

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Parliamentary Record

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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	Gillen
Paul Anthony Edward Everingham	Jingili
Roger Michael Steele	Ludmilla
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Alline Dawn Lawrie	Nightciff
Milton James Ballantyne	Nhulunbuy
Ronald John Withnall	Port Darwin
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Marshall Bruce Perron	Stuart Park
Hyacinth Tungutalum	Tiwi
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PART I

THE DEBATES

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WHEREAS, by Section 4M(1) of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910, it is provided that the Administrator may prorogue the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory and may also appoint such times for holding the sessions of the Legislative Assembly as he thinks fit:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN ARMSTRONG ENGLAND, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, in exercise of the powers conferred by the said Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910, do, by this notice, prorogue the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory as on Friday, the twenty-fifth day of February, 1977 and appoint Tuesday, the first day of March, 1977 as the day for the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory to assemble and be holden for the dispatch of divers urgent and important affairs and all members of the said Legislative Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance accordingly in the building known as the Legislative Assembly Chamber at Darwin at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon on the first day of March 1977.

Made under my Hand and Seal of the Northern Territory of Australia this eleventh day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven.

J.A. ENGLAND
Administrator

FIRST ASSEMBLY - SECOND SESSION

On Tuesday 21 December 1976, the Assembly adjourned until 10 am on Tuesday 1 March 1977. The Assembly was prorogued by His Honour the Administrator under the provisions of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act on 25 February until 1 March 1977. The second session commenced on that day.

Tuesday 1 March 1977

The Assembly met at 10 am pursuant to the notice of prorogation and appointment made by His Honour the Administrator,

The Acting Clerk read the notice.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER: I am informed that it is the intention of His Honour the Administrator to attend at the doors to the Legislative Assembly Chambers at the hour of 10.10 o'clock and it is my intention to present myself to him there. I shall be pleased if honourable members will accompany me.

SITTING RESUMED

Mr Speaker resumed the Chair at 10.17 am.

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, His Honour the Administrator requests me to inform you that it is his pleasure to attend the Assembly now to declare the causes of his calling the Assembly together.

Mr SPEAKER: Will the Serjeant-at-Arms kindly inform His Honour that the Assembly is ready to receive him.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH

His Honour the Administrator took the Chair, with Mr Speaker on his right hand. His Honour was pleased to deliver the following speech:

Mr Speaker and members, the calling together of this Legislative Assembly for a new session at this time is particularly appropriate. It is an Assembly vested with new powers following the enactment of Commonwealth and Territory legislation which, for the

ATTENDANCE OF THE MINISTER

Mr SPEAKER: I wish to inform honourable members that the Honourable Albert Evan Adermann, Commonwealth Minister of State for the Northern Territory, is within the precincts. With the concurrence of honourable members, I shall invite the Honourable Minister to take a seat on the floor of the Assembly.

Members: Hear, hear!

The Minister took a seat on the floor of the Assembly.

DELEGATION FROM THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT

The Serjeant-at-Arms announced the presence of a delegation from the Commonwealth Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: I propose to the Assembly that, with its concurrence, the delegation be received at the Table.

Members: Hear, hear!

The members of the delegation took their seats at the Table.

The delegation comprised:

Senator the Honourable C.L. Laucke,
President of the Senate
The Right Honourable B.M. Snedden,
Q.C., Speaker of the House of
Representatives
Senator J.B. Keeffe
Senator B.F. Kilgariff
Senator E.A. Robertson
Mr S.E. Calder, M.H.R.
Mr S.A. Lusher, M.H.R.
Mr D.M. Blake, V.R.D.,
Deputy Clerk, House of Repre-
sentatives
Mr K.O. Bradshaw,
First Clerk-Assistant, the
Senate

Mr SPEAKER: Mr President Laucke, Mr Speaker Snedden, and members of the delegation, on behalf of the Assembly, I extend to you a warm welcome. I understand that the joint leaders of the delegation have decided on this occasion that Mr Speaker Snedden will address the Assembly on behalf of the delegation. I would be grateful, Mr Speaker, if you would do so now.

Mr SNEDDEN: It is a pleasure for all the delegation to be in Darwin for this significant occasion. The President and I are honoured to lead the delegation from the Commonwealth Parliament. The delegation has no members who are strangers to the Territory. Three represent the Territory in the Parliament, and no more staunch or eloquent advocates of Territorians' interests exist. The others of the delegation are kindred spirits and friends of the people of the Territory. We are messengers bringing you the friendship, the goodwill and the encouragement of the Commonwealth Parliament.

You are not strangers to us. You, Mr Speaker, we have seen in Canberra on select committees of your Assembly and we have met you at Presiding Officers Conferences and hope to do so again in future.

Mr Majority Leader and Chief Secretary, you are a frequent visitor to Canberra and you have played a notable part in constitutional development, not only in the Territory but at the Australian Constitutional Convention. We have many colleagues and friends whom we meet as members of committees in international and regional conferences and seminars.

This is no mere courtesy visit constrained by formal niceties and protocol; this is an opportunity for parliamentary colleagues to congratulate you on a significant advance in parliamentary and democratic process. This Assembly is now responsible, through the Majority Leader and Chief Secretary and his Cabinet, for such things as constitutional development - I am not quite sure who sets the pace for that, but you have a responsibility - local administration through your own public service; husbanding and improving your own environment; local government and its finance; housing and town management; law and order; civil defence and emergency services; transport and communications; local industries and public works; educational planning; and community services, including welfare, recreation and consumer protection. These are the very essence of living and human relationships and the management will now be where it properly belongs - with the people and with you,

their elected representatives. This is just part of the continuing evolution of democracy - devolution in management of the affairs of people by their elected representatives. This is not "a great leap forward". What has happened can be seen only as a measured and orderly tread in the direction towards statehood.

Mr Speaker, we do not come bearing gifts as did the Greeks with such disastrous consequences for the Trojans. I am here to make a promise of a gift - and I do not want any wry smiles from Territorians about promises from Canberra, please. We thought it should be something in the tradition of parliamentary interests. We would have liked to have promised you a new and permanent parliament house but we thought perhaps we had better build our own first. We hope, however, that we will be invited to Darwin again to see a new parliament house that will be a focal point linking the two parts of the city. It occurred to us that it may be acceptable to the Assembly if we were to offer as a gift 2 dispatch boxes and we will hope that it will not be long before we will be in a position to offer a mace to the Assembly on the achievement of self-government and statehood in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, it has been a great honour to all delegation members to be here to mark the occasion of the opening of the second session of the first Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory. Through their representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament, the whole of Australia wishes you success in your deliberations, discretion in your judgement, and the achievement of the aspirations of the people of the Northern Territory.

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the honourable member for Gillen to move a motion of thanks to the delegation.

MR ROBERTSON: I move that the following resolution be agreed to:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory, in Assembly assembled, express our thanks to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Parliament of

the Commonwealth of Australia in sending to us a distinguished delegation to attend the opening of the second session of the first Assembly. The presence of your delegation at a time of a significant constitutional development in the Territory is welcomed as a mark of the continuing regard of the parent legislature for the welfare of this institution. We reciprocate your warm greetings and expressions of goodwill and look forward to the continuation of a friendly association that has always existed between our respective Houses.

I note first of all, Mr Speaker Snedden, that you do not come, as you have pointed out, bearing gifts so that we need not be wary of you. Perhaps when you come next time and bring the dispatch boxes we may have cause to be wary of you.

The delegation before us has, as its joint leaders, the two highest ranking members that Parliament can send as a delegation. They send to us the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.

Mr Speaker Snedden is no stranger to us in the Territory. Indeed, I recall the many visits you made, sir, as the Leader of the Opposition. In the process of that, you assisted us greatly and you made many undying friendships. Mr President Laucke, I have seen you in your Chamber and I thought, from my humble position as Chairman of Committees in this House, that your impartial conduct in that House was an example to us all. I welcome you both here very sincerely.

I turn now, to the two senators who are members of the Australian Labor Party. I welcome Senator Keefe as Shadow Minister for the Northern Territory and Senator Robertson, I welcome you here as one of our opposing Territory members. I suppose that in your own way, Senators, you have a certain distinguishing feature - I speak in a spirit of levity - you are the first 2 members of the Australian Labor Party to pass through the Bar during a sitting of this Assembly. I daresay you will be doing your absolute best to ensure that you are not the last. You are welcome here.

Steve Lusher MHR comes to us and is welcome in his capacity as a member of the Government's Internal Committee on Federal Affairs. Mr Lusher has recently visited us in his capacity as a member of a subcommittee of that committee and he is very welcome back here. Indeed we hope, sir, that you and your colleagues on that committee come back again. I think that it is a most useful exercise and you are welcome in that capacity.

Mr Sam Calder MHR - what do I say in this Chamber about Mr Calder? He has devoted many years of service to the Northern Territory. It gives me great pleasure to welcome to this Chamber a man who has been of such inspiration to me. I have been a supporter of Sam's for a long time and now find myself in the position of speaking to him on the floor of this House. Sam, you are very welcome here.

Senator Bernie Kilgariff - again what do you say about Senator Kilgariff? We are not really welcoming him to the floor of this Chamber but welcoming him back to it. Senator Kilgariff was the first Speaker of this Assembly. It is significant that he comes back to us on this occasion when you bear in mind that he first came here on the first constitutional development of the Chamber. From my recollection, that was when he was originally elected. I extend to you, Senator, a very warm welcome.

Thank you all for coming, thank you for your kind words and I would also like to say thank you to your Clerks who have attended.

I cannot really close without mentioning, on an occasion such as this, the presence of Mr Justice Ward in the Gallery. I think that too is very significant.

Mrs LAWRIE: I second the motion.

I see the presence of the members of the Commonwealth Parliament as the recognition, approval and endorsement by the people of Australia of our orderly constitutional development. This is a moment of unity not division. It is a recognition that we are firstly

and primarily Australians, a free people, governing our own destiny by a very democratic process. The Australian people through their representatives are present and wish us well and we thank them for their presence and approval.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr SPEAKER: With the unanimous concurrence of members, I declare the motion carried.

Mr SNEDDEN: On behalf of the delegation, Mr Speaker, I would say we appreciate the opportunity to be here and may we now withdraw?

The delegation withdrew.

MINISTER'S SPEECH

Mr SPEAKER: With the concurrence of members, I now invite the Honourable the Minister for the Northern Territory to address the Assembly.

Mr ADERMANN: This is indeed an important day in the constitutional history of the Northern Territory, marking as it does the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly in which the members have direct executive responsibility over a substantial number of state-type activities. Today sees the beginning of a process which will bring the Northern Territory to a situation of responsible self-government and ultimate statehood. This is a commitment which the Government made to the people of the Northern Territory when it was elected to office. It is a commitment which will be honoured.

Before addressing myself further to this important event, I take the opportunity to dispel rumours suggesting that the Government intends to mark time on the total re-establishment of Darwin and in the developmental progress of the Territory as a whole. There is no truth in these rumours; the Government is committed to the development of Darwin as a great city, to the progress of all other centres, and to the orderly development of the enormous resource potential of the Territory.

It is true that Territorians, and the

region, have had to share in the general economic problems that have beset Australia as a result of the worst world-wide economic climate since the great depression in the 1930s. It is not true that these difficult times have anything to do with a deliberate policy of containment of Darwin growth and NT development. Indeed, despite the difficult budgetary situation facing it, the Government consciously sought this financial year to ensure that adequate funds were provided to maintain the impetus of Darwin reconstruction and the development of the Territory generally. It has been, and it remains, our fullest intention to provide adequate funds, within the scope allowed by these still difficult - but improving - times, to meet the needs and aspirations of the Northern Territory. We are just as committed in this regard as we have proven to be on our promise to take the first real step towards the conferral of executive responsibility on the Legislative Assembly. While some here will not see today's important event in constitutional development as being as far-reaching as they would have liked, it is a major step. We have set in train an irreversible process which must inevitably lead to political autonomy for the Northern Territory.

Today's ceremony, as you all know, was rather abruptly and devastatingly postponed by Cyclone Tracy on Christmas Day of 1974. At this point, may I digress a little to pay tribute to the magnificent job done by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

On Christmas morning 1974, only 400 of Darwin's 8,700 homes were left substantially intact by Cyclone Tracy's winds. But, by the second anniversary of the devastation of Darwin, the DRC had completed 1,350 new homes and 150 flats; work had been done on other major government building projects; private residents, with the help of the Government's concessional home loan scheme, had built or rebuilt 1,800 homes, and the Northern Territory Housing Commission a further 500. Within 2 years, 3,650 homes had been built or rebuilt in addition to those restored to their pre-Tracy condition. We have witnessed a building effort unique in

Australia's history. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has been so effective in performing its task that it has proved possible to wind it up on 31 December next and revert to normal procedures for public works in the city from that date.

That said, here we are today in a city that is moving ahead very quickly towards complete reconstruction, in a Territory with an obviously great future, and it gives me great pleasure to know that this Legislative Assembly rose to the occasion through very difficult times. It is encouraging to note that the Assembly is pressing strongly for more responsibilities in the drive to ultimate statehood. The Government will cooperate with the Assembly in the orderly achievement of that goal.

This may be the point to recall the history of constitutional change or reform in more recent times. The Legislative Council was established in 1947 with power to make ordinances for the peace, order and good government of the Territory. The composition of the Council from then until 1959 was: the Administrator of the Northern Territory as President, 7 official or government appointed members and 6 elected members.

In 1960, the Council was redesigned to provide some more influence from elected representation. The Administrator remained as President, there were 6 official members, 3 government appointed non-official members and 8 elected members. This situation again changed in 1966 when, from the same number of MLCs, the President was elected from non-official and elected membership. In 1968, the composition became 6 official and 11 elected members, and in 1974 the now Legislative Assembly was established with 19 elected members.

It is fitting that tribute be paid to some of the major political figures of the past and present, people deeply involved in the move towards ultimate self-determination, to people like the first Northern Territory federal member, the late Harold Nelson, who fought his campaign on the catchcry: "No taxation without representation", to his

son Jock, who held the seat for 17 years after the war and, although on the other side of the political fence, did his job with great dignity. Representing the Territory since has been Sam Calder who is untiring in his efforts on behalf of the Territory and its people.

I pay tribute to the leader of the 6 elected members of the Legislative Council who fought to win changes in the 1950s - I refer to the then Mr Dick Ward, now His Honour Mr Justice Ward of the Northern Territory Supreme Court. Other names spring to mind - Senator Bernie Kilgariff, originally one of the government appointed non-official members who won popular support when he stood as the member for Alice Springs and who became one of the Northern Territory's first 2 senators; men like Ron Withnall MLA, still here and still independent and still pressing the cause of constitutional advancement; "blinkin' bods" like former MLC and Mayor of Darwin, Mr Tiger Brennan, who regularly used the phrase "the holy city" to describe Canberra; the late Fred Drysdale of that noted NT pioneering family; and the late Harry Chan, Chinese community leader and former President of the Legislative Council and Mayor of Darwin.

There are many more, including the official and appointed non-official members of the old Legislative Council. Time does not permit my mentioning them all by name but the Territory owes them all a debt of gratitude.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr ADERMANN: Looking to the future, I would remind you that the Government has set itself the target of progressively transferring to the Legislative Assembly Executive responsibility for all state-type functions within the next 3 to 4 years. In the coming financial year, the Legislative Assembly will determine the financial priorities to be accorded to the functions for which it is responsible - for the first time there will be a full scale budget in the Assembly.

Pending the transfer of other functions, the Government will continue to

consult with and seek the advice of Executive Members in respect of those matters. We have established the essential framework for the further transfer of powers, including provision for Executive Members and the Northern Territory Public Service. A good deal more remains to be done.

In the coming months, the Government and the Legislative Assembly will turn their attention to the development of a separate fiscus for the Territory and the establishment of a Northern Territory Government as a legal entity. These complex matters will be given priority, as will the determination of an agreed timetable for the transfer of further powers to the Assembly.

Nobody can doubt that the Territory has a great and bright future and it is the Government's intention that the people's elected representatives should play their full role in the realisation of that future as dictated by your wishes and demands - the demands of the people of the Territory, the people of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Mr SPEAKER: On behalf of the Assembly, I thank the Honourable the Minister for his speech.

The Chair will be resumed at the ringing of the bells at approximately 2 pm.

Mr Speaker MacFarlane resumed the Chair at 2 pm and questions without notice were asked.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mr STEELE: Question on notice number 1629 was directed to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government. It concerned the contractor company in charge of the construction of the Timber Creek Police Station - a \$600,000 to \$700,000 job. The question asked whether it was true that the company was having financial difficulties; I was told that this company was having problems in carrying on the work down there. This is a pretty important facility in that area, we are all of

the opinion in this House that these isolated bush stations must have 2 policemen instead of one, and the construction of this police station is obviously a step in the right direction.

The question also asked whether the construction of Timber Creek Police Station was on schedule in keeping with the requirements of the Department of Construction and, if not, what the problems were and why there was a delay. I thought the question was important enough to put on notice and I am disappointed that the answer has not been forthcoming. I do not know what the system is in regard to questions unanswered for a certain time. Who is responsible for providing an answer? It is important that these departments do come back with this information. We will certainly find some way of re-directing the question or making sure that these people do provide some sort of information.

Mr VALE: Mr Speaker, I am very glad to see you looking a lot more like yourself. This morning, when you were all dressed up and looking so distinguished, you reminded me of a story about the fellow who had been away from home for so long that when he got back the dog bit him in the front yard, the kids started to cry and his wife phoned the police to say that there was a prowler in the yard.

The point I wish to raise concerns the serious and grave position of local business houses and firms in Alice Springs concerning payment by the Government for the supply of goods and services. The delays by the departments in paying for these goods and services has dragged, not into days, not into weeks, but into months. The position has become so critical that these small firms have had to go into heavy bank overdrafts to make ends meet while waiting for payments from the Federal Treasury. The position is so serious that I suggest there is only one method to shake the departments into paying these accounts on time, and that would be for these firms to withhold their taxes. The position is critical in Central Australia - I cannot over-emphasise that. A serious position requires

a serious reply. The only method I can suggest to shake the Government out of its lethargic payment of these accounts is for these firms to withhold their taxes.

Mr ROBERTSON: The new floor covering may have its advantages but I doubt that these chairs enhance that advantage. I cannot understand quite frankly why people insisted on keeping these things.

I would like to endorse the remarks of the honourable member for Stuart. I have been very closely involved in the difficulties of business houses in Alice Springs recently, in particular their difficulties in obtaining payment from the Government. I went public during the term of office of the Australian Labor Party and I made a comment to the press which was printed in the Centralian Advocate. I said that, until the Government paid its debts to the business people of Alice Springs, I would not pay my debts to the Government. I now reaffirm, and they can print it again that I will be paying nothing to the Government, on exactly the same basis as I have previously, until such time as the Government honours its commitments and its debts to the business people of my town. They are going out backwards and it is this, as much as anything else, that is causing it. The Government must accept ultimate responsibility for what its servants and officers do. The difficulty clearly is in the departments. Whether that is the result of the Government's control of finance or whether the Government is not receiving money in sufficient time to pay it out, I do not care. The fact of the matter is that in Wilkinson Street alone last week I was informed of the loss of 6 jobs. One of those firms that put 4 off have been owed \$40,000 continually over 90 days. In a small company of local business people who have put their whole heart and soul into establishing a business, a small firm that started off in the back of a van and ended up employing 22 people, consumers in our town, those consumers are now losing their jobs and it is largely a result of cash flow difficulties.

There is another matter which I wish

to go into now. It is very serious and I start off by saying that the comments I am going to make are in no way whatever directed towards the Aboriginal people as a people. It is a situation which has developed and it has been debated in this House before; I refer to the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Alcoholism among the Aboriginal people which was debated here. I said at that time that we are unlikely to have any panaceas. We are unlikely in the present circumstances to come up with a cure although I hope we can. The honourable member for Barkly, in his capacity as Cabinet Member, is currently heading a liquor commission legislation proposal in which I am assisting him. Whether that is going to solve the problem, I do not know.

I have here a letter from Australian Pacific Tours Pty Ltd, addressed to Mr L.J.R. Underdown, Hotel Alice Springs, PO Box 5, Alice Springs NT 5750, and I have Mr Underdown's personal approval to read this letter to the House. It results from a letter he wrote to the company querying why, after many years of that company using his hotel for accommodation on tours, they have cancelled that arrangement. Their letter says:

Thank you for your letter of 11 January. I must apologise for not replying earlier, but I have been on leave until February. We regret the necessity for having to cancel the tour which was booked into your hotel over the New Year period, but unfortunately, due to circumstances apparently beyond your control, trouble with Aborigines at the hotel has caused considerable alarm and discomfort to our passengers, to a point where we could have been guilty of misrepresentation in that we knowingly allowed the next party to stay at your hotel after the incidents which occurred on the previous tour, and the fact that there was no guarantee that all would be well for a second tour. I must point out that we would have placed ourselves in a very difficult situation in relation to the new Trade Practices Act if we had knowingly booked our party into your hotel after having made the statements in our brochure that we do

with regard to checking of hotels and the high standards of the establishments we use. Unfortunately, complaints we have received from our passengers have left us with no alternative.

I can assure you that it is not a decision we came to easily. We realise that you, as well as ourselves, are in an awkward position. We do thank you for the assistance we have received from your hotel, staff, management and company over the years, and we hope that when the hotel recovers from its present problems, we will once again be in a position to make use of same.

The implications there for Alice Springs are very dire indeed. We are in a serious economic situation in Alice Springs. I believe in some areas that business exaggerates its difficulties and I also believe that a lot of business problems, from my own observations in Alice Springs, are the result of ineptitude in management and in many cases want of common courtesy. I am not generalising; there are only one or two firms involved in this, but you will always find that those firms do the most grizzling.

This is a letter from a major tour operator to a major hotelier in our town at a time when we desperately need tourism. We desperately need to encourage it. In fact it is at the moment one of the very few viable industries we have, although hopefully the cattle industry will pick up to some extent. I read the letter to honourable members to give us all an idea of the difficulties we face with the alcohol problem in respect of our Aboriginal people. What we can do about it, as I have said in this place before, I do not know. I am afraid that, when we came into this place, when we were elected by the people and were sworn in here, we were not given a magic wand at the same time as we took the oath.

