixed.

Mr TUXWORTH: I have two matters that I would like to touch on. The first is the "Broadband" program which was relayed last night and mentioned this morning. I would like to have it recorded in Hansard that I found the whole thing to be a disgusting exhibition of radio politics. I think that the people who put it on and pursued the issues to the degree they did were devious and the whole thing was sick. I believe that it is time the ABC cleaned up its own house because things are not very well in that stable. The ABC is an institution funded by public money for the benefit of the public and the least we could expect from it is to hear on the radio waves interesting broadcasts and the truth. It is so far from putting the pair of them over at one time at the moment that I am beginning to wonder whether it is worth while funding it.

A member: Hear, hear!

Mr TUXWORTH: The other item I would like to bring to the attention of members tonight is in relation to the introduction of TAB and the proposed legalising of gambling systems in the Northern Territory. Three years ago, in the election campaign, a member of the Labor Party who was the spokesman for the party on several things came out on a front page spread of the NT News and said the Labor Party was in favour of introducing TAB into the Territory and that bookmakers would go. He said this was the party's official platform and that it was to be known by all, far and wide. This is all very well. It is fine that any party comes out and makes its stand clear on things. Tonight in the paper, Mr Deputy Speaker, there is an article attributed to the aspiring leader of the Labor Party team in the coming elections, Mr Isaacs, in which it is said that he has been asked by people to state the policies of the Labor Party in relation to gambling, particularly in relation to TAB and poker machines. "Mr Isaacs said that the Labor Party does not have a policy concerning poker machines and it will be a matter of conscience because there

is a division on the issue". The first point I would like to raise is that there will always be divisions on issues and this party, if it aspires to government, can't go through life shovelling things under the carpet and putting things off to conscience vote. People are entitled to know what the party's attitude is. We know what the individual's attitude is. They are divisive and they are all different. We would like to know what the party's attitude is on poker machines.

The other point is that the Labor Party has done a 180 degree turnabout on its attitude towards TAB in the last 3 years. They now say that they are not in favour of having TAB and there is no reason why the TAB should be introduced into the Northern Territory because it is going to cost \$1m to set it up, and it will be throwing good money after bad. They say the bookmakers are a local industry and they are unique.

A member: They must be looking for campaign funds.

Mr TUXWORTH: Right. The question that would come to mind with this is: Is this a 6 month policy that is likely to change after October?

Mr Robertson: No, it's two bob each way.

Mr TUXWORTH: Right.

Mr Ryan: It will change after October because they won't have anything to do with it after then.

Mr TUXWORTH: The aspiring leader of the opposition team accused our Majority Leader in the last week of running with the hares and hunting with the hounds. I would like to put it to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the announcement in the paper tonight is nothing less than bending with the wind because the party finds it expedient today to take the heat off itself with the previous standard it had and has now come out and said it is not in favour of TAB. If, in view of the findings of the inquiry that is now in progress, the Labor Party has looked at the issue and revised its stand, that would be an admirable way to go about it, but to

hang on to the prospects of political opportunism in the way they are doing at the moment, clutching at any straw and changing their policies about, there is little hope that the electors in the NT will ever know what they want.

Mr POLLOCK: I listened intently to the honourable member for Elsey and I cannot let his remarks go by without comment. Listening to him this afternoon, I must say that there is somebody with a terribly guilty conscience in this place and it is not me. He said that I placed the blame on producers for the inconsistency in the product standard. I did not place the entire blame on the producers, but I do say that the producers do have a part to play in the whole project and they must share some of the blame.

He mentioned that the King River Bridge was a problem for getting beef cattle to the Katherine abattoir. How do you get cattle from Moroak over the King River Bridge on the Victoria Highway to the abattoir? I am not sure what his route is.

He spoke about unity and going forward with one voice. That is what I meant yesterday in relation to the conference. The cattlemen did get their heads together and came forward with one voice in the matters that they put to the Minister. In relation to the timing, if he wanted the Minister for Primary Industries there, any other date would not have been suitable.