Mr WITHNALL: I would like to say a few words this afternoon on the subject of town planning. I am aware that there is a proposal that town planning legislation will be introduced, but my particular comments this afternoon are

directed towards what I might call the subterfuges which the Darwin Reconstruction Commission are using in order to justify their retention of a very expensive and, I suggest, very useless, town planning staff. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission, under section 8 of the act, has the right to indulge in town planning schemes, but no town planning scheme can be put into operation until it has been properly advertised and has received the approval of the Minister. There has been some advertisement of some abortive proposals but in no case has the Minister approved of any town planning scheme. It would appear, however, that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has received some advice that, because it has power under section 15 of its act to approve the sorts of buildings that may be erected, it may indulge in unlimited town planning by simply dealing with the types of buildings which can be erected on particular land. Nothing could be further from the truth. While I admit that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission may refuse to permit on a particular piece of land buildings to be erected which are within the existing town plan, it cannot approve of the erection of buildings on any land within the city of Darwin which are in excess of the town plan because the fact remains that, in the absence of a town plan approved under section 8 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act, the existing town plan is valid; it may not be denied and may not be contravened even by a body so august as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

I illustrate this by saying that in an area at the west end of Smith Street, around Beagle Street, an advertisement has appeared under the authority of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission proposing the erection of 6 or 8 blocks at least - and it may be more than that - of 6 storey flats. I discussed this matter with somebody concerned with town planning in the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and they claimed that, because they had authority to approve the erection of a building, they could change the town plan that way. Of course that is nonsense. They could, in a negative way, prevent anything being erected which was within the existing town plan but

they cannot extend the power to approve the erection of a building against the town plan itself.

This is the sort of nonsense the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is now committing in order to hang on to the authority which it claims to have to do some town planning in the city of Darwin. Let us face it, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has no power, none whatever, to do any town planning in the city of Darwin. It has power only to approve or disapprove of the erection of a building of a particular type.

I would like to go on to discuss the merits of the proposal which they have made with respect to the Beagle Street area, but I do not think time will permit. However, I would like to bring to the attention of honourable members and the public generally a further piece of monumental stupidity which the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the Town Planning Board between them have committed. I am the executor of Eric Izod's estate. Eric Izod owned a piece of land on the Esplanade in Darwin which is next door to the present Naval Headquarters. That piece of land has been sold under a contract which is conditional upon the use of the land being rezoned for general business purposes. The buyers under the contract of sale approached, in my name, the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the Town Planning Board simultaneously for permission to erect a business building which would require rezoning of the land to a general business zone.

The town planning section of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, sitting with the members of the Town Planning Board, considered this application and said that it would allow the erection of the building. Then, so help me, the Town Planning Board went away and sat down on its own and refused to change the zoning.

Thus, we have a most ridiculous situation - it cannot be Catch 22; it has got to be Catch 23 surely. We have the ridiculous situation that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission town planning people, sitting with the Darwin Town Planning Board, have approved

of the erection of that building and the Town Planning Board has said that the land cannot be used for any purpose except residential A.

How silly can you get? What sort of a ridiculous situation have we been reduced to under governmental authority? The honourable member for Fannie Bay is a member of the DRC and I will ask him to have a look at this situation, to find out just exactly what is going on in the town planning section of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and to instruct them that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's operation in town planning never even started. They have not started, they cannot be used, and the continued employment of staff for town planning in the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is a complete waste of public money.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to make some brief remarks about the 14th Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that the honourable member for Ludmilla and myself attended with our Serjeant-at-Arms. The agenda items for the conference were vast and varied and one particular agenda item was "Aid". This was discussed mainly by the delegates from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Western Samoa and the Gilbert Islands and they directed their aid questions towards Australia and New Zealand. There was one gentleman there whose name was Sir Albert Henry and he was the Premier of the Cook Islands. Sir Albert Henry was deploring the lack of aid that the Cook Islands were receiving and mentioned that they were unable to build a new powerhouse. We are having powerhouse problems in Darwin, so that was not anything new to me. He attacked the New Zealand Government constantly for the whole 15 minutes that he was allowed to speak.

I was fortunate enough to take part in the conference but the thing that struck me about the speech that Sir Albert Henry made was that he was worried about going to the polls this year. He had promised the Cook Islands that he was going to obtain aid from New Zealand or Australia to build a new powerhouse. He had fallen down on his promise because he was unable to obtain the aid. He has probably got more rela-

tions in the Parliament of the Cook Islands than anywhere else in the world so his position in the Cook Islands is very secure. Nevertheless, he was concerned that, because he was unable to obtain the aid from either Australia or New Zealand, he was letting the Cook Islands down.

Finally, it was my turn to speak and I jumped to my feet and assured Sir Albert Henry that members of this Legislative Assembly were also having problems, especially those in the Darwin area. I told him that we were having power disputes, power breakdowns, turbine breakdowns, that our telephones were running hot every time the power went out and our electors were ringing us up and asking what we were doing about it. I said we also were worried about an election.

We in Darwin think that we are the only people who are having problems with power and water. We are not. Apparently the water problem exists not only in Darwin, but exists throughout various parts of the world.

Mr Withnall: Water or power?

Mr DONDAS: Water and power. Everybody seems to be having problems, but we seem to single out Darwin and keep on saying, "What kind of place are we living in? We have terrible water and we have no power". Everybody seems to get very excited. But I am saying that there are other parts of the country that are experiencing a lot of problems with their water supply and with their power supply. We should maybe take a stand now and have a little bit of patience and work towards a goal within the next 2 or 3 years to overcome the problems we are faced with now.

Mr Withnall: You have given in.

Mr DONDAS: I have not given in.

There was a delegate from Fiji and he was the mayor of Ba. Whilst he was on his feet he told a joke about a cyclone in his area during which a goat was killed. The parish priest came along to the mayor and said, "Mr Mayor, I have a dead goat; I am giving it to you for disposal". The mayor said to the parish

priest, "That is not my job; you are the priest and it is your job to bury the goat". The parish priest replied: "Yes, I will bury the goat but I am inviting the next of kin".

Mr Ryan: Ha, ha!

Mr DONDAS: I am glad you saw the point.

The conference itself was carried out in a very friendly manner and both the honourable member for Ludmilla and myself as well as our Serjeant-at-Arms enjoyed our stay. The South Australian branch of the CPA made every endeavour to make sure that we were happy and content.

I asked a question earlier of the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning: "Why was the airconditioning in government offices left on over the weekend?" I did not really hear his reply because it was a little bit waffled, maybe because of the new seating arrangements or he was not quite clear in his pronunciation, but he said that they did not have anybody to go around and turn the things off. We sit out there in the northern suburbs and there is not a day or a weekend goes by when we do not have the power go off for an hour or 2 hours.

Mr Perron: Rubbish!

Mr DONDAS: I challenge the honourable member outside the House to prove that statement, Mr Speaker. I will not go into it now because there is no way in the world that he could win that argument and I would only be wasting every member's time here.

I am saying that while we have government offices here in town, Block 1, Block 2, Block 8, Block 5, Block 6 with power on at the weekend, there are people out in the northern suburbs who maybe could have power if it was turned off in town. On Friday night, they knock off at 4.21. On Saturday and Sunday there are something like 52 hours with power on in town and we have power off out there for 2 hours because they are shedding. You do not get this in Katherine, Mr Speaker, but we get it in the northern suburbs. In the northern

suburbs we have 20,000 people. The Cabinet Member says, "Rubbish". I would like him to come out to the northern suburbs and spend 48 hours and see what the residents of the northern suburbs go through.

A lady rang me up from Howard Springs the other day. Over a 30 hour period she had only had 10 hours of power. That appeared in the NT News on Thursday. Her name is Mrs Harris. She rang me up and she was quite irate. She said, "Our power has been off. We have had 10 hours of power in 30 hours. We have food in the fridge and I have got a baby to feed. What can you do about it?" I told her there was nothing very much I could do except ring Bishop Street and ask what the problem was. Mrs Harris said, "I can do that, I can find out the information". She was quite irate and she hung up. I was quite disturbed. I did not have a chance to find out where Mrs Harris lived in Howard Springs and what the story was, but nevertheless I rang Mr Redmond, the Director of Works, and said, "Look, this is a phone call that I have had, what can you do about it?" Eventually, about a half hour later, I got another phone call from somebody else, from the ESU or Bishop Street, and I think that Mrs Harris' problem was finally organised. But what I am trying to say is that if we are going to waste power in the city areas then we should not have any shedding out in the northern suburbs.

Another area of concern I have is that the ESU and the day labour force have an argument. I feel for them because there have been some people in the day labour organisation who have been employed here for 5, 10 or 15 years. They are asking for accommodation. That is not too much to ask when you consider that these bods who come up from Canberra or Sydney and are going to be here for only 2 years have everything laid on. They do not want to be part of our community, but they are coming up here and are going to work up here for a couple of years; they are going to save a few bob and then buzz off. But we have had people working in the day labour force for 5 and 10 years and they do not get any consideration as far as accommodation is concerned. I

feel that they have every justification to take the action they are taking. However, now we have something like \$9.5m worth of homes sitting vacant in the northern suburbs and we have had people living in cyclone-damaged houses and in caravans or demountables for 18 months. Their Christmas wish for 1976 was to get into a house. Some people had over 40 points and they were high on the priority list to move into accommodation for Christmas, but because of this dispute they were unable to and they were forced to face another Christmas in the old caravan or the old demountable or even under the old wet floor boards,

You would not stand for it, Mr Speaker, and I would not stand for it, but nevertheless these people have no alternative. They are faced with the situation whereby they must stay in that accommodation. They cannot afford to pay \$60 a week for a flat or \$90 per week for a house, and they are just not available. This dispute should have been settled well and truly by now. We ask questions of various Cabinet Members about what is happening but nobody seems to know. It is about time somebody got up off his backside and made some decision so that those 240 or 250 homes can be connected up and people can move out of substandard accommodation and into good accommodation.

Mr POLLOCK: I have 2 matters that I want to raise today. The first concerns the sewerage farm situation at Alice Springs. We had planned this year to spend \$105,000 for additional pondage. Tenders were to be called a month or so ago and work was to be done this financial year. The problem of pumping the excess sewage or letting it flow over into the swamp from down the creek would have been overcome. Some thinking people decided that it would be possible to use the excess water in a lucerne growing project on land beside the sewage pond area and thus save the expenditure of some of this \$105,000. However, nobody seems to want to make up his mind about the matter; decisions are still to be made on the matter. The Minister wrote that he has departmental fellows looking into this. The \$105,000 is not being spent on the pond and no decision is being made in

relation to the lucerne growing. An end result will be that no money at all will be spent and the swamp will be added to considerably with sewage waste breeding more mosquitoes. It is time that those responsible took some firm action to overcome the problem. It is a problem that is on-going as the town of Alice Springs grows. There will be an increased amount of sewage and waste water to be disposed of.

The other matter I wanted to refer to concerns the Australian Broadcasting Commission services to the Northern Territory. Members will recall that last year I alluded to this matter and said that I had called on the Minister for Posts and Telecommunications, Mr Robinson, to institute an inquiry into a number of aspects of the service in the Northern Territory. The Minister replied saying that he did not really consider an inquiry necessary, but he did advise, quoting his letter: "Again I must emphasise that the commission and the Government are aware of the deficiencies in the service provided by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in the Northern Territory. As soon as resources permit, I expect that the commission will quickly move to improve the situation". They are moving quickly to improve the situation because for the last 18 months or so the position of talks officer here in Darwin to service the whole Northern Territory has been vacant, and nothing has been done, as far as I can see, about replacing that officer or improving the service. We have 2 rural officers here at the ABC who provide the service for the whole of the Northern Territory; one is about to go on 3 months' leave, and as soon as he comes back, the second one goes on 4 months' leave. So, effectively, for 7 months there will be one rural officer instead of the 2 who are needed to provide a service to the rural community of the Northern Territory, and still no talks officer to provide a service which Territorians are entitled to in relation to their community affairs.

I hope that the new chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission will take some positive action to remedy the situation which the Government admits exists, that the service provided by

ABC radio and television to the Northern Territory is quite unsatisfactory and needs improvement. One would hope that this will be forthcoming in the immediate future.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise in this adjournment debate to convey to the House a few things which are affecting my electorate, but before doing so, I would like to pay tribute to you, Mr Speaker, and your staff for the work that has been done on the Assembly Chamber.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr BALLANTYNE: I have watched the progress over the last few weeks and I think there has been a magnificent effort put in by the workmen who did the job. It was really an eye-opener to me when I saw it and I would like to convey my thanks, and I am sure everyone here, by the "hear, hears", would wish to say the same thing.

My first subject today is one of maintenance of schools in the Northern Territory. I am sure that every member has problems with the same thing in his electorate. It is a continuing problem and I do not know why it is. Malcolm Fraser said in 1975 that we were going to have better management to tighten up the economy and he would manage the money and the nation's affairs in the best possible way. I know he is not a miracle-man to wave a wand, but somewhere along the line in the government departments there are people, I would say, who deliberately try to sabotage the system. I refer, as did the honourable member for Gillen today, to payment to contractors who take out government contracts to do certain works of maintenance; I am sure that somewhere along the line there is a deliberate sabotage effort to cause chaos, not only to the department itself but to the people who are called in to do jobs.

I mention this because I happen to know one of the contractors in Nhulunbuy and I recently asked him how business was. He said, "I have been doing a bit of contract work for the Government, repairing schools". Some of the maintenance work there had built up, so

they got him to do a certain job. He said he was not going to take on another one because he would go broke; he was not being paid.

I do not know why, when you take out a contract, you cannot get paid for it. We buy something, we buy a car, we buy household goods, we buy a house, we have a commitment and we have to pay. Somehow or other within the government service it is always computer problems: "The program broke down". They have the most sophisticated equipment you can buy anywhere I have seen some of the equipment and I happen to be a little bit knowledgeable in this field - but for some reason or other they cannot pay their bills. You cannot tell me that they have not got the money. That is a lot of nonsense because the money is available. A contract has been taken out and it has been fulfilled by the contractors but for some reason or another, when they come around to getting paid for the job, there is no money available or the department is still processing it.

I just thought that I would draw your attention to that because I know how the member for Gillen and the member for Stuart feel about these things. I am sure that all the other members of this Assembly have the same problems. I do not know why. Management has grown this day from one foot wide to a kilometre wide. I am sure that in management today there is chaos. I only know one thing about management: when you pay something for goods you receive them and if you are not happy with the goods you return them or you come to some understanding.

There seems to be a different system of operating the programs for the maintenance of schools than when I was in the industry. There is no preventive maintenance scheme. A plan can be drawn up for every school, for every building, the same as this building here, where you have a monthly check up; inspectors come around and check up on these things and find out whether the taps are leaking or whether there is a blind broken or a window catch not operating. It seems to me that they wait until everything happens at once. A perfect example of this exists at the

Dhupuma College just out of Nhulunbuy. I went out there the other day and I was absolutely appalled at what I saw. I had been out there before but they had not been pointing these things out to me. They said they were having trouble getting this done and getting that done. There was a young chap killed out there last year. He was electrocuted. He plugged into a general purpose outlet; he went up on the roof, grabbed hold of an electric drill on an iron roof and was electrocuted. I went out there the other day and that same general purpose outlet still had a safety tag on it. I do not know whether it had been checked. Through somebody I know, I tried to get it fixed up and I believe they have checked it out. Those are the sorts of things that really worry me.

There was \$15,000 spent checking up on the electrical system out there. The principal told me that the security lights did not work after they had spent the \$15,000. Surely they were working before. I could go out there with 2 or 3 people and I would have that thing operating in an afternoon but, for some reason or another, they bring up all these stories that they have not got the money. I am sure that a lot of the trouble is that the workers have not got the tradesmanship behind them. I am worried about the people who are doing these jobs. There were 2 driers and one brand new industrial washing machine sitting out in the weather; they have been there for 2 years in a crate, I guarantee that if you took those units out of the boxes you would have to spend something like \$2,000 or \$3,000 to get the machines to operate because they will probably be full of water and rusted out. These are the sorts of things that I worry about.

I bring this to the attention of the Assembly because, somewhere along the line, I am sure that there is sabotage going on. I only hope that some sense will reign in regard to the planning of the maintenance of schools and government buildings and that the proper people will be given the money to do it in a more methodical way than it has been done in the past. I could go to every place in the Territory and find all sorts of problems with buildings

because people are too lazy to do the job or they leave it go to next day or they say they have not got enough money. I do not believe that. I just bring that to members' attention because I know that it concerns all of us.

Today I asked the Executive Cabinet Member for Law about a police boat. This is one of these things that go on and on and on. There will come a time when I might have to report to this Assembly that someone has drowned in a boating accident because there was no police boat at Nhulunbuy. I was told I should check with the company out there. I do not know what the company has to do with it; I asked about a police boat. However, I will find that out and will probably trace it. They may be playing a little game with me and will say: "When you get there, you will probably find that there is a boat". I only hope, when they do buy a boat, that it is seaworthy because we have pretty high seas out there at times. We do not want a little motor boat to putt putt around in the harbour; we want something to go out to sea in case of emergency. We want to have it equipped with the proper emergency gear and also a spare outboard engine.

I asked a question in this House last year about the surroundings of the government buildings in Mitchell Street. I see that some work has been carried out but I was told that it was supposed to be finished in November last year. We are now into the month of March and that work is still not completed. I do not know who is doing the job. It seems to me that they are doing the job quite methodically, but the time they have taken to do it astounds me.

A member: What about the cost, \$110,000?

Mr BALLANTYNE: I am no gardener and I am no landscaper, but that job has taken so far something like 9 months. I do not know who was organising it; I think it was the DRC but I do not know who the officer in charge was. I am glad that I am not working in private enterprise with him because, management-wise, he has a lot to learn.

I asked the Cabinet Member for Transport privately about Aboriginal people who work in industry in isolated areas. Some of them are sometimes held back in their employment because they have not got the educational background, they cannot read or write. It was drawn to my attention recently that one Aboriginal lad had let his licence expire; he had a C class licence. Now, the licence has expired and he cannot pass the test because he is unable to read the questions that are asked for that C class licence. I believe he got the C class licence in the early days when the regulations were not as tough. I only hope that we could give some consideration to the Aboriginal people in the isolated areas. Perhaps we might be able to do it through the Administrator's Council and give them, say, a restricted licence, a licence to operate in a certain area, not in the towns or townships but in an outback area where you do not have the same problems - you have not got road signs and lights and all that sort of thing.

It is a problem that concerns me and I only hope that other members will discuss this with me because I am sure that we may be able to help the Aboriginals in their employment. Driving vehicles is something that they can do quite capably. But you have got to pass all sorts of quiz tests these days.

They seem to be in the C class licence test particularly, and these people are just unable to read or write. There have been language papers put out for the Aboriginals but they cannot even read their own language. They know their own language to speak it but they cannot read it and they cannot write it. I only hope that we can in some way try to rehabilitate some of the Aboriginal people in this way.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, as the honourable member for Nhulunbuy has remarked, in the last 3 or 4 weeks a remarkable transformation of this Chamber has been accomplished. I am greatly impressed, and I know most members are also, by the vastly improved appearance of the Chamber and the provision of better facilities. It is my intention to write a congratulatory letter to the Director of Construction, Mr George Redmond, with particular reference to the efforts exerted for the successful completion of the job by Mr Mackenzie, Assistant Associate Director, General Works, and the Chief Designer, General Works, Mr Drewes. The cooperation from all sections of the Department of Construction and the contractors involved in the work was excellent.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 2 March 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION REPORT ON
ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND DRIVING

Mr RYAN: I table the Law Reform Commission report on alcohol, drugs and driving.

I move that the report be noted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later time.

I would like to point out to honourable members that, when this report was tabled at the last sittings, there were only a limited number of copies available and I assume that all members now have copies of the report. If, however, any member has mislaid his copy, if he could contact me, I will do my best to see that he gets another copy. I have just had to hand back the original copy that I had for tabling.

Leave granted.

Debate adjourned.

PROPOSED MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from the honourable member for Port Darwin a letter proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the Assembly for discussion, namely, the need for the revision of (a) the functions of the Home Finance Trustee and (b) the grounds and provisions upon which loan money should be advanced. Is the honourable member supported?

Proposal not supported.

HOUSING BILL

(Serial 183)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is in identical form to the Housing Bill (Serial 115) which was presented to the Assembly in October

1976 and, as a result of the prorogation, it is necessary for me to reintroduce the bill. Most of the principles were fully outlined in the second-reading speech on 13 October and I do not propose to waste the time of the Assembly in recanvassing all of the issues that were raised at that time and in the subsequent debate. The scheme is proposed to proceed as was originally indicated and members might recall that, at the time of presenting the bill, I did indicate that there were several issues which required resolution by the Australian Government. These were occasioned by the fact that some new concepts had been introduced into the bill by ourselves, particularly the principle of a rebate off the purchase price of the home of part of the rent paid in the qualifying period. I believe that is a completely new concept in Australian housing. However, it was also necessary for us to negotiate with the Government with regard to the sale price formula that was determined in the bill and was explained on 13 October. That has now been accepted although it is also accepted that this may need to be reviewed in 1978 in light of the new arrangements to be settled between the Commonwealth and the states for the provision of welfare housing on a new assistance basis from 1978/79. However, for the time being, we have been advised by the Minister that he considers the commission sales scheme to be generally in accord with the provisions of the 1973/74 Housing Agreement Act. Therefore, the way is now clear to permit the relevant bill to proceed and for the commission's home sales scheme to be implemented in due course.

The other area that required major negotiation with the Government was interest and income limits that were to be applicable. Again, I believe that we have a major win in the Northern Territory in that it has now been accepted as a principle that the income limit cut-off point ought to be a figure of 125% of the average weekly male earnings in the Northern Territory. This will mean that, under the terms of the bill, the Administrator in Council will declare the interest rate applicable to particular classes of purchaser and, by the application of the income test, and

the acceptance of the principle of 125% of the average weekly earnings, it means that persons below an income of \$10,000 per annum at the moment will be eligible for the lower interest rate of 5.75%. Applicants whose income assessments are above the formula basis will be required to pay interest at the same rate as is payable in respect to housing loans by the Northern Territory Home Finance Trustee. That rate has now been fixed from 1 March at 9%. I have been advised by the Housing Commission that they estimate that about 90% of the commission's eligible tenants will qualify for the lower percentage rate of interest. I would like to indicate that the scheme will mean that 642 families will be eligible throughout the Northern Territory. These are 170 in Alice Springs, 19 in Tennant Creek, 39 in Katherine and 414 in Darwin. Naturally, as the scheme progresses and people move from the four year period to the fifth year that is required for qualification, those numbers will naturally increase.

I would like to stress again that a considerable percentage of the housing stock owned by the Housing Commission is eligible for sale. For example, in Darwin at the moment, the Housing Commission has 1,700 housing lots and some 359 flats. Of the 2,000 people in Darwin who are currently housed by the Housing Commission, 414 will be eligible to purchase their homes. I am sure a similar proportion will apply in other centres in the Northern Territory. When we add these sorts of figures to the previous sales that have been undertaken by the commission in past years, we see that the Northern Territory Housing Commission has fulfilled a very worthwhile role in providing private sector housing for Darwin because so many of its tenants elect to purchase their homes and become permanent citizens in our community.

I am very pleased that our negotiations with the Department of the Northern Territory and the Department of Finance have resulted in the acceptance of our bill without amendment. There are still some sensitive areas and obviously we will have to continue to liaise with Treasury. However, I am

confident that this scheme will provide a boost to this community and a sound basis on which we will be able to go to the housing ministers conference next year as part of the re-negotiation of the home sales agreement.

Members will be interested to know that the Minister was keen to establish some sort of relationship between the scheme adopted for the Housing Commission and the sale of government homes to Commonwealth Government employees scheme. The Minister has indicated that he would like to see the terms and conditions of the government home sales scheme to be tied as closely as possible to that of the Housing Commission. There will no doubt be some differences, probably in the eligibility period. I am not yet in a position to indicate when the government scheme can be implemented. However, given the momentum that this bill will now produce and the pressures that the Commonwealth employees will themselves exert, it will not be long before we see the final form of the government sales scheme announced by the Minister and hopefully implemented on a common date with this particular scheme. I commend the bill.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is with great pleasure that I stand to support this particular bill. It is an area that I have certainly pushed for for quite some time in the Alice Springs region. I note that, in Alice Springs, we have 172 families which will be immediately eligible and, as time goes by, there will be more. While I wholeheartedly support the bill and while the Cabinet Member is to be commended for the effort which he has put into this piece of legislation, and more particularly for the efforts which he has put into negotiation with Treasury, there are some things in it which do not leave me completely satisfied.

I turn first to the question of interest payments in respect of the loan. It is to be noted that an interest rate of 5.75% is to be charged for people on under 125% of the average male earnings. Before I proceed with that, there is something I would like the Cabinet Member to explain for me in his reply. He mentioned that this is

determined on a Territory basis but I am unaware of any such statistical analysis and I am wondering if it is going to be determined on the national basis. If it is, owing to the high cost of living in the Northern Territory, our average earnings would be considerably higher than the national average. I hope I can take him at his word and that, in fact, it will be based on a Territory average. I have no doubt that he will be able to put me in the picture there.

I am not advocating an increase in interest for those people below the 125%, but I mention this to amplify my pleasure in speaking to the bill in that I would have been happy with about 6.5% and when my constituents have been asking me what the interest rate is most likely to pan out at, that is the figure I have been giving as an ideal target. It is very gratifying indeed to see that the lower income earners are going to benefit from an extremely low interest rate. In fact at 5.75%, it is probably better than you will obtain from the War Service Home Commission over \$15,000. Their system is 3.75% for the first \$12,000 and 6.5% for the balance.

The question of 9% being applied in respect of the people over 125% however, leaves me in some conflict. There is a conflict of ideology with what I believe is the role of a Liberal member, and that is to encourage people to go out and earn and to benefit from their efforts. Let us assume that \$10,000 a year is the cut-off point and a person goes into the scheme earning \$9,500 and he then gets a \$1,000 increase to \$10,500. If the value of his home is around about \$40,000, which is not uncommon in the Territory, then clearly he is going to make a nett loss as a result of his efforts. His interest component will increase enough to more than wipe out the extra money he has earned. That of course is in conflict with the basic concept of welfare housing. It has always been my understanding that welfare housing is meant for people on lower incomes. Perhaps we could say that a person who receives a certain income is no longer really a person entitled to welfare housing and perhaps this is a reasonable justifica-

tion for the move. It is something I would like the Cabinet Member's comment on. I am quite sure that he has researched this in depth and has given it a lot of thought, but I do point out that it is somewhat contradictory to the policy and philosophical stand of those on this side of the Chamber.

He mentions that the rebate rental system is to come into operation and I think that is absolutely magic. That is something I have told everyone that we were having difficulty with and that the Cabinet Member was using his best endeavours to obtain that scheme. To have him come here and tell us that he has achieved it, I think is to his credit entirely. What I would like to know is how that percentage will operate, how many years it is in respect of, and how it will work. When I go back to my electorate, I want to be able to clearly explain to people as precisely as I can. I know there will probably be regulations and various other problems, but I want to be able to explain to the many people who have approached me on this precisely how it will work. Is it to be 45% of the last 3 years or 55% or whatever over the whole?

One other very pleasing feature of the bill as reintroduced is the point that the present tenant of the Housing Commission, having qualified under the 5-year scheme and having lived in that home for the 5-year period or whatever part of that 5-year period, having regard to the fact that this also includes tenancy of a flat, is going to make improvements. Under the old scheme, a home in which you had been living for a long time was not necessarily the one that was offered to you to purchase; you ended up going to a brand new house on a dusty block, having worked for some years establishing lawns and trees on the house you were renting. That situation I believe is to be changed, and again the Cabinet Member is to be commended for insisting upon that.

He did say, and I was a little distressed by it, that he hoped the legislation would commence in due course. I do not know what difficulties he has in mind in relation to its

commencement and perhaps in reply he might let us know what difficulties he anticipates to prompt him to make the statement "in due course". I want to see this piece of legislation commenced quickly. I want to see it commence properly, let us not go too hasty about it, but I would like to know precisely what he means by that and what difficulties he expects.

He did mention also, and I endorse his remarks, although I put it another way, that he is looking at the possibility of putting the Government homes scheme into a similar format to the Housing Commission's scheme. Surely it should be in his mind, and no doubt is, that we should be working towards a single housing authority. If we have a single housing authority, there can be no difference in my mind between the commission's scheme and the scheme that relates to the public service. We have heard from 2 good senators from here, in a joint statement recently, taking up incidentally the policy of this party over the years for a single housing authority and, while we have the basis for a home sales scheme as good as this one is going to be if passed into law, then I think it is an ideal basis upon which we can establish our single housing authority. I wholeheartedly support the bill.

Mr RYAN: I supported the bill upon its previous introduction and I continue to support it. It is extremely important that the people who come to live in the Territory are given the opportunity to achieve what many people consider to be the most important transaction in their life - the purchase of a house. Initially, we have a situation where they can rent for 5 years and then become eligible to buy. I support that idea; it certainly makes sure that people who rent a house and wish to buy it live in the Territory for 5 years. This is an excellent way to weed out those people who may try to capitalise on cheap housing to the detriment of those people who wish to stay in the Territory and help develop the Territory.

I sympathise with the honourable member for Gillen in his remarks about the difference between the low interest and

the high interest. However, I do not think a lot can be done in this particular case because there has to be a cut off point somewhere and, where there are cut-off points, there is always an inequity for those people who happen to fall round about the cut-off point. It will be unfortunate for those people affected. However, in general, the proposal of the dual interest rate is certainly a good idea. It may even be true to say that those people on the 9% interest rate really are not getting welfare housing. They are paying a fairly realistic rate whereas the people on the 5% are truly welfare housing recipients.

Before sitting down, I will refer back to my previous speech in support of this bill where I mentioned that the Housing Commission should encourage people who intend to buy a house to improve the house. This does not necessarily restrict them to gardens. A garden is easy to establish in Darwin and relatively easy to establish in Alice Springs and the other centres if one is prepared to take the time. I think more people in the Territory are now taking a pride in their homes and this is seen by anybody who visits the various centres. Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs are all improving in that particular way. However, encouragement should be given to people who are quite sure that they will remain in the houses, to improve the house, make additions to the house. It should be made quite clear that those additions will not affect the final purchase price of the house from the Housing Commission. When the assessment comes, the Housing Commission should look very realistically at the fact that this person has improved the property and make sure that he is not in fact paying twice for the improvements. It should be sufficient that he improved the house. If he pays the equivalent of a house that has not been improved, this is a satisfactory arrangement.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to support the bill. I think that mention should be made of the fact that a former member of the Legislative Council worked very hard to have such a measure as this introduced. I refer to the former mem-

ber for McMillan, Tom Bell, who did all in his power to ensure that eligible Housing Commission tenants could buy the house in which they had lived in many cases for up to 10 or 12 years. However, because of the policy at that time, they had not been allowed to purchase. This is a significant change in policy on the part of the Housing Commission and it has no doubt been influenced by the Cabinet Member. People will now be able to buy a house in which they have been living if they are approved tenants. This is something which the old Legislative Council and this Assembly have been pressing for. I expect this legislation to have the full support of all members of the House. It will encourage stability in our communities and it should be welcomed by all.

Debate adjourned.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 171)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

I indicate that this is government sponsored legislation and the second-reading speech has been prepared for me by the Government. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance so that it fully conforms with the International Labour Organisation's Workmen's Compensation and Occupational Disease Convention revised in 1934. Ratification of this convention by the Australian Government was registered on 29 April 1959. Although the Northern Territory legislation does in certain cases protect some larger categories of workers, it does not provide for automatic presumption in favour of workers engaged in the industries or belonging to the professions mentioned in the right hand column of the convention's table, when they are struck down by one of the diseases figured in the left hand column, that the illness has been contracted professionally.

It is proposed that a list of diseases in related areas of employment

should be included in the schedule and that there should be sections added to the ordinance to provide that specific diseases contracted whilst employed in that specific industry be deemed to be caused by that employment for the purposes of section 9 unless the contrary is proved.

The ACT and all states except Queensland have complied with the convention. Some of these jurisdictions have gone further than the convention's requirements; it is proposed however that, in the Northern Territory, only strict compliance with the requirements of the convention will be sought, by lifting directly out of the convention the list of the diseases and their related industries or occupations. It is believed that any other disease which may be claimed to be employment related is adequately provided for by the general provisions of the existing section 9 of the principal ordinance.

I will now turn to the provisions of the bill. The short title of the bill is dealt with in clause 1. The principal ordinance is defined in clause 2 as the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. Matters relating to the commencement of the ordinance are dealt with in clause 3. Clause 4 amends section 9 of the principal ordinance by omitting subsections (5), (5A), (6) and (7) of that section.

Clause 5 amends the principal ordinance by the insertion of section 9AA which provides that, unless the contrary is established, the contraction of a prescribed disease by a workman, the workman having been employed in a prescribed industry or occupation, is deemed to have been caused by the employment. The insertion of these provisions further provides for the situation where a person is no longer employed but who suffers from or whose death is caused by a prescribed disease and who had previously been employed in a prescribed industry and establishes the date of commencement of the disease for the purpose of giving notice under section 25 and establishes a need for giving notice under section 9 of the principal ordinance.

Clause 6 provides for the inclusion

of a fourth schedule to the principal ordinance in which is prescribed in the first column the disease referred to in section 9AA and in the second column the industries or occupations to which those diseases are related for the purposes of that section of the ordinance.

I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

CEMETERIES BILL

(Serial 180)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The Nhulunbuy cemetery lies just outside the town boundary and the Aboriginal reserve. In 1973, the Administrator formally dedicated the land for the purposes of a public cemetery and created a board of trustees for its control and management. Since then, the board's activities have been subsidised through an annual appropriation. It has been noted that there is an apparent legal conflict in the management arrangements for this cemetery land. On the one hand, there is the Board of Trustees exercising exclusive powers under the ordinance but, on the other, there is the Director of Social Welfare with a duty imposed on him by the Social Welfare Ordinance to supervise and regulate the use and management of the land for the benefit of the Aboriginal people. Inconsistency is also apparent between those sections of the Cemeteries Ordinance which grant certain rights to the public in dedicated cemeteries and the limitations on access onto Aboriginal reserves.

This conflict and the inconsistencies have been studied and I am now advised that the dedication of the cemetery should be considered ineffective. It follows from this that the purported appointment of a Board of Trustees would also be ineffective. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has confirmed that the traditional claimants of this land have no objections to its continued use as a public cemetery but would object to its excision from the

reserve. This reserve is one of those scheduled for transfer to a land trust under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. As that act allows for the continuation of Crown occupation of parts of land within that Aboriginal freehold, it is important that the use of the Nhulunbuy cemetery is legitimised prior to the vesting process.

Clause 3 of this short bill introduces a new section 6A into the Cemeteries Ordinance. The section is in 3 parts. The first is to remove all doubts as to the validity of the original dedication of the Nhulunbuy cemetery. The second part removes from that land the controls previously applicable under the Social Welfare Ordinance. The third part retrospectively validates the appointment and activities of the Board of Trustees. Although other burial grounds do exist on reserves, none of these have ever been dedicated as a public cemetery and, consequently, no parallel action in respect of them is required to protect their status.

In view of the implications of this legislation, I indicate that I will be seeking urgency at this sittings.

Debate adjourned.

MINING BILL

(Serial 181)

Bill presented, by leave, and read a first time.

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

Copies of this bill have already been sent to honourable members to give them an opportunity to study it as it is desirable that the debate on the bill be finalised at this sittings of the Assembly. This is a very short bill and its purpose is, firstly, to amend the existing provisions of the ordinance whereby the grant of a mining tenement over land included in an Aboriginal reserve can only be made to the holder of a current exploration licence over that land and, secondly, to provide for the grant of a special mineral lease over Aboriginal land. In December 1972,

in association with the Government's decision to provide for the grant of title to Aborigines over their traditional land and the subsequent appointment of Mr Justice Woodward to inquire into and report on the appropriate means to recognise and establish traditional rights and interests of Aborigines, the granting of further exploration and mining rights in Aboriginal reserves throughout the Northern Territory was suspended. The only exception to this freeze related to exploration licences granted prior to December 1972. Exploration licences which had been granted prior to that date were continued in force and, subject to the agreement of the appropriate Aboriginal representative being obtained, allowed to undergo annual renewals to the full extent of the 5-year term prescribed by the Mining Ordinance. This exception was made on the clear understanding that consideration of any application for mining tenements made by virtue of these exploration rights would be deferred until the Government had fully considered and determined the question of Aboriginal land rights. With the acceptance, in principle, of the Woodward Report, this suspension was reaffirmed and, as I understand the situation, it will continue to be applied until the administrative arrangements associated with the introduction of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act have been settled.

Whilst it is not hard to appreciate the complexities involved in the Government's considerations leading to the Aboriginal Land Rights legislation, nor to understand the need to defer any further alienation of land which could become Aboriginal land until the precise scheme of land title had been determined, unfortunately the time involved in these processes has placed outstanding applications for mining tenements over reserve land in jeopardy.

Under the existing provision of section 38Y of the Mining Ordinance, a person can only apply for, and be granted, a mining tenement over land included in an Aboriginal reserve if he is the current holder of an exploration licence over that land. At the present

time, about 100 applications for mining tenements over Aboriginal reserved land are being held in abeyance and most of these were applied for by virtue of exploration licences which no longer exist. The balance are related to the few remaining exploration licences which were exemptions to the December 1972 embargo, but these will also shortly expire, leaving all the mining tenement applications submitted without the necessary cover of an exploration licence over the land applied for. As none of the applications will therefore have been determined during the life of their related exploration licences, by the operation of section 38Y of the ordinance, their continuation is open to continual suspicion. The companies involved have in good faith spent substantial expenses and effort in exploring the mineral potential of their respective areas and it is considered that an obligation exists to fully protect any rights which the mining companies may have established by virtue of their applications for mining tenements.

It is worth mentioning here that the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act provides specific exemption from the consent provisions of the act to those exploration licence holders who applied for mining tenements before 4 June 1976, the date on which the bill was introduced into Parliament. The inclusion of this provision was obviously made in the belief that such applications would be preserved and the only statutory obligations placed on such applicants is to negotiate fair terms and conditions with the appropriate Aboriginal land council.

The amendment proposed to section 38Y will erase any doubt as to the valid continuation of the applications which have been submitted. In general, it provides that a mining tenement of reserved land can be granted to a person who has taken possession and made application whilst the holder of an exploration licence, removing the requirement for him to also be the holder of an exploration licence at the time of a grant. This change will allow the current applications to legitimately continue beyond the expiry date to the terms of their related

exploration licences, and in due course to receive proper consideration subject to the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

Members will note that, in addition to exploration licences, provision has also been made for application for mining tenements submitted by virtue of a prospecting authority which was the former prospecting title available under the Mining Ordinance prior to the introduction of exploration licences in late 1971. This reference to authorities is called for to protect applications by Queensland Mines Ltd over the Nabarlek uranium deposits in the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve. The applications by Queensland Mines were originally applied for under a prospecting authority granted in the late 1960s which was subsequently converted to an exploration licence. The continuance of the applications by Queensland Mines is also contemplated in the Aboriginal Land Rights Act where an exploration licence has been defined in the act to include prospecting authorities, which establishes any application for mining tenements made by the holders therefore in the category of those exempt from the consent provisions.

The other main amendment contained in the bill is to section 54B of the ordinance, which relates to the granting of special mineral leases. Under the present provisions of this section, a special mineral lease can only be granted over Crown land or land included in an Aboriginal reserve, and the purpose of this amendment is to include the power to grant such leases over Aboriginal land. This proposal has special significance in relation to Mr Justice Fox's consideration of Aboriginal land claims in the Alligator River region and to any subsequent development of the Ranger uranium deposits should those claims be successful and the grant of Aboriginal land made.

I assure members that the amendments that I have proposed will in no way interfere with the intentions or requirements of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act regarding the grant of mining titles. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

PRISONS BILL

(Serial 169)

Bill presented, by leave, and read a first time.

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

In presenting the bill, I am acutely aware of the deficiencies in the Prisons Ordinance and the need for substantial legislative reform to enable modern philosophies on penal reform and the treatment of offenders to take place in the Northern Territory.

A review of this legislation was commenced under the auspices of the Executive Member responsible for correctional services prior to the transfer of powers, Mr Pollock, and it has been continued since my assumption of the responsibilities. With the 1974 report from the Legislative Council Select Committee, reports from the Hawkins-Misner investigations into the Northern Territory criminal justice system, United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners, and a number of other recommendations in reports, there is substantial expert advice available on which to base legislative reform. Legislation on prisons must be capable of complementing other laws and programs concerned with penal reform in the community. The Northern Territory, with its special socio-economic situation, provides a unique opportunity for the development of policies and laws which would enable some break-through in this huge problem. This task is massive and our resources are very limited. I would hope, within the life of this present Assembly, to initiate policies and provide the framework for some of the legislation which will enable the reform process to get under way;

The amendments proposed in this bill will assist in establishing a situation where administration of the present legislation will be effectively carried out. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Prisons Ordinance to enable its more effective administration. Unfortunately, it stops there. It is not intended to bring about amendments other than those absolutely necessary

for this purpose because of the limitations of resources.

Prior to the recent amendments to this ordinance arising out of the passing of the Transfer of Powers Ordinance, both the policy direction and executive responsibility for this ordinance rested with the Administrator, with the Controller of Prisons responsible to the Administrator for its administration. The effect of the amendment made by the Transfer of Powers Ordinance has been to transfer most of the powers and responsibilities previously held by the Administrator to myself as Executive Member. This was convenient and expedient in meeting the deadline, 1 January 1977. It is now possible and desirable to place some of these administrative powers with the Director of Correctional Services. This will bring the Northern Territory further into line with the other states of Australia.

As well, the bill provides for some amendment that will enable the Director of Correctional Services to absorb some of the responsibilities for the control of prisons. The result will see the Executive Member for Law responsible for the overall policy direction and more important responsibility under the ordinance. The Director of Correctional Services will be responsible to the Executive Member, or myself, for its administration.

In essence, the bill places the Executive Member and the Director of Correctional Services in the same relationship as the Executive Member and the director are in the capacity as Chief Executive Officer for Correctional Services under the Public Service Ordinance. Power of delegation for the director is proposed to enable the more efficient implementation of various aspects covered by the ordinance in the regulations. This is consistent with the arrangement under the Public Service Ordinance.

There has been extreme criticism, historically, over the administration of prisons in the Northern Territory and a number of inquiries and investigations, some of which I have mentioned, have been carried out. I think an

appropriate appreciation of inefficiencies arising out of the administration is contained in the report that was done by the former Legislative Council in 1974. A couple of these recommendations are included in the bill before the House,

Administration of the ordinance by the controller has been virtually impossible because of the restrictions placed upon him in his capacity as a Commonwealth public servant working through a hierarchical situation in the Department of the Northern Territory and its predecessors. He has been hindered by lack of administrative personnel and financial delegation as well as having to work through a series of more senior officers without in reality having any direct access to the Administrator. The situation will change substantially with the passing of this bill as a Director of Correctional Services, having the powers and responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer under the Public Service Ordinance, will have all the necessary powers to enable the effective administration of the prison services and be answerable directly to the Executive Member. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED GOODS BILL

(Serial 179)

Bill presented, by leave, and read a first time.

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

Members may recall that last year this Assembly passed the Disposal of Uncollected Goods Ordinance. That ordinance, which has been assented to but has not yet come into operation, enables a person to dispose of goods that have not been collected by the owner.

In the course of preparing regulations pursuant to the ordinance, the legislative draftsman has observed a number of minor deficiencies in the ordinance. This bill seeks to correct the deficiencies. The matters dealt with in the bill are: firstly, to pro-

vide for a prescribed form of a bail-ee's notice of intended sale in the Gazette; secondly, to make it clear that notice of an application to a court for an order of sale of goods must be given to every person who the applicant has reason to believe has, or claims to have, an interest in the goods; thirdly, to make it clear that a dispute can only be referred back to the court that made an order for sale if the dispute arises out of an attempt to comply with section 16 of the ordinance; fourthly, to provide for a prescribed form of record of sale or disposal and to require further details if the goods are destroyed; and finally, to correct errors in section 23 of the principal ordinance.

The bill is designed to come into operation contemporaneously with the principal ordinance. In addition, the regulations have been prepared and early action can be taken to bring the legislation into operation. This bill is commended to members.

Debate adjourned.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WELFARE

Mr PERRON: (by leave): I move that Mr I. Tuxworth, the member for Barkly, be nominated by the Assembly to the Northern Territory Consultative Committee on Social Welfare.

The Minister for Social Welfare, Senator Guilfoyle, has sought from this Assembly a nomination to the Northern Territory Consultative Committee on Social Welfare which will be convened in Darwin tomorrow. The consultative committee will provide an input from people of the Northern Territory on problems and difficulties encountered in the administration of Commonwealth social security and welfare programs. The committee will advise the Director General of the Department of Social Security on the administration of such programs within the Northern Territory. The legislative responsibilities for child and social welfare in this House rests with the Cabinet Member for Community Services and I believe it is fitting that he should represent this Assembly on Senator Guilfoyle's newly constituted committee.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to support the motion. Social welfare is one of our big portfolios and there are many programs going on in both the long and the short term. In the Territory, we have a vast area to cover and, if we can get this information to the consultative committee, they can probably speed up the process. Often, requests come from people for assistance and, by the time they reach the proper authority, the people may have suffered some hardship. I can only say that this is an opportunity for which we should be thankful. If we can have somebody from the Assembly on the committee, I cannot think of anyone more worthy than the honourable member for Barkly. I am sure that, from time to time, he will come back to the Assembly from those meetings and he may even enlighten us on some of the things they discuss. I am sure it will all be made public.