I want to turn now to a matter concerning Ayers Rock. I wish to refer to air traffic control and safety. The Easter before last, I visited the Rock and was quite surprised at the number of air traffic movements there. As a result, I made some representations to the Department of Air Transport because of fears expressed to me about the possibility of an accident. The department responded very quickly and during the following August-September school holiday period installed a mobile air traffic control centre with air traffic control officers. However, during Easter this year, another peak period, the service did not operate and some concern was expressed. It was advised that

it would not operating at the May school holiday period nor at the June long weekend but they hoped to operate again during the school holidays in August- September. I took the matter up with the South Australian Director of the Department of Air Transport and this week I received a letter from him:

Thank you for your inquiry in respect of the provision of air traffic control services at Ayers Rock during busy periods. This project, like many others of similar importance, has been beset by delay mainly due to severe financial restraints. Preliminary essential work has, however, been processed and I am pleased to advise site and building approvals have been successfully negotiated with the Reserves Board. In addition, design work is at a very advanced stage. The last major burdle, approval of funds, has been sought and I believe these may be forthcoming very shortly. Should this be so, immediate construction will be undertaken and facilities, hopefully, will be established in time for the forthcoming August-September school holidays. Should the above time table require further amendment, I will advise you of the timetable.

They got by with ad hoc facilities last holidays, but now they have got to go into the whole process of buildings and so on, with another consumption of funds, which are not necessary on a strip that is going to be scrapped. They could get by with what they had last August and September, I believe, and ensure the safety of all air travellers in that area around the Ayers Rock at all busy periods such as the forthcoming June long weekend and the May school holidays which are now upon us. The busy period has started, holiday periods fluctuate from state to state, and perhaps we might have it during the forthcoming August-September school holiday period. What do we have to have - an air tragedy out there before we get some positive firm action by this department? I believe that during the Easter period there was nearly another Canary Island incident involving two aircraft, admittedly of much smaller size. The same sort of thing nearly happened at the Rock and the re-

ports have been submitted. Perhaps we have got to see one of these things happen. I hope not. But it is about time the Department really got its shackles into gear and looked at the situation realistically.

I noticed with interest that there was a question on the notice paper from the honourable member of Port Darwin about the Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund. Last week, I went to Amoonguna in my electorate where there is a fantastic sporting complex that has been provided through funds from the Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund. It is a lovely oval; the grass was 3 foot high on it, but don't worry about it it is nearly covering the fence. There is a hall which is a credit to any community except that every window in the place, every light in the place, the internal fittings, the glass in the stove, are all smashed and you walk over the door to walk into the building. Nevertheless, the building exterior is a credit to any community, or should be at least. I know that the people in Alice Springs township itself would be very pleased to have such a facility. There are a number of basketball courts, tennis courts and so forth and I do not know whether they are used or not really. There is also in the grounds a beautiful swimming pool. I know it has been in the ground there for a couple of years. There is a beautiful filtration plant there and the whole area is fenced but the pool cannot be used because it is not completed. Some \$20,000 odd has been expended on this pool, but there is a crack in the cement work and if the tiling was done by a tradesman, he should go back to trade school. The pool is not in a fit condition to be filled or used. Another summer has gone by and the people of Amoonguna have not been able to use this pool. Nobody else for that matter has been able to use this pool. When the matter was queried, they said that more funds were needed to finish this job off. That in itself is horrifying when one considers the amount that must have been spent already on this job.

I made some enquiries as to how much had been expended so that I could make some submission to the Minister or to the Fund to help the people of Amoon-

guna ensure that this pool is completed and that they are able to use it, as they should be able to. Less than an hour after making the inquiry, I received a phone call from the Assistant Director of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Darwin to say that the information could not be provided, that it was a private fund, that all information about the transaction of the fund was private and the fund had decided that any queries from the likes of members of the Legislative Assembly were not to be answered, the information was not to be provided. I was told that this recommendation had gone to a former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and this fantastic decision had been endorsed by Cavanagh as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and - I say regrettably - has not been rescinded. It is shameful. These are public moneys collected under statute of the Commonwealth and all the money that has been spent on that pool is a complete waste.

There may be other examples of this sort of thing. If there are, they will be to the detriment of the Aboriginal communities whom this money is supposed to benefit. I do not know what can be done next but I do know that I am taking the matter further with the Minister. I rang him direct and through some remarkable feat I was able to speak to him directly on the matter. Nevertheless, to this stage, the situation is unchanged. I will be taking the matter further but, at the same time, it is appropriate that I draw the House's attention to the situation. What hope the honourable member for Port Darwin has of having his question answered, I do not know, but I do hope that the information is forthcoming and that the Minister will take a firm stand in relation to the matter, that he will rescind that order and that the details of the fund will be published.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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