Mr ROBERTSON: I do think that it is appropriate that the Cabinet Member for Community Services be appointed by this Assembly to this Committee. I also think that it is appropriate that the House be advised of the terms of reference of that particular committee and I say that not knowing whether anybody else is going to inform the House or whether or not they have been circulated. If the House will bear with me, Mr Speaker, I will read those so that we are all quite clear what we are inflicting on the honourable member.

The terms of reference simply are: "Within the responsibilities of the Commonwealth Government to advise the Director-General of the Department of Social Security through the Director General at Adelaide, on the administration at the Territory level of the departmental social security and welfare programs, and in particular to (1) review delivery of Commonwealth social security programs in the Northern Territory; (2) review the relationship between the department's programs and those welfare services of other departments; (3) advise on the department's social welfare programs and the effectiveness of service delivery in the Northern Territory; and (4) provide within the Northern Territory an assessment of the welfare services and roles of local government and voluntary organisations in their relationship to

the department's program". In addition to the consultative committee, the Children's Services Sub-Committee will: "(1) assess data on target populations; (2) examine how public expenditure is deployed; (3) review and comment on the initiatives and proposals of the Office of Child Care, Department of Social Security; and (4) encourage the co-ordination of Commonwealth Government programs in the child care field with other children's services and family welfare programs in the Northern Territory or initiate proposals for the consideration of the Office of Child Care. The Children's Services Sub-Committee will report to the Northern Territory Consultative Committee on Social Welfare".

In supporting the motion, I would like to endorse the comments of the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning, in that the Cabinet Member for Community Services is the ideal person to undertake these tasks. Having said that and having been provided with a letter of invitation to that Cabinet Member, I do not want to always play the devil's advocate in this place, but unless we protest at certain things then we are not heard and things are not corrected. I realise that the first meeting of this consultative committee and the first meeting which the Cabinet Member will attend if appointed by the Assembly is to be held tomorrow, 3 March, at 10 am for the convenience of the Minister for Social Security who proposes to open that conference. I am fully aware that she is probably busier than we are; it does seem to me though a pity that that Cabinet Member is required to be absent from this House or absent from that meeting.

Just looking at the letter generally, it seems to me as if some departments still do not understand what this place is all about. For a start, there is no information that I have available as to who the other members on the committee are to be. Further than that, the letter says, "Officers of the department will contact you to facilitate transport arrangements for your attendance at the meeting". They either do not realise we have our own transport arrangements and our own facilities or they believe that on

matters affecting the Department of Social Security, that department must fund transport for our Cabinet Members. There seems to be a lack of understanding still among some elements of the public service as to what this Assembly is all about. However, I do not want to create a bad atmosphere for the Cabinet Member to go into the meeting tomorrow if that is what is done.

I do not really believe there is a great deal of reason to dwell on the terms of reference other than to say I would like to see if the Cabinet Member intends perhaps to have a further one injected into it. We notice that the committee is to inquire into relationships between local government and local programs and planning and plans of the federal department. I think it is necessary, having regard to the fact that we have our own Social Development Branch which will become a state-like function, that the functions of the state welfare services are also examined in relation to those provided by the Federal Government. It is a further area for consideration.

Certainly in the field of social development and social welfare in the Northern Territory, it is very good to see such a consultative committee emerge. Those of us from Alice Springs would be well aware of the very severe difficulties we are facing down there in relation to minors. The courts are becoming increasingly concerned with children's behaviour. We have a large concern at what are alleged to be problems with children at the Alice Springs High School. I would like to take this opportunity to advise publicly that, as far as I can find out as a member of the Alice Springs High School Council, the problem is not a result of the students of the school, rather it is a welfare problem resultant from children who have left school, who are unemployed and bored, and who come back to the school and in many instances involuntarily involve school students.

It is a rather disturbing thing that in a town like Alice Springs we have a group called the "Gap Angels" and I believe we now see the emergence of another group called the "East-side Warriors". One group wears tight jeans and

ripple-soled shoes and the other one does not, and God help any young person in Alice Springs who is caught in Todd Street wearing ripple-soled shoes because he will be taken for one of the other lot and will probably end up in the gutter. It is a serious business. It has got to the level of people moving in groups to defend themselves against other groups.

All these areas are within the social welfare and social difficulty scene. I welcome the appointment of the committee and I commend to honourable members the Cabinet Member for Community Services as this Assembly's appointment to that committee.

Motion agreed to.

TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Miss ANDREW (by leave): I move that the Legislative Assembly nominate Mr M.B. Perron, the member for Stuart Park, to take a place on the Technical and Further Education Council for the Northern Territory.

In moving that motion, which I have great pleasure in doing, I would like to make a few comments about the history of the formation of this council. This council was announced by the Minister towards the end of November last year and a letter was subsequently written inviting the Legislative Assembly to make a nomination to the council. This council is chaired by the Director of Education in the Northern Territory, Dr Eedle, and has as its third member a nominee of the Darwin Community College; apparently, this position is currently held by the principal Mr Flint.

The terms of reference of this council are very broad. They are to advise the Minister firstly of their own responsibility and the need for other consultative support. This of course allows the council, with its knowledge and resources, to look into all kinds of areas where examination in the field of technical and further education is needed. They have responsibility for advising the Minister on the operation of a vocational training centre in

Batchelor; the relationship of the Darwin Community College to the TAFE council - it must be kept in mind of course that the Darwin Community College is a statutory authority in its own right and as such has a large degree of independence; - the relationship between the TAFE Council and the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations; and the future development of the Alice Springs College and the role of the Technical and Further Education Council in coordinating resource allocation and development plans for technical and further education.

The need for this committee has become very obvious since the last election. Ministers of the Federal Government in many portfolios suddenly bound on a great urge to vocationally train everyone. A number of departments are involved in this business; just to mention a few: the Department of Health, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, as well as the Darwin Community College. The Department of Education, too, has a number of officers scattered around the Territory with responsibility, quite independent of the Darwin Community College, for certain elements of vocational training; usually these are on Aboriginal settlements. There are some in some of the smaller centres. This led to a ludicrous situation arising where all these departments were conducting one form or another of vocational training without any knowledge of or consultation with the other departments.

This council has already met and I was interested to note, in reading the files, that they have already suggested the establishment of a consultative body, which will include all these departments plus many others, to meet twice a year and discuss various specific matters; for example, the School of Community Health and Welfare. I am not certain whether the Minister has agreed with this proposal but I understand that a tentative meeting date for this group of people has been arranged.

This is one of the most important committees that has arisen in the field

of education in recent years. A lot of patience and diplomacy will be required from the members and I wish Mr Perron well and leave him with the thought that it must be kept in mind that this committee must, by necessity, be a coordinating resource not a directive one.

Mr RYAN: I support wholeheartedly the nomination of the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning to the Technical and Further Education Council of the NT. The reasons why I support his nomination are varied and many. Let us look at the title, "Technical and Further Education". This is the education you might receive after you leave school and I intend to be quite blunt in my approach to this situation. When you leave school, there is a good chance in the Northern Territory that you will need further education because I do not think they give you much at school. I am supporting the honourable member's nomination because it is about time we had an ordinary person who can use a bit of common sense, and not be snowed over by all the "birds" who come up here. When I say "birds", I do not mean women but rather the funny people who come up here with all sorts of qualifications and then proceed to turn out kids who are pretty well useless. I am sure that the honourable member's approach will be quite enlightening to the Director of Education and the principal of the college. I think he will be able to give quite a lead to these gentlemen. I am not being over-critical of these 2 people, but I feel that the honourable member will be able to present the feelings of many people in the Northern Territory. He will certainly be able to present mine. I know that we do tend to agree on most things concerning education and I particularly support his nomination. I am quite sure that he will represent the views of the majority of the people in this Assembly and the Northern Territory.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I support the nomination of the honourable member to the committee and, like all previous speakers, I call down on his head and the heads of his wife and family, the beneficence of Allah, and I hope that his goats and crops will be good this year.

I hope that this committee has not been set on us by the secret agents of the Rank Xerox Corporation. If you look around Darwin and the plethora of committees that exist, you would often wonder whether anyone would have set them up except someone trying to boost the output of Rank Xerox machines. I would say that 85% of the committees in this community do nothing but churn out more and more wasted material on Rank Xerox machines - material that gets distributed, is never read, and is thrown straight in the wastepaper bin at great expense to the public purse. I hope that this committee is not another one like that. I am sure that, with the Cabinet Member on this committee, it will do something positive.

I must support the remarks of the honourable Cabinet Member for Transport and Secondary Industry in relation to the requirements for further education. In fact, a night school would be a very good thing because I am sure that my 9-year old daughter, who presently is supposed to know her 9 times multiplication tables, but who cannot yet repeat to me the twice times multiplication tables and who cannot spell for nuts and has been passed from grade to grade year after year, will have to go to night school because any sane employer would simply not put up with the standard that she is going to be able to apply to her work in later life.

The other point which I would like to refer to is the sad lack of attendance at committee meetings. Certainly, I am a big enough offender myself. I am sure that our Cabinet Member will attend whenever he can, but so many committee meetings are called and put off time and time again because of no quorum. There are sometimes 9 members on committees - far too large of course - in many cases 15 members; they are idiot committees that just keep talking round and round the table. When enough people do turn up, they keep talking round and round and, about once in every 3 meetings, there is not a quorum. I certainly hope that this does not happen here.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I support the motion. The honourable member for Jingili did say some adverse words against comm-

ittees and I would agree in some cases, but I think, in a case like this, it is a little bit different. I would not support the remark made by the Cabinet Member for Transport. Many of the problems in the educational field today do not come particularly from the educators, they have a lot to do with the parental guidance and discipline in the home.

Mrs Lawrie: They are not allowed to have a say in their children's education.

Mr BALLANTYNE: You should live in Gove, you might feel happier there.

I am particularly interested in the technical education side. In the township of Nhulunbuy over the last 2 years, the evening classes at night school have risen from about 5% to 15% which is not too bad for the population in the town. If you have 3,500, about 2,000 of those would be adults. These classes range from matriculation right through to degree courses in business studies. There are also art courses, hobby courses etc. The community is responding very well. We are a new community and most of the people are in the younger age group and I think you would probably get more people interested in education among that age group.

The terms of reference were read out by the Cabinet Member for Law and I am sure they will be looking into all areas of education. Today, we have these expert educators who come up with some bright ideas that can be very confusing. We had a change in our system some 2 years ago from the South Australian system to the Commonwealth Teaching Service. Our biggest problem in the Territory is that the Director of Education cannot choose his own teachers. He has to go through the Commonwealth Teaching Service. I am not saying that some of those teachers are not the right type to come to the Territory but those people are not adjusted to the Territory. Many of them have just come out of training school and from other areas. Some of them have come from other isolated areas and they seem to adjust pretty well. Those are the sorts of things I would like to talk about.

Dr Eedle, the Director of Education, is probably one of the best types of persons I have had dealings with. He has been trying very hard since he has been in this position. I only hope that, in this new position that he now has under the Minister for Education, he has some power and some say in the education of the people of the Territory. I do not know how he stands it - a man of his ability, his knowledge and background. He is not given the opportunity that a director should be given. I only hope that, with constitutional development, we can form a commission or some other means of giving him the power so that, in the Territory, we can have our own say in everything we want to do.

There are big problems regarding the education of Aboriginal children, particularly in the adult field. This council will be headed by Dr Eedle and our Cabinet Member for Education, Mr Perron who is a young man in a hurry, and he is going to go a long way to help us. I am sure his enthusiasm alone will help to restore some sanity back into the future outlook on education.

Mr PERRON: I would like to say a few words on the terms of reference for this committee and thank honourable members for some of the remarks they have put forward in supporting this motion. I would like to mention 3 short key terms of reference that I believe are particularly significant in gauging whether the council is playing an effective role as time goes by. The first one is "Co-ordinating resource allocation and development plans". That is very important, with the multitude of organisations which are at present running around the Northern Territory, seemingly going their own way, overlapping each other's areas and obviously creating considerable waste. The second one is "To recommend on the distribution of financial allocations for technical and further education". This is very important and fits in with what I was saying about the first term. The last one refers to "decision at the local level". If that decision-making at the local level is not taken heed of in the advice given to the Minister - and the committee is primarily there to advise the Minister - the committee can

take various actions either to ensure that its advice is heeded or even go so far as declaring itself as a waste of time on everybody's part.

Time will tell whether indeed it is effective in its task. I believe that decision-making at a local level is probably the most important of all areas because in the decisions which are now being made in Canberra by the various departmental liaison branches that advise the Minister on recommendations which come from the Northern Territory, these recommendations are usually shunted back to some public servant in Canberra. Many of these public servants no doubt have probably never been here; they look at these recommendations from the Territory; they make a recommendation to the Minister and, no doubt, in many cases he just takes that recommendation. I see this committee as playing a role of replacing these Territorial liaison branches in Canberra to a large degree. Time alone will tell if we are effectively in that situation.

Motion agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL COUNCILS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr POLLOCK: I move that a select committee comprising Mr Ballantyne, Mr Wichnall and Mr Pollock be appointed to examine and report to the Assembly on the role, structure and effectiveness of Regional Councils for Social Development established in the Territory under the Australian Assistance Plan with a view to (a) advising on their value as a means of community development, (b) recommending changes in the composition, structure and functions of the regional councils, (c) evaluating existing projects initiated by the councils, (d) suggesting the basis of financial assistance if the responsibility for funding the councils is assumed by the Legislative Assembly, and (e) examining the role of local government as a substitute for regional councils in the area of community development; that the committee have power to consider and make use of the minutes of evidence and records of the select committee appointed for this purpose in the first session of this

Assembly; that the committee have power to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly and to adjourn from place to place; and that the committee report to this Assembly during this sittings.

This motion is required for the re-formation of the select committee which has been carrying out an inquiry in relation to the matters outlined in the terms of reference. It is hoped that committee will present its report during this current sittings.

Motion agreed to.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH - ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr KENTISH: It gives me pleasure to rise in reply to the address delivered by His Honour the Administrator on the occasion of the opening of the session yesterday. I thoroughly agree with His Honour the Administrator that the time was and is appropriate for such a ceremonial marking of the occasion.

I would like to refer to some snippets of wisdom that the Administrator mentioned in his address to us yesterday. It is of interest to me and perhaps to members here to compare the ceremony that we witnessed yesterday with a file which I came across yesterday evening relating to a similar ceremony on 18 February 1969. It was somewhat knocked about by Cyclone Tracy, but I still have a folder similar to the one we had on the desk yesterday, bearing the names of the people who were sworn in on that occasion in 1969. The Administrator on that occasion was Mr Roger Dean who left his mark on those papers at that time. We had a delegation from Canberra on that occasion also and, according to this paper, Senator J.A. Little, DLP, S.E. Calder MP, C.P. and B.P. Hansen MP, ALP composed the delegation that visited us on 18 February 1969, which was the first Legislative Council in which I took part.

Yesterday we had a similar occasion and it was very interesting and informative to compare what has gone on in between. The Administrator said that these major happenings occur at a difficult time in Australia's history

and the Territory is not isolated from events elsewhere on the continent. While he was speaking, I was thinking of our physical isolation to some extent, that our railway had disappeared under a heap of red tape or whatever it might be, and our road has disappeared under water and our shipping is somewhat unpredictable. He remarked that we are not isolated but he did not mean in that sense of course, he meant that, in matters of politics and economy and all these sort of things, we are definitely part of the rest of Australia and that is very true. He might have gone further and said that we are increasingly tied to the rest of the world. It so happens that, when we have an economic depression, we are told that it is due to an economic depression in England or America or in Europe and that is the inflationary depression that we are putting up with at the present time. By the same token, we are told we cannot expect to recover from economic depressions or inflation until the rest of the world recovers and so on; we are unmistakably tied to the rest of the world, more than in economic things, of course, in other matters as well. I am told that in education we follow something like 10 or 20 years behind Canada and America, that we are plunging head first into matters now that they discarded 10 years ago. We should be very fortunate in being a bit behind; we might be able to learn something from the mistakes that other countries have made, but we do not appear to benefit much by learning from their mistakes; we are intent on making our own mistakes in many directions.

Militarily, we are very concerned with what happens in the rest of the world. Over the past years we have gradually seen a red arrow creeping towards the strategic point in our sealand communication with Europe, namely the Cape of Good Hope, Capetown. In enemy hands this could effectively cut us off from sea communications with Europe. Lately, we have heard rumbles or the portents of a similar situation possibly occurring in the Pacific. To the west of us and to the east of us, we heard some mumblings from our Pacific neighbours about this. We do not live in a world alone - a very timely reminder from His Honour.

He mentioned bills that would be coming forward. There is a bill for a mental defectives ordinance to replace current but outdated legislation. I am not quite conversant with the present situation but, during the 1930s and 1940s, I did hear it remarked that mental defectives had to be sent south to be certified insane. This roused my curiosity and I inquired why they were sent out of the Territory to be certified. The answer I received was that it was considered that there would not be people in the Northern Territory qualified to judge who was a mental defective. It is possible to read several meanings into that. However, that was the way it stood then so I am interested to see the form of the legislation which is coming up in this regard.

He mentioned that work was proceeding on licensing legislation. We have had the Adams inquiry and, more recently, a parliamentary inquiry about the licensing and liquor problems in the Northern Territory. Most of us would agree that it is a grievous problem in the Northern Territory and everyone would hope that some effective action can be taken to alleviate the disaster that is caused by the liquor consumption in many parts of the Northern Territory. The problem will no doubt require very drastic treatment. We see drastic things happen.

I asked a question this morning concerning the behaviour of some of my constituents in outlying stations. These people have been waiting for many years for the help of the law to deal with the problems. They know that it is against the law of the Northern Territory to bring liquor without a special permit into the reserve areas but they are still plagued by this problem of people ignoring the law and bringing in liquor by charter planes and other means. They have been tempted to take the law into their own hands to try to alleviate their problem because no other access to the law is readily or effectively available to them. They may wait several years yet before they have a police station and someone who will uphold the law of the Northern Territory in this respect.

I would hope that, when the liquor

licensing is looked at, many of the recommendations, or at least the most useful of them, from the Adams Inquiry and from the Parliamentary Committee Inquiry will be implemented. I have seen a suggestion recently in a southern paper that people who are chronic offenders in drunkenness and alcohol problems should be institutionalised or put away for a while and treated until they have recovered. This is not a new thing. I can remember when I was much younger in Brisbane, I would inquire about persons who were missing from the scene and I would be told that they had gone to Dulwich. This was an institution somewhere around Bribie Island off Brisbane where people were put away to dry out, as we might say. In those days it is doubtful that they received any effective treatment and we would hope that there would be some effective treatment for such people. It is not a new idea. It may be very necessary for us to consider something like this in the Northern Territory, that once a person has been apprehended several times or treated in an overnight place for drunkenness, that he would be taken to a place where he could be isolated and treated by law. This would be drastic, of course, but a grievous problem requires drastic treatment.

On the reserves, having gone around and looked at the situation for quite a while, it seems to me that there are some places where a majority of people are in favour of liquor and I would say that such places would require a wet canteen, properly supervised and cared for. In other places, the majority want to remain dry and I think that their wishes should be respected. In both of these cases, they are plagued and worried enormously by what they call "personal permits" which destroy both the functions of a controlled wet canteen and also control the prohibition on the areas. It would seem to me that this matter of a personal permit would have to be deleted.

The Administrator dealt briefly and succinctly with other matters as well. Finally, he said that he would leave us to our deliberations and that he wished us well for the year ahead - for the short life that is ahead of this Assem-

bly. In reply to that, I would say that we waited a long time for the appointment of the Administrator people became very impatient that we had to wait so long - but having observed His Honour and the way in which he manages the duties of his office, I would say that the long delay we had has been vindicated.

Mr WITHNALL: The fact that there was an address by His Honour the Administrator to this Assembly, indicating what the reasons were for the calling together of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, was at least an advance upon the situation we have been used to for many years now where nobody got a glimmer of anybody's policy until the bill was thumped on the table, not generally, but very often, with a request for urgency.

I do not profess to speak on behalf of the honourable member for Nightcliff, but I do want to say that, although I have read some suggestions in the press of late that the opposition in the Legislative Assembly is a weak opposition, I want to deny that because I think that the opposition is a fairly strong one although fairly weak in numbers. I will have more to say about that on a later occasion.

In dealing with what was said in the Administrator's speech, I must say that, although the general indication of the policy to be adopted in the next 8 months is acceptable, the speech was notable for what it did not say. If the total proposals contained in the Administrator's speech represent the total policy of honourable members opposite, then I suggest that what we are going to enjoy from honourable members is a fairly shady simulacrum of government instead of any real government at all.

I would have thought that we would have had in the Administrator's speech some very real indications of what honourable members opposite were proposing for the next 8 months, certainly in the field of constitutional reform. I would have expected to find some proposal there as to the ways in which the beef industry could have been helped. I would have expected to see some idea at

least of the direction in which honourable members opposite were heading. I would have expected to hear something about their policy in so far as mining is concerned and the extent to which they were going to press for the conferring on a local Northern Territory executive the power to deal with the day to day business of mining. I must emphasise that I am not suggesting or requesting that the Commonwealth Government should, so far as the Northern Territory is concerned, give over its hold over mining, but I think the Commonwealth Government's interests are completely served and will in the future be completely served through their exercise of the power of controlling exports. I cannot see any real interest at all that the Commonwealth Government has in mining except the control over the export of minerals mined. If minerals can be used within the Commonwealth of Australia, there is surely no reason for the mining of those minerals in the Northern Territory to be under the control of the Commonwealth Government.

The last 2 Commonwealth Governments, over the last 4 years, have shown that they really have no mining policy. So far as uranium mining is concerned, they have relied on the old stunt of referring the matter to some other person to inquire and make recommendations and then, having received the recommendations, to be ultra-cautious in applying them. Indeed I would not be surprised if, in answer to some question that I might ask tomorrow, I would elicit the information that there was an interdepartmental committee considering the Fox Report, as well as the interdepartmental committee which apparently for 14 agonising months has been considering the report on land tenure by His Honour Mr Justice Else-Mitchell.

I would have expected somewhere in the speech the Administrator made to find some statement as to what the policy of honourable members opposite was on the Home Finance Trustee. By a series of contrived questions this morning, we elicited some information but the only direction which was indicated so far as the policy of honourable members opposite was concerned

this morning was that they favoured an increase of the maximum money available from \$15,000 to \$20,000. I would have expected more. I would have thought that somebody would have examined the whole scheme under the Housing Loans Ordinance and come up with some sort of policy as to what direction that ordinance would take in the next 8 months at least.

A member: Do you want a committee?

Mr WITHNALL: I do not suggest any committee. The honourable member seems to love the idea of committees. I suppose that is only an indication of his desire to shuffle off his responsibility as well.

I also wondered, and will ask honourable members opposite, what happened to their ideas about land reform. Admittedly the control of land is not one of the referred powers, everybody understands that, but I would expect that at a time when constitutional changes were in the offing - and the Minister said that the Government was going to stick to its promise that the Territory would become a state within 3 years - I would have thought that honourable members opposite would have been able to give some idea of the direction in which their thinking lay so far as land policy was concerned.

Let me emphasise that this is an important time in the life of this Assembly and a most important time in the political history of the Northern Territory and all the members opposite have the ball in their court. Between now and the next elections is a critical time for them to really put their foot to the ball and get some sort of policy stated, get some sort of policy in action. If honourable members have such a policy, I only ask why it has not been shared with the people or with the other members of the Assembly not fortunate enough to be members of the party which is in power.

I would like to say what I thought ought to be policy in a number of these fields, but it would probably take me too long. But I have to express some hopes with respect to a number of matters that I have spoken about. I

would hope that by some dint or other a coherent policy on housing could be presented by honourable members opposite. I would hope that one of the foremost proposals in their policy will relate to constitutional reform, both through the Constitutional Convention and also through pressure on the Federal Government.

I hoped that there would have been an expression of policy in the Administrator's speech - and I hope that I will get this sort of expression in future - about the revision of the meat export system in the Northern Territory. I hoped to have heard that it was the policy of members opposite that they would proceed as effectively as they could to enlarge the export trade for meat in the Northern Territory. I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, would entirely agree with me. There is a market for meat from the Northern Territory which is largely neglected, and neglected only because the Department of Primary Industry in Canberra thinks entirely in terms of the states. They do not think in terms of the Northern Territory and the market that we could get quite easily - a market which would earn us export income.

From what I have said, you will understand that my regret is that there was so little in the Administrator's speech. There was no indication of the direction which the Government of the Northern Territory - I think that is a correct term - will take in the next 8 months.

Let me conclude by saying that, while I accept with a good deal of satisfaction the re-affirmation made by the Minister for the Northern Territory that statehood would be achieved in the Northern Territory within the ensuing 3 years, I was somewhat disappointed by the generality of the statements that he made. I would have hoped that, somehow or other in the 2 years since the promise was made, a good deal more progress would have been achieved than the mere 34 subjects of government which have been transferred. I would have expected in a speech on such an occasion that he would have said something more concrete about the Government's proposals for the transfer of powers. I

warn honourable members opposite that, if those 34 subjects are still the only 34 subjects which have been transferred at the date of the next elections, they will have achieved very little and their record will go to the people on that achievement.

Mr EVERINGHAM: In rising to support this motion, I find myself surprised that the honourable member for Port Darwin could voice some of the criticism that he has just managed to do. He has used the term, "the government of the Northern Territory", and it is all very well to use that term but the honourable member opposite is as well aware as I am of the qualification that should be applied to it. The honourable member has himself just said that there are only 34 areas in which responsibility has so far been transferred and I rather think it would be vain for the Administrator to have spoken in respect of areas where this Assembly's Cabinet has no authority to carry out the wishes that the Administrator might vainly state in a speech to us.

Mr Withnall: He could have expressed the direction of energies.

Mr EVERINGHAM: The Administrator should correctly - and I think the honourable member will concede this - confine himself to the areas where the Assembly Executive has authority to act and, whilst I agree with many of the sentiments the honourable member expressed just now, it would be a mere idle airing of views for his Honour the Administrator to have canvassed the field as the honourable member apparently wished him to do. His Honour the Administrator rightly confined himself to areas where he can see that his Cabinet or Executive may be able to get some things done. He has presented to us a positive series of proposals.

I think that my friend the honourable member opposite asked what we were doing about mining. "Nothing", he said. Well, he cannot have read the speech too closely because a Mining Bill to enable the granting of development leases to provide for detailed examination of significant mineralisation is to be introduced.

"What are we going to do about the beef industry?", he asked. Well, Mr Speaker, where will we find the money to finance these vague and general propositions that the honourable member opposite has proposed? What is attainable? If we just examine his speech, we see on the first page of Hansard that the Administrator has proposed the introduction of 5 bills, and on the next page a further 9, a total of 14 bills. He then goes on to say: "Our limited drafting resources are constantly engaged on corrective bills resulting from the daily problems of government in the Territory". And for the next 8 months I would consider that if we can achieve what has been indicated there with the resources of drafting available to us, we will be doing extremely well. It is much better to put forward an object which is attainable rather than to promise pie in the sky as my learned friend opposite can so easily do with no sense of having to actually realise promises that are so easily made.

Before sitting down, I might touch on the matter of the Home Finance Trustee which I suppose has now become a sour grape issue with the honourable member.

Mr Withnall: Not at all, I have plenty of time.

Mr EVERINGHAM: The honourable member has seen, apparently without any great emotion, the slow rise in the maximum loan available from the Home Finance Trustee from \$6,000 in 1966 to \$15,000 today. Where have we on record before that it caused the honourable member such concern? All of a sudden, the matter becomes one of public urgency.

Mr Withnall: The word "urgent" does not appear.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Public importance. It is rather strange that it becomes a matter of public importance all of a sudden when there is possibly some little oil to be squeezed out of it. I would say that the honourable member has heard that it is the policy of this group to endeavour to raise the amount available to people under the scheme but the honourable member is watching the hole at the moment and not the

doughnut. If you have so much money, you can only give it to so many people. If you break it up into pieces of \$15,000, many people get it but if you break it up into pieces of \$20,000 fewer people get it. I would like to see the loan raised to \$25,000 and I have stated this previously before the honourable member thought about it. If we do that, and we can probably easily do that within a couple of months, it will mean that some people will get everything they want but others who might have got something will go begging. Without acting precipitately, we must endeavour to arrange to raise a larger sum of money in the next financial year so that the amount for everyone can be increased. With that, I indicate my support and will sit down.

Mr RYAN: In listening to the Administrator's speech yesterday, there were some items which appeared important to me. He said that it is a difficult time for the Northern Territory and I think we all agree with that. A short time later, he said that these major happenings occur at a difficult time in Australia's history and the Territory is not isolated from events elsewhere on the continent. That was a very significant sentence. Mr Speaker, we are certainly not isolated when it comes to actions of the Federal Government; we are controlled quite strongly by the Federal Government.

Whilst we are certainly proud that we do have some powers that we can exercise in our own right, we have nowhere near enough for the satisfaction of the majority of people in the Northern Territory. We know that there is some opposition to statehood for the Territory but whether or not this is worth arguing about at this point, I do not know. I am certainly not going to go into the details of statehood for the Territory but I certainly believe that the Federal Government must continue to give us more executive authority so that the honourable member for Port Darwin can justifiably get on his feet and go crook at us for various actions where we have some responsibility. I would only be too happy to listen to complaints made by the honourable member for Port Darwin in areas of responsibility that have been conferred on

the Executive of the Assembly. I am sure he is frustrated with the progress of constitutional development over the years. He has been a member of the House for a long time and I assume that, after that amount of time, I would be getting a bit frustrated too. However, I was a bit disappointed that he took his frustration out on us.

We are as concerned as he is about the further constitutional development of the Northern Territory. The Minister's speech said: "We have established the essential framework for the further transfer of power, including provision for Executive Members and the Northern Territory Public Service. A good deal more needs to be done". I think we have an assurance there that the Government is working towards it. We are certainly pushing the Government to ensure that further developments take place, and at the earliest possible time.

The Minister made a couple of comments which I thought were significant. He said that the Government was committed to the development of Darwin as a great city, to the progress of all other centres and to the orderly development of the enormous resource potential of the Territory. I feel that that was an extremely important comment because I for one have been waiting for a positive statement - and that is reasonably positive as far as I am concerned - as to the Government's intentions in the Northern Territory. I am concerned for industry in the Northern Territory as the Cabinet Member responsible for industry, and when I say "responsible", it is mainly on a liaison, a spokesman, level at this stage. I know that industry is concerned with the future intentions of the Government in the Northern Territory and I was very pleased to hear the Minister making such a statement because I feel sure that industry in the Northern Territory must be given the assurance that the Federal Government is not going to turn off the tap. Stories have persisted that this is going to happen, but I do not believe it is going to happen. I do not believe that any government, whether Liberal, National Country Party or Labor, could possibly turn off the tap and cease

development in the Northern Territory. But it was certainly nice to hear the Minister for the Northern Territory, speaking on behalf of the Federal Government, say that the Government is committed to the development of the Northern Territory. Within the present restrictions that we have due to the monetary situation in Australia, I believe we are not going too badly. I know a lot of people in certain industries that have been badly affected but hopefully we will see in the future an improvement.

This morning the honourable Cabinet Member for Resources was talking about the cattle industry, and the signs are that this industry may well be on the way out of the doldrums. The tourist industry, the industry which I am now responsible for in the Northern Territory, does not get the attention that it needs. It is a big industry and I do not think people in commerce and industry realise just how much they have to rely on tourism for the development of the Northern Territory.

The Minister said: "It has been and it remains our fullest intention to provide adequate funds within the scope allowed by these still difficult but improving times to meet the needs and aspirations of the Northern Territory". These comments make it quite clear that we will be looked after to the fullest extent that the Government can, bearing in mind that we are not isolated. We are part of Australia; we cannot sit up here and expect that we will get extra special treatment at a time when Australia has to check its finances and get the economy on some form of workable level. We cannot expect the Northern Territory to get special treatment; all we ask is that the Northern Territory gets sufficient treatment to continue its development. We have to continue to develop. We are not like the other states which have had years and years of self government to establish their own criteria. We have just been given a few powers so that we can now start establishing our criteria for the future. We expect, and in fact I think we should demand, that the Federal Government within the limits of its financial arrangements should give the Northern Territory all the encourage-

ment that it can so that we can extract the greatest potential out of the area. I am quite confident that the Northern Territory, if given the opportunity, will produce for Australia a wealth which will quickly establish it with the rest of the states.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to thank his Honour the Administrator for his speech yesterday. I doubt whether he intended making up a policy statement on behalf of the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party. I do not think he is in a position to do that although he may be in a position to indicate the type of legislation that may be introduced in the next 8 months while we are here. The Administrator said that there were going to be some difficult decisions made. Whilst other members have spoken on this, my comments are directed purely at taking up the challenge. Of course there will be difficult decisions and of course we will be in for some troubled times, but that is part of the responsibility that we have accepted.

I am going to take one particular example and I feel that it is apt because it has been a problem for almost a year - the subject of police identification. I refer to a question without notice number 1038 dated 1 April 1976. This question was asked by the honourable member for Alice Springs to the then Executive Member for Education and Law. The question was: "Are police in future going to have identification badges or names?" The reply was: "When the uniforms were returned to Darwin, there was no provision to have a number identification tag included. Because the old uniforms were really old and falling apart, it was decided to accept the uniforms as they were." At some subsequent time, a decision was made by the Minister for the Northern Territory and also by the Police Commissioner that the identification badges or name tags were no longer necessary.

Yesterday, a question was asked by the honourable member for Nightcliff of the Cabinet Member for Law about the situation regarding identification or name badges. The Cabinet Member for Law replied that there was no decision made as yet. I feel that, if we are going to

accept the responsibility, if we are going to accept the challenge, then it is time that our Cabinet Members accepted that responsibility and started making some decisions. It is only a matter of "Yes, we are going to have badges" or "No, we are not going to have any badges."

Mr Pollock: We are not.

Mr DONDAS: Let everybody know about it. That is all that I am saying. If we are going to take the Administrator's speech to heart - he was talking about new powers, about constitutional advancement and about difficult times for the Territory - we must as a Legislative Assembly and a Majority Party accept the responsibility that we are undertaking and make some decisions. I support the motion.

Mr POLLOCK: I would like to support the motion and speak on a number of matters. I think that one cannot let go by the remarks made by the honourable member for Casuarina in relation to Cabinet Members accepting responsibility. I can quite confidently speak for all Cabinet Members when I say that they are quite willing to accept the responsibility that is associated with their office. At this stage of the structure of the Cabinet, myself and the honourable member for Stuart Park do not have any direct responsibilities for any matters. By the same token, I believe that the Cabinet does and its members do accept the responsibilities and are only too willing to accept many more from the Commonwealth Government.

A member: They don't pay you either David.

Mr POLLOCK: They do not pay us; that is right. In fact, since 1 January, my allowances have dropped \$550 rather than gone forward.

One matter raised in this speech was town planning. In Alice Springs, we see some classic displays of town planning, one in relation to the provision of sporting and recreation facilities or rather the lack thereof. In Alice Springs, there is one principal enclosed sporting facility, there is another one which the council is quite intent

on transforming into a barbecue area and we have acres and acres of open space. Every town plan for a new subdivision has long walks of green belt areas but no provision in those areas for enclosed sporting grounds into which the sporting bodies can control the entry of people, collect a revenue and return revenue to the municipal council which is pretty good at ripping off the sporting bodies.

We have in Alice Springs quite a number of large sporting groups, all facing a common problem and that is the lack of playing space and facilities. The cricket association at the moment cannot expand further because there are no more cricket pitches in town - the 3 cricket pitches that are there are used from daylight to dark each week. The baseball association cannot expand its facilities because the facilities that are provided there are fully taxed also practically from daylight to dark. Australian rules football is faced with the same situation. The rugby league, the netball association, the basketball association - every sporting body in town is faced with these problems of lack of sporting space. We have some groups of people with some grandiose impracticable pie in the sky scheme to transform the sewerage farm, which hundreds of thousands of dollars has been spent on, into a sporting area, an area which will not grow grass or grow anything at all, and which of course costs a hell of a lot of money to transform - and there is no money around to do anything with anyway. Town planning people are not providing in the town area close to the people any enclosed sporting facilities and this is of a matter of concern to a great number of people in Alice Springs.

We heard in the speech yesterday about matters pertaining to Darwin and the cyclone. That is fair enough, but we are also faced with disasters in the bottom end because all the money is being drained off by the "Forty Kilometres Club", syphoned out of the bottom end of the country where we have Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and even Ayers Rock. The future there seems to be relatively uncertain, as it has been for some considerable time, and the tourist industry and the

development of the town and the Rock is being hindered by a large degree of indecision. I understand there was a meeting last Friday of the Ayers Rock Advisory Committee and it was decided that it will forward through the relative department a submission for Cabinet. One would hope that when Cabinet receive this submission - or submissions; I believe there are 2, one for the short term and one for the long term; so they can take options, I suppose, to accept them in principle and defer and carry on and further delay the matter - that those responsible for ensuring that some positive action is taken accept the challenge and get on with the job of providing the funds necessary to upgrade facilities at Ayers Rock and provide funds for proper roads to the area and improve all the services that are required.

It is ridiculous to think that at Ayers Rock there are about 7 or 8 generating systems for electricity when one decent power station could provide the whole lot of them at a much reduced cost and give a much improved service. The same goes for most of the services which exist there. A very ad hoc situation has been allowed to exist for so long and I hope that we will shortly see some action to overcome those problems.

I would like to refer also to the Dowsett houses at Areyonga and Papunya. Two and a half years ago, when I was first on the campaign trail, I was out at Areyonga and Papunya and I saw these houses three quarters finished. The contractors had gone bust and something was to be done about finishing the houses in the near future. The 2 houses at Areyonga and 3 at Papunya are deteriorating quickly. Every department that has any finger in the pie says: "We are going to do something about it; we have some program in mind". You write a letter or send a telegram and they say: "Don't worry about it. In a couple of months, it will be all fixed up". The situation is exactly the same two and a half years later and it is a deplorable situation at a time when we want housing at these places. We see the large amount of money that has already been expended going to waste.

There are many other areas that I could cover. I covered some this morning in question time when I answered a question about the cattle industry and other matters in my particular area of responsibility.

Debate adjourned.

BRANDS BILL

(Serial 168)

Continued from 1 March 1977.

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

In 1974, significant amendments to the Brands Bill were passed by the Legislative Council for the Northern Territory. Those amendments recognised the growing trade in buffalo meat and brought buffalo legally into the same category as cattle for the purpose of brands, travelling stock and disease control. Under previous legislation, difficulties were being experienced by landholders in the coastal plains leases who were attempting to domesticate and to manage the buffalo herds that freely roamed in that area. The original legislation caused delays in landholders' activities as the stock inspector was required when branding took place. The branding irons were kept in Darwin and the buffalo had to be held for longer than usual periods in yards or under strict control. The amendment to the ordinance generally omitted the word "domesticated" and thus made all buffalo subject to the provision of that ordinance. By oversight, however, the word "domesticated" was not omitted from section 42AA and this is the purpose of the current amendment. It is a simple procedure to remove the anomaly and I commend the bill. Appropriate action will be taken to bring the regulations to the ordinance into line with the new provisions of the bill.

Debate adjourned

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Mr PERRON: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I would like to touch on the subject of matriculation. It is a subject which one could go on about at great length. There has been much public interest in this matter of late, particularly as the Northern Territory seems to have returned a very poor pass rate in matriculation, and so I made some inquiries fairly recently to establish exactly how matriculation papers were marked. I found it particularly difficult to find anyone who could clearly explain to me how the matriculation results are arrived at, particularly when one considers that whilst you had to pass 5 subjects in matriculation, and that a D seemed to be about the minimum pass rate for a subject, you could get 5 Ds and fail matriculation. Yet there was one case pointed out to me where a student got an A, a D - which is just on the pass rate - an E and 2 Fs and passed matriculation. This seemed amazing to me and still does. I located a document called the "Matriculation Statute" put out by the University of Adelaide which marks our matriculation papers, and I would like to read a short extract from this to honourable members. I hope that they will listen to this closely because it is not very easy to follow although it is very relevant:

Matriculation marking procedure: Students must obtain a total of at least 225 scaled marks in 5 required subjects to pass matriculation. Grades: results in each subject are classified in the grades A to G in descending order of merit. The method of determining the grades is as follows: the chief examiner, in consultation with other examiners on the subject, determines a minimum mark for the award of grade D; of the candidates who achieve that mark or better, the first 10% are awarded grade A, the next 25% grade B, the next 45% grade C and the remaining 20% grade D; of the remaining candidates the first 30% are awarded grade E, the next 50% grade F and the remaining 20% grade G.

It seems to me that if the chief examiner sets a minimum mark for grade D of 50% and the first 10% of persons who get above 50% are awarded A classifications in that subject, then the

whole class might maintain a maximum of 60% top marks yet are awarded A passes in that subject. If I am wrong there, someone might like to point out where I am wrong.

The statute goes on:

Scaling of marks: for the purpose of comparing candidates' achievements in different groups of subjects and thus obtaining aggregates to be used as a basis for matriculation, the marks awarded by examiners in each subject are scaled. Scaling is carried out in 2 steps: (a) to ensure that the distribution of marks is approximately the same for all subjects the examiners' marks in each subject are first scaled so that the top score is 100 and the 5th, 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles are allotted scores of 75, 55, 45 and 25 respectively, (the scaling being linear within the resulting intervals); (b) since the above process takes no account of possible differences of quality between the groups of candidates taking different subjects the scores in each subject are adjusted to within the range of zero to 100, so that, to a close approximation, the average score of the candidates in each subject is equal to the average score obtained by those candidates in the other subjects taken by them. Under the system of scaling which ensures a comparable distribution of students' performances in the various subjects of the matriculation examination, the median mark in each subject is 45.

I am no expert in mathematics but, in trying to fathom this hocus pocus that is presented to us as a basis for marking matriculation papers, if I understand it correctly, it seems that the examiners could in actual fact determine how many people pass matriculation. What I hope is not done is that that figure may be tied to the number of vacancies that universities and other areas where matriculation students are seeking to go have available, so that they are trying possibly to limit the number of people who are passing matriculation. I hope I am very wrong.

I wish to have recorded in Hansard

that set of procedures which I, have just read because I do believe in actual fact that they are hocus pocus and that there is no necessity for such a system when students are sitting for matriculation in many cases not to go on to institutes of higher education but merely to obtain that matriculation pass itself.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to discuss a subject that has been bothering me and many members of my electorate. This morning I asked whether the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning would urgently ask the Minister for the Northern Territory to have the covenant extended from one year to two. He said that he would. I have a letter here from a member of my electorate and I would like to read it all out because it gets right to the heart of the subject. The letter is dated 12 February 1977:

I would like to bring your attention to the unfair covenant scheme applicable to land in the Northern Territory. It is outdated and should no longer be applicable to land in Darwin. I should imagine that, when it was first introduced, land was sold at a very minimal amount to encourage people to live here. Today, the same land is selling for \$10,000 to \$20,000 for a suburban block which is more than land down south is selling for. How dare the government say that, if a covenant is not met, they can take away a block of land after a person has paid thousands of dollars for it? Are we living in Russia?

The price of housing has more than doubled in Darwin but our wages have not, yet we are expected to pay inflationary prices for land and, within 2 years, pay out another \$50,000 for a house to be erected. What are we - Rockefellers or just ordinary working class people? Why hasn't something been done about only having leasehold instead of freehold which we most emphatically should have after paying a fantastic price for the land?

There is always a small percentage of speculators who could buy land just for profit but the majority are

like myself with no money for speculation. People down south are not penalised in this respect. As we are all Australians, why should the people in the Northern Territory be singled out and treated so unfairly? I find the pressure to build in April very upsetting as the prices of everything keep going up and every other day they say on the radio that the loans are being frozen and they are not being frozen. What is this, some sort of mental torture for the people of Darwin?

After the anguish I went through in the cyclone, I would appreciate it if you could go to bat and fight this covenant scheme which is morally wrong with today's prices. We people in Darwin want the same rights that other people in Australia have.

The letter is signed Barbara Adams of Wanguri.

I agree with the contents of that letter. If I had my own way, I would abolish the covenant scheme tomorrow. We do not really need it. In the mid-1950s, you could buy a block of land at Ross Smith Avenue or in Fannie Bay for 50 pounds per block and the Government were worried about people buying tracts of land and going away for years. I can understand the Government's intention in those days of forcing people to build in a prescribed time but our population has since averaged out and Cyclone Tracy proved it. We had 46,000 people prior to the cyclone in December 1974 and I believe now in February 1977 our population is approaching something like 50,000 people. The cyclone did not frighten our people away; they came back. The point that I am trying to make is that there is no longer a need for the Department of the Government to enforce covenants on people. We might get some people buying a block of land purely for speculation as Mrs Adams says in her letter, but these would be very few. The rest of the people are in Darwin and they want to stay here and build.

We are not living in Russia. We are living in a free state where people should be able to decide when, where,

why and how they are going to spend their money. We have not had a town planning scheme operating in the Darwin area since before the cyclone. We still do not have one now. The honourable member for McDonnell said the town planning scheme was inadequate and we should be doing something about it. He was talking about his area. People now living in the Darwin area are faced with the high cost of blocks of land. It could be up to \$12,000 for a cheap block and, if they want to move into the elite area, they may be forced to pay \$25,000 or \$30,000. At the same time, they are faced with high building costs. Building costs could be anywhere from \$32,000 for a little 2 bedroom house and up to \$55,000 to \$60,000 for a 3 bedroom house. Combining those two costs, it is very unlikely that somebody could build a decent house for less than \$50,000.

The reason why I asked a question this morning of the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning was to give people time. We have an auction coming up very shortly. If people can go along to that auction and know that they are going to pay up to \$12,000 for a block of land they will know that they have got 2 years to save money to pay for the block, presuming they have borrowed the money to buy the block in the first place. Give them a breathing space to save a few dollars and then they have 2 years to start to build after that period has finished. In other words, they would have 4 years from the day they buy their block before it could be taken off them or they could be threatened with having it taken off them. If you are looking at \$50,000 today for a house, it is going to cost them possibly \$60,000 in 4 year's time. It is in their own interests to build as soon as possible. We still should give them breathing space, especially young people.

Mr WITHNALL: I want to congratulate the 17 members of the Country Liberal Party who in this Chamber are called "honourable". I also want to offer them a little information and education. This morning, I proposed that a matter of importance should be discussed in this Chamber and the honourable members refused any support. They have indeed

made some history in this because I think it is probably the first time in any parliament under the rules of Westminster when an opposition has been refused the opportunity to debate a matter of public importance. The education I would like to offer the honourable members is that the support which is to be given does not indicate support for any particular opinion, it indicates support only for the question as to whether or not it is a matter of public importance. If honourable members will examine May's Parliamentary Practice or the Practice of the Senate or the Standing Orders of the Commonwealth Parliament, they will find that, in the Houses of Parliament of the Commonwealth, only 8 members need support it in the House of Representatives and in the Senate only 4. The whole point of the provision in the standing orders is to give people who are in the minority the opportunity of debating a question which that minority thinks important, without regard to the fact that in any other form of debate the majority could squash them. Honourable members opposite have not only shown their ignorance of parliamentary procedures, they have shown that they are prepared to be completely discourteous to refuse an opportunity for a debate which I would have thought within any democratic institution it was their duty to support.

In the British House of Commons of 640 members, 40 members need rise to support such a motion. That I think is one-sixteenth of the House. We, in the Assembly of 19 members, require 4 members to rise and support, which is about 20%. I would have thought that, amongst the members opposite, I would have found somebody who had courtesy and an understanding of the democratic process and a wish to have every matter which was important debated.

Mr Speaker, the Home Finance Trustee has a function which is governed by the Housing Loans Ordinance. While I cannot hope on this adjournment to deal with this matter to the extent to which I would like, I am forced in the circumstances to continue a saga of adjournment speeches to be able to say something of what I wanted to say about it. The Housing Loans Ordinance operates

upon the basis that there will be a scheme for the lending of money to persons who require money for the purposes of building their homes. The Prime Minister, during the last election campaign, promised the utmost assistance of the Commonwealth Government in providing for the people of Australia housing that they would own themselves. So far very little has been done in this respect and I have listened with a good deal of interest to what the honourable Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government had to say in his contrived questions today.

What I think is necessary is a re-examination of the whole concept of the provision of housing for the people. Welfare housing, which is limited to the people within certain income brackets, is governed in the Northern Territory by the Housing Commission. Welfare housing operates on money which is loaned at 4.5%. It is loaned to the Northern Territory under the same terms as the Commonwealth State Housing Loans Agreement which was made in 1972 and which is due to expire next year. This money is loaned at 4 - 4.5% and, under the terms of the bill introduced today, those premises of people within the required bracket may be purchased at an interest rate of 5.75%.

In the past, when the Commonwealth sold houses to public servants, it loaned the money at the same going rate as the Housing Commission was able to charge. When I purchased my house in 1966, the interest rate was 4.5% which was considerably below the market rate of interest at that time. I expect that, if the Government does agree that it should resume the scheme of selling houses to its own tenants, the same interest rates will be payable. It seems to me that we will have at least 2 classes and possibly 3 classes of people in the community, people who have their loan subsidised by the Commonwealth and people who do not have their loans subsidised by the Commonwealth - people whose money advance comes from the Commonwealth Government Treasury or through Commonwealth Government loan funds and people who must rely upon the Home Finance Trustee who obtains his money from the open market. I do suggest to honourable

members that this sort of division is wholly undesirable.

There are other differences and, at some later stage, I will enter into a discussion on those other differences too, but for today I concern myself only with the interest rates of money available. If Commonwealth Public Servants can purchase their houses with money at 5.75% or 6% or whatever the minimum rate to be declared is, why is it necessary that the private sector should pay 9%? It seems to me that there is an inequity there which is not supportable under any considerations at all.

There are various means by which we can alleviate this position. We can provide a plain, straightout subsidy, and a subsidy of 3% for the loans to be advanced in this year would mean a cost to the Commonwealth of about \$90,000 in interest for this and succeeding years. It would of course cost a lot more having regard to previous loans and having regard to loans that would certainly be made in the succeeding years. But that is the order of the interest bill for loans to be made this year only. There is every reason why the Commonwealth Government and the state governments should accept that housing is one of the most important things in the life of the people and accept that money at cheap interest rates should be available to everybody within limits. I do not suggest that money at cheap interest rates should be available to build houses costing in the region of \$300,000. But within the limits of the ordinary citizen's housing in every town in Australia, I do suggest that it is an important function of government, and should be a function of both the Commonwealth and state Governments in Australia, that money should be available at a rate which could be paid by the people.

Have a look at the cost of housing in Darwin today. I suggest that, if you pare everything down to the absolute minimum, you cannot build a house for less than \$35,000. And that depends on your having paid an amount of probably \$10,000 for the land, but you cannot build a house for less than \$35,000 and the interest rate on that is \$3,150 a

year or \$60 a week. That is completely beyond the reach of the average person and, if something is not done, the proliferation of caravans and these horrible units that we have in Darwin today will go on, simply because people cannot afford to live decently at the price at which money is available to them.

There is another way of handling the problem but I do not know that it has been seriously considered yet and that is to break your interest down to provide a certain amount of interest at a subsidised rate and other interest at a higher rate over and above the, say, \$15,000 or \$20,000. This scheme is operating in Canberra at present but the rates there are 9% for the first \$15,000 and 12% after that. There is a still better way and that is what I might call an interest deferral proposal. Interest is levied during the first, say, 10 years at 4% but the 5% is still payable at a deferred time. That sort of scheme has a great attraction because, living as we do in a period of inflation, in 10 years time the probability is that paying off the extra interest will be a much simpler proposition than it would be to somebody who is faced with repaying it at the time the money is borrowed.

I am not talking about giving money away; I am only trying to suggest that there is a very large field that needs to be investigated so that the housing loans authority may operate in a way which will encourage the ownership of homes by people in the community and will not shut people out of housing and force them into caravans or these dreadful housing units and will give some justice to people whether they be within the welfare housing bracket or not. The present inequities must be recognised and some action must be taken to correct them.

There are other matters concerned with the Home Finance Trustee about which I would like to speak but I am afraid that time will not permit me to do it tonight. I shall have to take it up on some other occasion.

Dr LETTS: I wish to rise briefly to comment on some of the remarks made by

the honourable member for Port Darwin relating to the question of a debate on a matter of public importance. The honourable member for Port Darwin suggested that there has been a serious breach of courtesy and parliamentary convention in relation to this matter. I would like to draw his attention to one or two aspects of it which he did not touch upon in his remarks.

In this Assembly, as distinct from most other parliaments, we do not have a person designated under standing orders or otherwise as the Leader of the House but in fact the role is to a large extent played by me as the Majority Leader. I suggest to the honourable member for Port Darwin that, whilst a good deal of what he said about the parliamentary convention is correct, it would be unthinkable in the House of Representatives or most other state parliaments or parliaments operating under the Westminster system that a leader of an opposition or a member of an opposition would expect to have a matter such as this brought in without the Leader of the House, the person concerned with the business of the House, knowing what the terms of the motion were in advance. It is a convention that members of the opposition will consult every day with the Leader of the House and the program is worked out between them.

Mr Withnall: I told you last night. Did I not?

Dr LETTS: The honourable member for Port Darwin is sailing very close to the difference between fact and fiction in his interjections, Mr Speaker. Some days ago, he mentioned to me that he intended to raise a matter of public importance.

Mr Withnall: I told you what it was.

Dr LETTS: When he told me what the topic of it was, I was in some doubt as to whether it was a matter of such importance as would merit the attention of a 2 hour debate in this House. He gave it to me verbally entirely in terms that it was to be a debate on an interest level in relation to home financing.

Mr Withnall: I did not; I said a review.

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I take offence at the remark of the honourable member for Port Darwin. He is challenging the truth of what I am saying and I would like him to withdraw that assertion because what I have said is exactly what he told me last week.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Port Darwin will withdraw the remark. The honourable the Majority Leader finds it offensive.

Mr WITHNALL: Mr Speaker, if the honourable the Majority Leader finds it offensive that I recollect a conversation in different terms to him, then I am afraid that I cannot deny myself by agreeing with his recollection and discrediting my own.

Mr SPEAKER: Mr Clerk advises me that it is not a matter for withdrawal and I have made an error in judgment. Does the honourable the Majority Leader still wish the matter withdrawn?

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I suggest that the honourable member may make a personal explanation at the end of my adjournment speech should he wish to do so, but I say quite categorically that I have a very clear recollection of his remarks to me and I reported to a number of other members of my party immediately afterward that the honourable member had only referred the question of a debate on interest rates to me. I deny that he said anything else with respect to the subject in any way in the sense of the breadth of the wording which he introduced as a matter for debate here this morning. At no time since has he ever shown me any form of words to suggest any variation on that. He talks about courtesy. The form of his motion was still being distributed in the Chamber at the time that you, sir, were reading it out and calling for support, and not one other member in this Chamber had any idea of the full extent of the proposal which he was putting before us. I suggest to the honourable member that, if he had had the decency and the courtesy that I have always extended to him and which has always been extended in my exper-

ience by anybody who wished to propose a matter of public importance in this Chamber, to let us know properly in advance what he had in mind, then the result might have been quite different. If there is any blame in that respect, I suggest he might examine his own procedures and his own attitudes and not make the same mistake in the future.

Mr SPEAKER: Does the honourable member for Port Darwin wish to make a personal explanation?

Mr WITHNALL: No.

Mr TAMBLING: I am looking forward to the promise of a saga of adjournment debates from the honourable member for Port Darwin, particularly with regard to housing. I believe that the initiatives which have been taken by the Fraser Government since it came to office in the area of housing are of particular benefit to the people of Australia and have really recognised the policies they did propose in all their election propaganda. The initiatives that have been taken at the Housing Ministers Conference in the last 2 years have been paving the way for new housing policies and have continued the adequate and very good level of financing. I have attended the last 2 ministerial conferences and officers of the Housing Commission have also attended a number of Housing Officers Conferences at which major initiatives and major policies and programs are being developed.

I was very interested to hear the honourable member refer to deferred interest. I can assure the Chamber that this particular policy has my active support and has had it at ministerial conferences and, through Mr Stolz, the Chairman of the Housing Commission, at a number of Housing Officers Conferences. Mr Stolz is one of the main proponents of the idea and probably one of Australia's leading experts on the implications of deferred interest. I am aware that he has made many significant contributions on this at conferences as recently as last week.

I mentioned this morning that hopefully we would be parties to the 1978 Housing Agreement Act and I look for-

ward to continuing the initiatives that we have been able to implement in the last year for the Housing Commission both in the bill presently before this Assembly and in the several other measures that have been taken in expanding the role and the significance of the Housing Commission. The Australian Government has also made a very remarkable contribution to the Northern Territory community since the cyclone in Darwin. There is no doubt that the cyclone scheme introduced by Dr Patterson, the then Minister for the Northern Territory, has been significant in the restoration of the private sector in Darwin. If you look at the figures that I gave this morning in answer to questions about the proposed 200 loans by the Home Finance Trustee, you will see that this also is a remarkable expansion of the program that the Home Finance Trustee is undertaking. The figures that I gave for the last 5 years clearly indicate that the Government is committed to helping public housing in the Northern Territory.

The honourable member also referred to the inequities that do arise with regard to interest, particularly the interest sector that applies to the sale of government homes. I had hoped that I had intimated this morning that the Minister for the Northern Territory was very keen to see that the reintroduction of the government home sales scheme would be on terms and conditions very similar to those proposed in the bill before this House; that is, that there would be a 2 tiered interest structure and that that two tiered interest structure would be geared to and related to a percentage of the average weekly male earnings. If that same formula is applied to public servants in the Northern Territory, then I believe that we will be cutting out one of these great inequities. It won't matter whether you are a public servant above or below that cut-off point or whether you are a member of the general community. I am hopeful that that 2 tiered interest system will emerge in the new government home sales scheme and in fact I have actively promoted it.

I notice that the honourable member did refer to the fact that he enjoyed a

4.5% government mortgage at one stage. I presume that, at that stage, he was also a public servant and that was at a stage when home finance was made available to all public servants at low interest rates.

Housing does concern us greatly and I

believe that a number of great initiatives have been taken; it will certainly be one of the paramount policies of the Majority Party.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Thursday 3 March 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE SITE

Mr SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the Minister for the Northern Territory:

Dear Mr MacFarlane,

You wrote to my colleague, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, on the matter of a new Parliament House to be situated at Larrakeyah on Defence Land.

I have made approaches to the Minister for Defence in the matter of the release of this and other land at Larrakeyah. A recent reply from the Acting Minister indicates that there has been a reassessment of the total Defence Land holdings in Darwin and that until he is satisfied that the essential defence requirements can be met he is unable to cede land currently proclaimed for defence purposes at this stage.

The Acting Minister has indicated that he should be in a position to give a firm answer in March. However, if a release is not possible, I would assume that the Legislative Assembly would have considered alternative site possibilities.

Yours sincerely,

Evan ADERMANN
Minister for the
Northern Territory

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Dick Old, the Minister for Agriculture in the Western Australian Government. I extend to Mr Old a warm welcome.

Members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

Mr KENTISH: I present a petition from the residents of Ngukurr, Roper River, concerning the licensing of the Roper Bar store. I ask that the petition be received and read.

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

The humble petition of the residents of Ngukurr, Roper River, respectfully sheweth that they strongly object to any form of licensing for the sale of liquor at the Roper Bar store because such licensing has been proven to have disastrous effects on the welfare and wellbeing of this community. The petitioners therefore humbly request the Legislative Assembly to act to prevent the granting of any form of liquor licence to this store, and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

Mr KENTISH: The people of Ngukurr, Roper River, are very concerned about this matter which will be decided during the middle of this month. They are urgently hoping for some assistance from whatever sources may be available to them to stave off this threat of disaster to their community.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 167)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

It has been policy for many years, under governments of both political philosophies, to keep the benefits provided under the Northern Territory Workmen's Compensation Ordinance in line with those provided for Commonwealth Government employees. The current scale of benefits were the same as those applicable to the Compensation (Commonwealth Government Employees) Act until the end of August 1976. Late in 1976, the Compensation (Commonwealth

Employees) Amendment Act was passed by both Houses of Federal Parliament and the act received assent on 10 December 1976. The increases in the benefits provided by that act, which were effective from 1 September 1976, took into account increases which had occurred in minimum wage levels. In accordance with the usual practice, the first opportunity was taken to prepare amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance to adjust the rates of payment so as to reinstate the parity which had previously existed between the ordinance and the act.

The sole purpose of this bill is to adjust the scale of payments under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance so that Territory workmen have the same advantage of the higher payments as soon as possible. The bill was granted a certificate of urgency by you, Mr Speaker.

Turning to the provisions of the bill, the short title of the bill is dealt with in clause 1. The principal ordinance is defined in clause 2 as the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.

Clause 3 increases the amount payable to an injured workman under the third schedule by amending section 10(1) of the principal ordinance by omitting \$20,000 and substituting \$25,000. Clause 4 increases from \$500 to \$700 the amount payable to an injured workman as compensation for expenses incurred by him in alterations to his home, motor vehicle or article used by him, necessitated by the compensatable injury.

Clause 5 increases from \$14 to \$20 per week the amount payable to an injured workman for a period during which, on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, he requires constant help or attention from another person.

Increases to incapacity and death benefits under the second schedule are provided by clause 6. The new benefits are: incapacity benefit for an employee - the rate in the ordinance at present is \$57 and the bill proposes to raise it to \$80 per week; for a spouse - \$15 per week in the existing ordinance to

go up to \$21 per week; for each child - \$7 per week in the ordinance, up to \$10 per week. For death benefits, the maximum payable will go from \$20,000 to \$25,000 and for each child from \$7 per week to \$10 per week. The minimum payment for a child is \$700 in the current ordinance and is raised to \$1,000, and the maximum payable for funeral expenses is raised from \$450 to \$650. The minimum benefit payable on the death of a workman, after a lump sum payment for an injury specified under the third schedule or a lump sum redemption of future weekly payments has been made, is increased from \$3,300 to \$4,650.

The provisions for existing weekly payments to be adjusted up to the new levels of benefits provided by this bill are contained in clause 7.

The effectiveness of existing policies of insurance against liability under the principal ordinance is maintained and provision is made for insurers to adjust premiums because of the increased liability under the existing policies by clause 8. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

ABORIGINAL LANDS AND SACRED SITES BILL

(Serial 172)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill must be regarded as a piece of major legislation. Its purpose is to complement the Aboriginal Land Rights Act passed by the Federal Parliament last year and, in doing so, the bill affects the rights and interests of all people in the Northern Territory, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

The content of the bill is strictly conditioned by the powers granted to the Northern Territory in the Commonwealth act. All honourable members will be aware that we fought for and tried to insist on the right for this Assembly to make the detailed laws relating

to the people of the Northern Territory as they are affected by land and associated resource matters. Members will also recall the strong opposition by many people, including members of the Federal Government, to the proposal that the Assembly should have any say in the question of Aboriginal land rights or associated legislation.

I am confident that the bill presented will clearly demonstrate the responsibility of the Assembly to properly consider such matters. It will also demonstrate the need for better consultation with the Assembly in drawing up legislation related to Territory affairs as there are still deficiencies in the Commonwealth act which are obvious to those who know something about Aboriginal matters. Unfortunately, the views of the Assembly and, in fact, most of the people of the Territory, were rarely heeded when the Commonwealth legislation was devised and too often those views were derided, denigrated or ignored by experts whose expertise stemmed from an academic background.

I have said before in this Chamber, and I repeat it for the sake of the record on this occasion, that I think it is one of the great tragedies that the Woodward Report never received proper analysis and debate in any parliament in this country. For various reasons, mostly tied in with the fact that it was tabled just before a series of elections took place, including a federal double dissolution, that report has never been analysed in the way that the public and people are now saying that the Fox Inquiry Report will have to be analysed. And although there are a number of very valid conclusions and good, strong recommendations in the Woodward Report, I think the tendency to take every word as being gospel is an unfortunate situation which may not have arisen if history had been different.

Be that as it may, the bill that I present is a result of many discussions with diverse groups of people. In the first place, the attitudes and opinions of Aborigines were sought. A committee of this Assembly went out a long time ago now - I think it was something over

12 months ago - and discussions of this type have continued. The proposals and the principles which are contained in this present bill were distributed to Aboriginal communities last year in the form of a letter, and discussions with communities and with individual Aborigines and groups has followed on from there. At all times, the needs and wishes of Aborigines, as far as we could ascertain them, were held in the foreground, and it was appreciated that the rights and wishes of the rest of the Territory population must also be considered in any legislation of this sort.

When the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was presenting the Commonwealth bill, he indicated that he would like to place the main thrust of ownership and management in the hands of the traditional owners, and he said at the time that there was some difficulty in doing this, as far as individual title for traditional owners was concerned, because of the difficulties and time required to delineate and survey boundaries. However, there is less difficulty in applying the principle - which the Commonwealth has strongly put forward and supported - of giving priority of place in legislation to traditional owners in the kind of complementary legislation which I am putting forward here today. We have used that approach in this legislation wherever possible.

Recognising the particular rights and responsibilities of traditional owners to Aboriginal land, the bill gives them the necessary authority over that land. There is still some confusion and conflict between the proper role of the land councils - of which there are 2 created so far: the northern and southern - and the traditional owners, what their relative positions are, and we are aware, many of us, that there is an attitude amongst many traditional owners to resent interference in the acceptance of their full rights and the management of their land by anybody, however constituted. However, in trying to place the main responsibility with traditional owners and giving them the necessary powers in this legislation, the responsibilities of the land councils as outlined in the federal act have not been ignored and this bill

makes it possible for any traditional owner to have the land council act on his behalf.

The bill covers 3 main areas: entry onto Aboriginal land, entry into waters adjacent to Aboriginal land, and protection of Aboriginal sacred sites. Other bills will deal with the problems of mining and cemeteries on Aboriginal land and the question of the entry of Aboriginals onto pastoral leases. Entry onto land, waters and sacred sites were all areas mentioned in section 3 of the Commonwealth Act by which this legislature is empowered to make laws in those fields.

I turn first to the question of entry onto Aboriginal land; that is, land that has been vested in an Aboriginal land trust under the act. The bill empowers any person to enter upon Aboriginal land at the invitation of the traditional Aboriginal owner of that land, thus giving full recognition of the rights of the traditional owners. It empowers the traditional owner to issue permits for entry onto his land, such permits to be subject to any conditions he may consider necessary. He is also empowered to delegate his power to issue permits to enter land to a person or body, including the Aboriginal land council, if that is his wish, and the delegation may be specific as to the extent of the powers delegated. He may request the Administrator to publish details of any such delegation. At all times the traditional owner retains his right to control entry of persons onto his land and the bill makes it clear that this right extends to other Aboriginals who do not have traditional association with his land. There was at least one community which quite strongly asked to have that right included in legislation.

Many Aboriginals approached us with the express wish that legislation permit the exclusion from land of traditional Aboriginals whose behaviour is disturbing to the group owing to drink, aggressiveness or any transgression of tribal law. The problem is a real one and was drawn to the attention of concerned people so that it could be recognised in the Commonwealth act. Unfortunately, no appropriate action was

taken in that law. The Commonwealth act gives an unfettered right for an Aboriginal to be on his traditional land and we may not make legislation to qualify that right in any way. This bill gives the clear right to the traditional owner to control the entry of other Aboriginals onto his land but I am sorry we cannot meet the Aboriginals' reasonable request to be given a right to control troublemakers in their community. I can only suggest that they ask for the Commonwealth act to be amended to give them such power, power which they would have had under their traditional law and way of life.

The Commonwealth act provides a right of entry to persons who hold leases or other rights on Aboriginal land. This bill provides particular powers of entry to the classes of persons whose daily duties in the Northern Territory necessitate their entry on such land. The first such class is police, and in normal circumstances they have an unrestricted right of entry onto Aboriginal land. In the second class is a person who holds an office under Territory law which requires his entry onto Aboriginal land in the course of his duties; such a person will be issued with a permit by the Administrator in Council with full details and a photograph of the holder; necessary conditions or restrictions on the permit will be endorsed on it and the holder must observe them. A third class is those persons whose duties require them on certain occasions to enter onto Aboriginal land for a particular purpose; for example, a water resources officer, a stock inspector, a plant disease inspector, a forestry officer or people who have specific tasks to perform there. The Administrator or a person authorised by him can give a permit for that particular task and endorse it with any required conditions. It is necessary in such cases to provide for the power of delegation down from the Administrator so that responsible officers in remote parts of the Territory are able to give authority in cases of emergency where action needs to be taken without delay.

All of these classes of people shall, as soon as possible, inform the traditional owner when they enter his land

and, unless there are urgent reasons to the contrary, shall leave the land on the request of the traditional owner. Also, if there are cases of wrongful behaviour by the holder of such an authority he can be reported to the Administrator in Council which will investigate and take the appropriate action. The Administrator in Council is also required to consult from time to time with the Aboriginal land councils to advise them on the class and number of permits likely to be issued under these provisions so that Aboriginals may be informed of the numbers and classes of people likely to enter their land.

Finally, provision is made for the Administrator, a member of this Assembly, a member of the Federal Parliament or candidate for election to enter on Aboriginal land. These people are also required to give notice of their entry to the traditional owners. This is a matter of common courtesy anyway. We are in effect transferring an authority which up until now has resided with the Director of Social Welfare, formerly the Director of Aboriginal Affairs, to administer and control the issue of permits to enter Aboriginal reserves. The transfer of this authority is to the Aboriginal people themselves, to the traditional owners. Later on, I will be introducing another bill which removes those powers in the Social Welfare Ordinance which will no longer be appropriate.

I turn now to the very vexed question of waters adjacent to Aboriginal land. All members will have heard a good deal of heated argument for and against their closure. As a background to whatever we do in this regard, it must be understood that Aboriginal land, as prescribed in the Commonwealth act, already embraces something in the order of 85% of the Northern Territory coastline. When one looks further at areas which are subject to further Aboriginal claims, this could be raised to 90% of the Northern Territory coastline. It is a matter in which no decision can be lightly taken.

Many Aboriginals are rightly concerned about intrusion into their land from the sea, although I believe that such

cases have been relatively rare when you look at the whole of the coastline. This has been an historic means of intrusion, going back to the Makassans who drifted or blew down on the north-west monsoon to the Arnhem Land coast. However, the entry to Aboriginal land from any direction is covered by the provisions which I have already outlined in the first part of the bill. If a person without authority enters onto Aboriginal land from other land or from the sea, he commits an offence and is subject to the punishments listed in the legislation. The waters do not need to be closed merely to prevent people from entering land from the sea. The same type of argument would lead to the need for a buffer zone also on the land side if one was to accept that principle around the whole of the Aboriginal land area.

On some earlier visits, I detected some variation in the Aboriginal community approach - a variation which seems to have disappeared when one considers the views of the Northern Land Council. The rest of the community feels very strongly about the view of the Northern Land Council about the total ownership and exclusive rights over these coastal waters. In the bill, the valid Aboriginal request to close certain waters for particular reasons is recognised. Those reasons may be to prevent exploitation, to preserve the sanctity of places of particular meaning or significance to Aboriginals or to preserve the breeding ground of a particular food source. Also, it is appreciated that some such areas are more than 2 kilometres from the coast. This point was drawn to the attention of the people concerned with making the Commonwealth act but, unfortunately, it was not incorporated in their legislation. The 2-kilometre limit fixed by their legislation can act as a disadvantage to the Aboriginal people and can deny the reality of the kind of areas which might receive some special attention.

The bill provides for traditional owners of coastal land to make application for the closure or protection of waters adjacent to that land. The Administrator in Council shall refer each request to the Aboriginal Land

Commissioner appointed under the Land Rights Act and shall have each request examined. The examination is to determine the extent to which intrusion into those waters would interfere with traditional Aboriginal rights for use of those waters and to assess any disadvantage to others which could flow from the closure of the waters. The Administrator shall have the results of that examination discussed with the owners who made the request. If, after these procedures have been followed, the Aboriginal owner desires to proceed, he shall ask the Administrator in Council to make a regulation or take necessary action to close or protect the waters. He shall specify in the application the type and degree of protection requested, from total closure to, say, closure against a form of fishing. The Administrator in Council shall consider and may accept, accept in a modified form or reject the request. If accepted by the Executive Council, it shall cause notice of the proposal to be published in the Gazette and subsequently in newspapers with full details and a map of the area, and may not make the regulations until one month after such publication. After considering any submission received, the Executive Council may make regulations closing waters within the 2-kilometre limit to the extent of total closure or to allow some particular form of exclusion. Beyond the 2-kilometre limit, the Executive Council's power is limited to action to close waters against a specified form of fishing under the Fisheries Ordinance.

It can be seen that the bill proposes the complete examination of each request and full advice to the total community of the Territory over every proposal. The Land Commissioner is involved from the beginning so that his expertise on Aboriginal matters may be available. In other words, the proposals in the bill ensure that the Administrator in Council acts on the best possible advice.

It is no secret that this was the most difficult area in which we and the draftsmen had to attempt to do something. It is fair to say that it would be impossible to produce a piece of legislation which would satisfy all the

different interests in the community. What we finished up with is a type of compromise which will still preserve a good deal of the waters off the coastline available for use. It will not result in absurd situations where Australians with fishing licences can be arrested and have boats confiscated and be locked up as the Taiwanese have been in the past. It will provide for the preservation of both traditional and need rights for Aboriginals in the proximities of their communities. If people will examine it coolly and calmly, they will find that it will be in the best interests of the type of harmony which Judge Woodward referred to when he said that anything that was done in these kinds of fields must be done with the interest of the whole community harmony in mind.

I turn now to Aboriginal sacred sites. These exist both on and off Aboriginal land as defined in the federal act. Within Aboriginal land, the interest is solely that of the Aboriginal landholder. On request from the holder to make regulations prescribing a specified area of land within an Aboriginal land area which contains a site, the Administrator in Council, if satisfied that the boundaries of the concerned land have been adequately marked with appropriate signs, shall make such regulations.

On areas off Aboriginal land, however, other interests must be considered. In receiving a request for the protection of such a site from an Aboriginal with traditional rights for that site, more detailed examination is necessary. The matter will again be referred to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner so that his expert knowledge and guidance may be applied. The Administrator in Council shall cause the matter to be examined to ascertain the importance of the site, the attitude of the owners or lessees of the land if any, whether other persons would be disadvantaged if the area was so declared, and the most appropriate steps that should be taken in all the circumstances to protect the site. These matters will all be discussed with the Aboriginals and with the Land Commissioner. If the Aboriginal wishes to proceed following the discussion, he

shall request the Administrator in Council to act. If it is to be by regulation, similar steps to those already outlined in regard to the closure of waters will follow; that is, advertising the intention with details and a map before final action is taken. Additionally, however, the Executive Council is empowered to consider action for the acquisition of land or the reservation of land under trustee management, which would be expected to be Aboriginal, or the making of specific bylaws where the land is in an area vested in a statutory authority.

One of the main points in relation to this section of the bill is that the initiative in questions relating to sacred sites is left with the Aborigines. All honourable members will be aware to some degree of the attitude of Aborigines to such sites. Some are so sacred to them that they would prefer no action to reveal their location, even for the purposes of protection, so no effort is made to have a blanket coverage or exhaustive registration of every sacred site in the Territory. We offer instead protection by the best means available for those sites Aborigines wish to have protection for in our laws and where they ask for this to be done.

The subject matter in this bill is very important and very sensitive. I hope the bill itself will be fairly straightforward and easily understood. I hope it will be read by as many people as possible - Aborigines and non-Aborigines - and that all interested persons will submit any comments and criticisms to me for further consideration. It is my sincere desire to make the best possible legislation in this field, and I can assure everybody that I am open to suggestions in respect to any part of it. I do not pretend that this is a perfect copy that we have before us of what the final form of the bill may be.

I think I should inform the Assembly, Mr Speaker, before closing, that I understand there is some concern in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and possibly with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, that I am introducing the legislation at this sittings. I believe

that the department and the Minister feel that they should have more consultation and probably a higher established level of agreement on all aspects of the bill than we are certain of at the moment. On the other hand, there are pressures within the community, and also from the Federal Government's select committee with special terms of reference in this field, that the concept that the complementary legislation will embrace be made known publicly as soon as possible. I have, of course, involved the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of the Northern Territory, Aboriginal people, and my own Chief Secretary's Department in discussions and consultations. I think there may be a feeling in some parts of the Government that we should act as a rubber-stamp for concepts, ideas and chapter and verse which they would approve. I have, when any suggestion of this has been made, hastened to assure them that, like any other legislature, we reserve the right to consider, debate, put forward various views, look at the matter in the best interests of the public and the people of the Northern Territory, and that we would be abrogating our rights and our responsibility if we were to act in a rubber-stamp way in this or other legislation.

Had the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs or any other minister wished to introduce a form of legislation which would fit into this complementary pattern, he was of course free to do and I gave an undertaking, at the very outset of the Assembly, that the Federal Government could have, through us, any legislation which they desired introduced in the very words that they wanted, but that we would give no undertaking as to what the final form would be following the points of view and discussions which would be aired in this House. There is no other way we could proceed in the event; the Government has not seen fit to put forward their legislation; they have left it to us and that puts them in the comfortable position of being able to criticise fairly from now on. I hope they will make suggestions. I have made considerable efforts to determine what the Government's policy is on some of the specific points but I have not been

successful yet in establishing that to my satisfaction, I think it would be fair to say that as much or more consultation has taken place between us and our federal colleagues as took place in the reverse direction before the Commonwealth act was introduced, and I see what we are doing today in somewhat the same sense as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs operated when he introduced that bill; he introduced it in June last year and let it lie on the table to be available to the public for some 2 months or more, for comment to be made and representations and views to be put, before the final form was established. That is precisely the reason I want to get something in at this sittings so that the Aboriginal people and other people in the community know what the proposals are and can come back to us. It is the duty of every member to take this legislation to his electorate and to consult with the people. When we come back to debating it at a subsequent sittings of this Assembly, we will be able to examine those views and incorporate the most constructive and beneficial of them in the final form of the legislation. I commend the bill.

Mr WITHNALL: I rise to speak on the second reading of this bill because I have a number of comments which may need very careful consideration. Firstly, with respect to the provisions relating to the exclusion of certain persons from Aboriginal land, I would like to point out to the honourable member that the ordinary law of trespass applies, and the persons in whom a title to the land is vested from time to time can have recourse to that law. I did consider that it might be possible that the elaborate provisions in this ordinance might perhaps result in some sort of suggestion that the ordinary laws of trespass are not to apply - in other words, that the provisions contained in these sections are designed to cover the field so far as the exclusion of persons from Aboriginal land was concerned. I leave the thought with the honourable member. I do not think it is a serious comment but I think it might well deserve some consideration.

Coming to the provisions relating to use of waters adjacent to Aboriginal land, I have 2 difficulties. First of all, section 73(1)(d) of the Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights Act gives power to make ordinances regulating or prohibiting the entry of persons into or controlling fishing or other activities in waters of the sea including waters of the territorial sea of Australia adjoining and within 2 kilometres of Aboriginal land - the last words are important - but so that any such ordinances shall provide for the right of the Aboriginal to enter and use the resources of those waters in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. Reading through the provisions of sections 13, 14 and 15 of this bill, I find no provision at all which gives an Aboriginal a right of entry. The provisions are drafted merely on the basis that there will be a traditional enjoyment of the water already available to the Aboriginals and that the waters may be protected from use by other persons who may be prescribed. It may be - and I suggest the honourable member should carefully consider this - that the bill is ineffective because it does not provide for a positive right to enter but only for the exclusion of other persons.

I come to my third point. The provisions of Part III of the bill relate to applications by authorised Aboriginals for certain actions to be taken with respect to the waters adjacent to Aboriginal land. It seems fairly clear that the section is designed to permit the exclusion of Aboriginals other than the traditional owner of the adjacent land. This probably is within the proviso to paragraph (d) of section 73(1) that I have just referred to although there could be some doubt and I suggest the honourable member should pay some attention to that. The more serious criticism of Part III arises because of the existence of the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975. I will read the provisions of section 10 of that act:

If, by reason of a provision in a law of a Territory, persons of a particular race, colour or national or ethnic origin do not enjoy a right

that is enjoyed by persons of another race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, then persons of the first-mentioned race, colour or national or ethnic origin shall, by force of this section, enjoy that right to the same extent as persons of that other race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

The Racial Discrimination Act came into force in October 1975 and, by section 6 of the act, the Commonwealth of Australia is bound by the provisions of the act.

Mr Robertson: It is subject to signatories of the secretariat of the United Nations and the 26 signatories have not been filed.

Mr WITHNALL: I address my remarks to it in any event. My information was that it had been proclaimed.

If the Racial Discrimination Act is proclaimed, the comments that I am making now will certainly be apt. The Caucasian race is well represented in the Northern Territory at the present time and section 10 must operate with respect to Caucasian people to let them enjoy every right which is conferred on the Aboriginal people. If the bill is examined carefully, I think it will be found that there is little doubt that there is, within the terms of section 10, a discrimination in favour of Aborigines. It may be said that the Aboriginal Land Rights Act is a subsequent piece of legislation and therefore may be taken to override section 10. However, I point out that the Aboriginal Land Rights Act does not purport to override section 10 - and the 2 acts are capable of running side by side. If this bill that is now before the Assembly gives rights to Aborigines, then, by force of section 10, those rights may also be enjoyed by Europeans. That is quite clear. I might also draw to honourable members' attention the likelihood that a subsequent bill under the Crown Lands Ordinance may suffer from this sort of criticism as well.

I turn now to consider the sacred sites provisions. I merely suggest to the honourable member that the provisions relating to sacred sites not on Aboriginal land may possibly result -

and I have not had time to study the section in detail at the moment - in the opening of the gates to persons who have pastoral leases or other titles to land upon which an Aboriginal site is found and that all Europeans will thereby gain a right of entry to that land because of the operation of section 10 of the Racial Discrimination Act.

My consideration of the bill has necessarily been fairly short but I thought it better to indicate the views that I have now so that some consideration may be given to them at an early date.

Debate adjourned.

SOCIAL WELFARE BILL

(Serial 175)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This legislation is directly consequential on the Aboriginal Land and Sacred Sites Bill. That bill, as I have just indicated, provides a system of control of entry onto Aboriginal land and it is a new system which is envisaged.

Part IV of the Social Welfare Ordinance of the Northern Territory provides for control of entry onto Aboriginal reserves. As honourable members will realise, practically all present Aboriginal reserves will, on the full operation of the Commonwealth act which is well on the way to full operation at the moment, become Aboriginal land. The bill merely provides that the provisions of the Social Welfare Ordinance relating to entry onto Aboriginal reserves do not apply to any part of such reserves which become Aboriginal land. Entry to such land will be then controlled by the provisions of the Aboriginal Lands and Sacred Sites Bill which has just been introduced. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

CROWN LANDS BILL

(Serial 174)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This is another piece of legislation in a series relating to Aboriginal land rights. It is not correctly complementary to the Commonwealth act, nor is it required by the Commonwealth act, but it does deal with a particular aspect of the traditional use of land by Aborigines, and that is the right of Aborigines to enter pastoral leases. Present pastoral leases contain, and have contained for many years, a reservation in favour of Aborigines, permitting them to enter and be on the land to use natural waters and to kill wildlife for food. If a lessee interferes with the exercise of this right, the only penalty provided for in the Crown Lands Ordinance is forfeiture of the lease. These provisions which can be found in sections 24E and 24B of the Crown Lands Ordinance are so drastic that they have never in fact been exercised.

Mr Justice Woodward in his report rightly drew attention to the ineffectiveness of such provisions and recommended that they be replaced by enforceable penalties such as a fine. This bill gives effect to the Woodward recommendation. It repeals the present provisions and insists on a right for traditional Aborigines to be able to enter a pastoral lease in their traditional country for ceremonial purposes, to use the natural waters, kill wildlife for food and use naturally growing food on that land. The area within 2 kilometres of a homestead and 1 kilometre of a bore is excluded from that right although I am sure that pastoralists, in most cases, who know the particular groups of Aborigines who traditionally use this right of forage would be perfectly happy for those people to use the bore water. It is an offence to interfere with this right of entry and presence of Aborigines without just cause. A penalty of \$2,000 is provided for such an offence. The provisions of this bill will protect the rights of traditional Aborigines

to enter upon pastoral properties by creating enforceable penalties for interference with that right as distinct from the virtually unenforceable penalties of the past.

It has just come to my attention this morning that in the latest issue of Land Rights News, which I understand is put out by the Northern Land Council, one page is devoted to mention of this Assembly and its complementary legislation proposals. There is some report of the presence of 2 Aboriginal delegates from the Northern Land Council at a meeting of the officers committee which I set up to help advise us on this legislation. The person who wrote this, presumably a European adviser, states, inter alia, that the Assembly wishes to pass a law which will prevent Aborigines from entering pastoral leases if they are in possession of a car or a gun. That is a damnable lie! There is nothing in this legislation which I have introduced this morning and there was certainly nothing in any discussions which I have ever had with Aborigines or any other people which suggests that there would be a sanction against using a car to enter a lease or even to carry a gun, provided it was rightfully carried and used in accordance with Northern Territory legislation.

The writer goes on to say that the Assembly also wanted to repeal section 112 of the Crown Lands Ordinance which relates to the granting of small leases of crown land to Aborigines. That matter has never been proposed by me; in fact, it has never been discussed by me with the Northern Land Council, their European advisers or anybody else. The thought has never been in my mind. This article is a mischievous continuation of the chronic determination which some European advisers to land councils appear to have to create disharmony and disruption between this legislature and our Aboriginal friends on those councils. I wish to goodness that, in the interest of the whole community and the Aboriginal people, they would desist from this irresponsible misrepresentation. In the case of the person who I believe may have been associated with this article, I am very surprised to think that he would have

had any hand in such a distortion if this were so. In any case, Mr Speaker, what the bill proposes to do is now evident to people: it is quite limited; it follows the Woodward recommendation in this case and I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

CEMETERIES BILL

(Serial 176)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill also is complementary to the Aboriginal land legislation. Its purpose is to make provision for the establishment of public cemeteries on land which becomes Aboriginal land. The present section 6 of the Cemeteries Ordinance provides for the dedication for the purposes of a public cemetery of any unleased land belonging to the Commonwealth. The Cemeteries Bill I introduced on 2 March to validate the declaration of a cemetery at Nhulunbuy demonstrated the difficulty of the application of that provision to land which had been reserved for Aborigines. But the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act provides for the vesting in Aboriginal land trusts of Aboriginal land; it will not be land belonging to the Commonwealth but will be land held under title by the land trusts and the provisions of section 6 of the ordinance could not apply.

The vast areas of Aboriginal land declared by the schedule to the act, and possible future areas pursuant to land claims, contain many developing town-sites which in time may require the establishment of a public cemetery. As I have pointed out, it would not be possible under the present provisions of the Cemeteries Ordinance to do that. To enable the declaration in the future of public cemeteries on Aboriginal land, this bill proposes to widen the powers of declaration to include also an area of Aboriginal land which has been leased in perpetuity at a nominal rental for that purpose. Such a lease may be granted pursuant to the provisions of section 19 of the Aboriginal

Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. It would be granted by the land trust at the direction of the land council with the approval of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and could not be granted without the understanding and consent of the Aboriginal community.

So, Mr Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to provide a means for the establishment of a public cemetery on Aboriginal land, if that is the wish of the Aboriginal community on that land. If they so desire, they arrange through the land trust and land council for land to be leased for that purpose, which will then be available for declaration under the Territory ordinance.

The Aboriginal Land and Sacred Sites Bill provides for reasonable rights of entry onto Aboriginal lands for persons to visit declared public cemeteries. This bill will be brought into operation at the same time as the Aboriginal Land and Sacred Sites Bill to permit the declaration of cemeteries on Aboriginal land and, in conjunction with the other bill, to give a public right of access to such cemeteries. The initiative, however, lies with the Aborigines. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

MINING BILL

(Serial 192)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The prime purpose of this bill is to amend the Mining Ordinance to conform with the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act regarding the grant of mining titles over Aboriginal land. Under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, a "mining interest", which is defined in the act so as to include exploration licences and all other forms of mining titles, cannot be granted in respect of Aboriginal land unless the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the land council responsible for the area have both con-

sented in writing to the grant. The exemptions to this rule apply where certain actions have been performed before 4 June 1976, the date of introduction of the Land Rights Bill into Federal Parliament, and in these circumstances, whilst the consent provisions do not apply, an obligation exists to enter into an agreement with the appropriate land councils as to the terms and conditions under which any mining interest may be granted.

This bill acknowledges the restrictions imposed on the grant of mining titles on Aboriginal land and establishes granting powers separate from existing private land provisions contained in the principal ordinance.

Members will note that the bill further provides that the person who in accordance with Aboriginal tradition may control the entry of persons upon land defined in the bill as the "authorised Aboriginal", is to have similar prerogatives to those given to an Aboriginal land council under the terms of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. That is to say, as the consent of or, in certain instances, agreement on terms and conditions with a land council is required, the consent of or agreement with the authorised Aboriginal will likewise be required before any mining interest can be granted.

The final provisions of the bill relate to the rate of royalty to be paid in respect of minerals obtained from Aboriginal land. The existing royalty payments payable under the Mining Ordinance in respect of Aboriginal reserves is twice the rate applied to minerals obtained from Crown land and the proposed amendment to the royalty provisions will set the same rate of royalty for Aboriginal land as for reserves.

The amendments which I have proposed are essential for the proper administration of mining activities on Aboriginal land and I commend the bill,

Debate adjourned.

INTERPRETATION BILL

(Serial 190)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill is not connected with the previous series of bills which have been introduced this morning. I should begin by expressing the view that the explanation which I am about to give will confuse members. If it fails to do so, I congratulate members because I have had a good deal of difficulty myself in following the notes.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure that the definitions in the Interpretation Ordinance are effective for the purposes of interpreting references in Northern Territory legislation. I can assure members that the amendments proposed in this bill will in no way alter the present definitions in the Interpretation Ordinance. The bill will merely ensure the effectiveness of the definitions.

I will explain the reasons why this action is necessary. First, the Interpretation Ordinance 1975 assented to on 12 March 1976 inserted a definition of the "Executive Member". Its commencement was tied to the commencement of the Transfer of Executive Powers Ordinance 1975 but that ordinance was never commenced; it was repealed and replaced by the current Transfer of Powers Ordinance. The Interpretation Ordinance 1976, assented to on 17 September 1976, repealed the Interpretation Ordinance 1975 and inserted new definitions, including a new definition of "Executive Member". This ordinance was to come into operation on the date of commencement of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act Amendment Act 1976. That date was 1 January 1977. However, allied with the new public service legislation was a further Interpretation Bill which resulted in the Interpretation Ordinance No. 3 of 1976. This was assented to on 22 December 1976 and, as it had no commencing section, came into operation on that date. Section 3 of that ordinance

introduced necessary new definitions of the "act", "department" and "executive member" which related to the total legislation dealing with the establishment of the Northern Territory Public Service. However, as the Interpretation Ordinance 1975 never commenced and was repealed on 1 January 1976 by the Interpretation Ordinance 1976, the status of those amendments is doubtful.

The purpose of this bill is to remove those doubts. It repeals the section of the Interpretation Ordinance No. 3 of 1976 which inserted the new definitions and reinserts the definitions in the legislation. The passage of this legislation will ensure the effectiveness of necessary definitions in our Interpretation Ordinance and I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Dr LETTS: I move that during the present session of the Assembly, during any adjournment of the Assembly, Mr Speaker may fix a time and date on which the Assembly will resume sitting, notwithstanding that the Assembly may have previously resolved otherwise.

This motion, Mr Speaker, is simply a restatement of a motion which we carried early in the life of the Assembly and which gives you, sir, the power to call for special meetings in between those which have been fixed in advance by resolution of this Assembly. We have found by experience over the years that serious crises affecting the community and requiring the attention of this legislature do arise from time to time and that special meetings need to be called. These are usually called by request to you and this motion, if carried, will simply reaffirm the power for you to call such meetings.

Motion agreed to.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH - ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in relation to

the Administrator's address. As the Administrator said, all members, and particularly you, Mr Speaker, as a longer term member of the old Legislative Council, would have liked to have seen that occur shortly after this House was officially formed. It is nevertheless very gratifying to see the work that has been done here in this Chamber post Cyclone Tracy. Certain sections of the community have suggested that the upgrading here was done as a result of the visit of the dignitaries and the opening. Of course, this is not true. I think that you would agree, sir, that the House in its original form was not really conducive to the conduct of parliamentary procedures. The acoustics have been greatly improved and the Chamber has now been given the air of dignity that it deserves.

It is a long-term thing, as I said when I was speaking on the select committee report on the needs and requirements of this Chamber. In light of the letter you received from the Minister for the Northern Territory, it certainly seems that this Chamber will be here for quite a number of years to come. I originally indicated that I suspected that it would be in existence for at least 10 years. In light of the difficulty in even obtaining the land and in light of the constraints being placed on public spending, I would suggest it will even be longer than a decade. If ever the House has to be expanded, it will be most difficult for the staff and planners to allow for those extensions. A change in the composition of the House will also create difficulties. It is something that still must be looked at and it is something that I urge Mr Speaker to press for because the day will soon come when this Chamber will find itself in logistical difficulties.

The usual thing in talking on the address in reply is to become involved in your own electorate and that is precisely what I intend doing. I want honourable members to understand that there is a difference between the electorate of Alice Springs and the electorate of Gillen. If we have an electoral redistribution - I will probably get an absolute scowl from the member

for Alice Springs for this - it would be my suggestion that the name "the electorate of Alice Springs" should go. I do find it extremely incongruous. I have well over half the population of the city of Alice Springs in my electorate yet someone else bears the name "the member for Alice Springs". Perhaps another name might be found.

I mention this because I am going to concentrate particularly and fairly briefly on the electorate of Gillen. Many times I have stood in this place and I have been extremely critical of government and town planners. I have harped upon the woes of the economy of our area. In respect of the actual electorate of Gillen, however, I would honestly find it difficult to recommend any major capital work proposal needed for that area.

Let me just have a quick look at what the electorate of Gillen has. It has a high school capable of holding about 1,000 students. With the construction of Sadadeen High School, that high school will cater for that side of town for many years to come. We have a new health centre which, in conjunction with the new Alice Springs Hospital, will cater for the needs of that area of the community for a long time. It contains one of the most up-to-date and modern dental clinics in the country, all with brand new Siemens equipment and a very fine and dedicated staff. It also has a baby health clinic and a general health clinic. We have in the electorate of Gillen vast parks - the Flynn Park in particular which is next to the old Alice Springs High School premises. We have 2 preschools and 2 primary schools, both of the highest standards, and professionally manned by the highest standard of staff.

Of course, you would be very foolish if you said that the electorate had everything. There are areas where I am pushing for change, areas of expenditure. I refer to the acquisition of library books and library facilities for what are now called resource centres. They were libraries when I went to school but I came up with button-up boots and the horse and cart in education. I would suggest to the Cabinet Member for Education that the

system should be varied. It seems to be ludicrous that we have a system where they must requisition books 12 months ahead for a primary school library. It would seem to be far more efficient and expeditious to have a system of granting funds for a library so that, as new and useful books become available on the market, the school may purchase them immediately.

If the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government has had any headaches from me at all, paramount among those headaches must be the question of the Araluen Foundation. I am aware, as a member of the committee of the Araluen Foundation, that notwithstanding the very lengthy submission we put in originally to the Town Planning Board in relation to the objection to the proposal to subdivide the entire of the Araluen Foundation claimed area and this very extensive submission covered the subject of how we proposed to fund the development - the department through its various officers has requested further information on how we are going to fund that particular development, how we propose constructing it, requiring architectural drawings and the like.

I repeat here what I have said before. It is absurd to propose to a group of people in a town representing all cultural sides of that town that they should be able to satisfy a government department that they are now able to provide the funds to do what they wish to do. It is exactly the same as people saying to the Northern Territory, "Tell us exactly how you are going to fund this state for 10 million people". It is quite meaningless. What they are proposing is that if we cannot say now how we are going to fund what we hope will be a \$3 or \$4m development, then they will deny us the opportunity for the next 5 generations to do it.

We are not talking about what we want for the Alice Springs city as such - and that is what the Araluen Cultural Foundation is proposing over this area - we are not talking about what we want now, we are talking about what our children and children's children are going to have, and there must be that

distinction drawn, I point out to the department that we are not interested in a vainglorious exercise so that we ourselves can go and sit in a decent theatre, so that we ourselves can be encouraged to look at natural trees having been grown in a maintained natural setting in respect of that area - we are talking about generations. As I say, it is entirely shortsighted and to me entirely unacceptable that the present generation must be held responsible for the failure of a long-term project like that because it does not have the immediate funds to satisfy a department. That particular area is my major concern at the moment.

I have spoken here many times on the economic difficulties we are going through in our area. I close with the words I used in a recent article on the economic difficulties of the Alice Springs region: government expenditure from now on must be directed towards productive spending. The reason I mention these facilities we already have is because, while I believe, as the honourable member for Jingili has said, that the standard of public spending must be of the highest order, that does not give us a licence to immediately go ahead and build white elephants just for the sake of spending public money.

That gets me to what I believe for the Central Australian region and the Northern Territory is the singularly most important piece of expenditure the Government can now make to promote the private sector, and that is the South Road. We must have it. It is absolutely vital to the economy of the Central Australian region. It is vital in terms of tourism; it is vital in terms of cattle transport; it is vital in terms of supply - an all-weather highway. Now you can build all the schools in the world, you can build all the government offices which were opened in our absence, but unless you provide the motivation and the incentive to the private sector and the means for the private sector to expand, then all of that is pointless.

Debate adjourned.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 171)

Continued from 2 March 1976.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to support this amending bill which I see largely replaces the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance as it now stands in respect of persons contracting silicosis and tuberculosis. Of course, in the old days, this special provision was incorporated to cover men who worked particularly in the mining industry, but I notice, on looking through the proposed new fourth schedule, that there are many other areas which are now covered as well as those in the traditional areas. Silicosis is still there but now we have anthrax infection, poisoning by benzene, arsenic poisoning, phosphorus poisoning, and poisoning by lead, which I suppose is still probably mainly related to mining.

It was often very difficult, I found, to assist men seeking compensation where the cause of the disease was perhaps obscure and where they had perhaps gone on to another type of employment before the disease cropped up. This bill, as I see it, seeks to correct the position. I see in section 9AA(1) that the dependants of a worker will be compensated if he dies without having become aware of the disease. It seems to me that this is a reform of the ordinance that has been long overdue and I welcome it.

Debate adjourned.

HOUSING BILL

(Serial 183)

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr STEELE: I see the reintroduction of the Housing Commission sales scheme as a vital reaffirmation of our electoral pledge which we made in 1974. Despite the long delay caused primarily by problems associated with Cyclone Tracy, we are now, because of the commencement of executive government, in a better position to satisfy the

needs of the electorate with a scheme such as that proposed by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government. He said on 13 October 1976 that some 600 families would be potentially affected by the introduction of this sales scheme. Of that total, approximately 100 live in the electorate of Ludmilla. I am delighted that the benefits of this scheme will be available to those families in the very near future.

An area of doubt which I have about the administration of this proposition can presumably be cleared up by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government. It is the concern I have for childless couples, long-term flat tenants of the Housing Commission who are eligible to move into a house but are denied this right by the newly arrived rental tenants - tenants with families competing for occupancy for the houses that are available. Unless a certain quota of houses is put aside and a formula decided on to cater for the particular needs of the long-term childless couple tenant, then the scheme is less than equitable. I hope that the Housing Commission takes my remarks into account.

Mr Speaker, I want this scheme implemented as soon as possible and I will be advising my constituents of the scheme's details in the coming weeks. I am not convinced that the residential requirement is necessary and I am certain that it is not desirable. I am mindful that the 5-year residential requirement will prevent many of my constituents from immediately applying to buy a home. The limiting factor will always be the number of houses available for sale and I refuse to accept that my constituents are second class citizens when these qualifying conditions are compared to those that have applied to Commonwealth public servants.

I see that in future years, when the Housing Commission does achieve a reasonable supply of homes, the residential requirement provision will be tossed out of the window. The Northern Territory will always need new people and we will always need homes to put them in. One of the reasons for the

big turnover in the workforce is significantly related to the fact that we have never had enough houses to go round and the community is poorer as a result. This modern approach to the housing needs of the community has no equal in the states. The fact that any person, regardless of income scale, is entitled to purchase state-type housing is certainly a significant advance. I commend the Housing Commission, the honourable member for Fannie Bay and the bill.

Debate adjourned.

MINING BILL

(Serial 181)

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I rise to support the bill which will perform the essential function of preserving the rights of existing exploration licence holders and also holders of authorities to prospect who, but for the passage of this legislation, would be unable to avail themselves of the advantages which they expected when they paid their money and carried out their exploration research. The one quarrel I have with the bill and I understand this may be cured in a later amendment - is that the terms of the legislation seem to preclude the idea of an Aboriginal, or for that matter anyone else, ever marking out a mining tenement on an Aboriginal reserve unless prior to doing so they held an authority to prospect or an exploration licence.

I appreciate the urgency attaching to this measure and it is for that reason that I support it. However, I do feel that in the very near future the anomalous situation which has been created will have to be cured. An Aboriginal cannot - I do not suppose too many do but they should be able to if they want to - mark off a mining tenement on an Aboriginal reserve or perhaps, after negotiation with some mining company or group, permit someone else to mark off a mining tenement on an Aboriginal reserve before he has gone through the process of holding an exploration licence. I do believe that this, what I consider anyway to be a defect, should be cured.

I know that this measure has to go through. I consider it only right and just that it should go through, and I consider it only right and just that it should have urgency attached to it because people have been induced to spend money in this Territory in the last few years, a good deal of money, and have only found themselves treading on the quicksands of government policy - a shifting, wishy-washy, marshmallow-type administration.

Mr Steele: Bugged down in the pipeline!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EVERINGHAM: Bugged is dead right.

I am surprised quite honestly, Mr Speaker, that any sane corporation at the present time could, having regard to its shareholders' interests, bring itself to spend money in what seems to be a proving ground, namely the Northern Territory, for every idle "fogger boggler" type idea when you can find the same resources in the states, and when you can get through with a great deal fewer problems, less time-wasting and fewer mining companies around.

Whilst I do not say that mining companies are the end that we should aim for at all times, nevertheless people have to have jobs, people have to have the products that mining companies offer; the world needs a lot of the products that mining companies offer, and we can achieve these ends with proper safeguards. But none at all should be subjected to the continual crossflow of abject lack of direct ideas on where we are heading that the people who do business in this Territory have to suffer. I support this bill.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mr TUNGUTALUM: Mr Speaker, we all have problems. The commercial fishermen are facing tremendous problems and mining companies are facing a lot of prob-

lems because of this Aboriginal Land Rights Act. I have a problem back home with my people at Bathurst and Melville Islands. I have a letter written to Mr Viner - about the fourth or the fifth letter - to ask about setting up our own land council. The letter reads:

Mr R.I. Viner,
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

re Tiwi Land Council

Our previous submission advising of the establishment of a provisional Tiwi Land Council resulted in your advice to re-apply when the lands rights legislation was enacted.

We, the Tiwi people of Bathurst and Melville Islands wish you to establish an Aboriginal Land Council for the area of Bathurst and Melville Islands, NT, under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act, section 20.

In support of this request we submit the following:

- 1. The whole Tiwi People have one language.*
- 2. All the population of the 2 islands are related and share one set of family customs.*
- 3. Our customs and traditions, particularly relating to land, are quite different, definite and distinct from those of tribes on the mainland.*
- 4. There has always existed an authority exercised by what are in fact the traditional owners, recognised and respected by all the people.*
- 5. The practice of calling meetings and seeking advice from the elders is an established one which has served the Tiwi people for thousands of years.*
- 6. We believe that the introduction of a Tiwi Land Council will be a continuation of an existing structure understandable to the Tiwi people.*

7. As it is viewed as a continuation of an existing process, there is no ground for expecting large expenditure in the operation of a separate Tiwi Land Council.
8. The representation of the existing provisional Tiwi Land Council was speedily agreed to as consisting of the recognised elders together with the presidents of the councils of Bathurst Island, Snake Bay, Garden Point and Pickertaramoor.
9. We believe that a Tiwi Land Council could best deal with the functions given to a land council under section 22 of the act, in particular -

(a) Section 22(a)

To ascertain and express the opinion of Aborigines living in the area of the Land Council as to the management of Aboriginal land in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning that land

(b) Section 22(b)

To protect the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aborigines interested in Aboriginal land in the area of the Land Council

(c) Section 22(c)

To consult with traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aborigines interested in, Aboriginal land in the area of the land council with respect to any proposal relating to the use of that land.

10. Any further information required will be immediately forwarded upon your request.
11. Through our existing delegate to the old Northern Land Council, we are seeking the support of other land councils in this application.

I have read out this letter in full because it sets out what my people on Bathurst and Melville Islands want to say about establishing their own land council for their own country. We do not want to be part of the Northern Land Council, although we will work with them from time to time as we need to do this. It is wrong to say that we asked for our own council and at the same time have asked to be part of the Northern Land Council.

I hope the Minister will not delay any longer in giving us the authority to set up our own council as we would then be the first major Aboriginal language group - and we speak one language on Bathurst and Melville Islands - to have its own land council. I hear that the Pitjantjatara people in Central Australia want their own council and that the Minister has been asked to talk about this. My people want the Minister to come out to Bathurst and Melville Islands as soon as possible to help us to make this land council in the same way as he did with the Northern Land Council at Batchelor. If he does this, he will be very welcome, but we do not want any further delays because we want to go ahead with the further development of our country under our own management. We, the Tiwi people, speak one language and I think we are entitled to have our own council.

Fishing is one of our biggest enterprises in the Top End. I used to be a fisherman way back, and fishing to me is not a sport but a means to feed the country. The advisers of the Northern Land Council, or other advisers, should understand that fishing is not to make a few quid but to feed people. People go to a shop to buy fish and chips but if there is no fishing you have no fish. Aboriginal people must realise that we need something to build this country; we need mining, for example; we cannot rely on the Government to give us funds all the time.

I support the commercial fisherman and I asked that they send up a petition. I hope the Majority Party and the Assembly members will accept that petition and make sure that we give access to the fishing grounds and allow mining.

Mr KENTISH: I would like to comment on some of the items that questions were asked about this morning. I am still waiting for an answer on the Berrimah lights. I am hoping that, in view of the accidents that occur at this place and the volume of traffic, something will be done in the near future. This place is becoming quite a public traffic hazard at peak hours.

I support the member for Tiwi in his inquiry about the finishing of the sealing of Whitewood Road which is sealed from the Howard Springs Road as far as the new school. With the opening of the new school there, the bus that delivers school children from that area does a complete circuit from the Howard Springs Road past the Whitewood Road, Hillier Road and back to the Stuart Highway at the McMinns pumping station. This is a sort of ring road around the whole area and is used by many more vehicles than the school bus. It is hoped that some attention will soon be given to this road.

I would like to say something this afternoon about another of our Territory problems. We have liquor problems and meat marketing problems, and education is another of our Territory problems. We have seen something about that in the recent exam results. I would like to touch on the part of it that concerns my electorate very considerably. I have heard the contentions in the last 3 years about education for Aboriginal children. People have said quite openly: "There are no jobs there for them when they are educated, so why bother about education? Why worry about educating children when there is not a job waiting for them?" It is a long time since I went to school in the 1920s but I must have been educated then to fit into the world of tomorrow because I am still coping fairly well. I was educated for the world of tomorrow in the 1920s.

Mr Steele: You are still here too, Rupert!

Mr KENTISH: I am still here. I was educated for the world of tomorrow in the 1920s and I am still coping with the world, despite the fact that there are a lot of dropouts around me at

present, with ribbons around their heads, frayed trousers, bare feet and whatnot. When I went to school, no one ever suggested to me that I was going to school so that I could get a good job when I had finished school. I had never heard of it. I had the understanding that I just went to school to get an education. That in itself seemed to be a sufficient purpose or an end to the whole exercise. We have this line of thought today that Aboriginal children should not be educated because there is not a job waiting for them and, for that reason, in places in my electorate, I find people advocating that they go back bush, forget about education, and get on with their hunting, learn to hunt and track. They do not really have to learn that because, even when they are going to school, they are still learning those things in their holidays and at weekends.

We have that situation which vexes me somewhat because of its shortsightedness. My answer would be not that they should cease being educated because there are no jobs available but that they should be much better educated so that they would more readily fit into jobs that are available in the wider community. My own observation is that many of the children who are educated have difficulty fitting into the jobs that are available for them in the wider community.

One of the greatest qualifications for a job in the wider community is a very precise and thorough grasp of English so that a person can receive instructions and carry on with the job without being constantly supervised. That is one of the best qualifications. The second thing is a practical experience of what a hard day's work looks like and feels like. The third is as much skill as possible in as many avenues as might be available.

For a good number of years at Croker Island, I had the oversight of young boys leaving school at 14 and 15, part-Aboriginal boys, and I was able to teach them a great deal about stock work, truck driving, tractor work, saw-milling, boat building and carpentry. Other men on the mission at Croker Island also instructed them. When those

boys had finished several years of practical training, they came into Darwin for jobs and we were amazed to find that we were getting letters back from all over the place asking if we had any more boys with this skill or potential and training; they would be assured of immediate employment if we could send more boys like this into Darwin. That was a practical finish to a good education which they had received at the Croker Island School.

That would not apply to girls but the girls had such a good grounding at the part-Aboriginal school at Croker Island that several of them went on from there to become double-certificate and triple-certificate nurses. They held other jobs as well.

If you teach a thorough grasp of English and give practical training on top of it, you will deliver a person who is capable of qualifying and excelling in any avenue in the community. That is one of the best things to come out of education, but there is also the personal satisfaction to such a person of being able to excel, of being able to cope and of being able to hold his own, being able to read and enlarge his vision.

This morning I presented a petition from Ngukurr, Roper River. I have in the past year voiced in this House some dismay that recently it was decided that the first language at this place - and I think possibly Bamyili; I am not quite sure if it took on there - would be what is called Creole or Pidgin. I left out the Pidgin part of the petition but it goes something like this: "Melabat iya la Ngukurr bin saninim dijan iya peipa bla shoum pipul mela numu wandim laisens bla grog la Ropa Bar Stor." That is the first language which is being taught to school children to fit them to take their place in the wider community at some later date. "Dataim dei bin obum laisens la Ropa Bar dis pleis bin brabli nugud ebribodi bin brabli nugud binji". That is education - a new Australian language.

I have a strong suspicion that some of our expatriates from New Guinea brought this rubbish over here but I am not absolutely certain about it. It is

the language of the cattle stations and the plantations and that was the translation of this morning's petition.

If a young man or woman turns up looking for a job somewhere and this is the language they have learnt at school, you wonder what chance they have. People say the alternative is, if they can't get a job, to go back to fishing and hunting again. I do not think we are giving the people a fair go.

Perhaps the people there may have chosen this language, this foul mixture of language, as being suitable for them, but I am very doubtful if they understood all the implications of their choice. Again I would like to say that any future for the Aboriginal people depends on a very good education, not on abandoning education.

Mr MacFARLANE: Sometime ago the honourable the Majority Leader said that the Northern Territory must not become a gigolo dancing attendance on the raddled hag - or he may have said "the painted lady" - of Darwin. I was disappointed that the Minister said the Government had no intention of marking time on the total re-establishment of Darwin. In my view, the time has come to earnestly consider whether the Northern Territory, not the 40 kilometre zone, can afford the luxury of having half the people in the Northern Territory as public servants or their dependants. We have statehood coming around the corner yet we have this gross proportion of our population completely non-productive. If you go through your public service departments, you will find your productive industries like lands, animal industry and agriculture, mines, water resources, bushfires, the tourist industry etc have very small staffs and are run very economically. Your big money is spent on providing additional facilities for public servants and their dependants. The Casuarina Hospital, your extra swimming pools, your extra schools, are all there as part of a benefit or privilege which is usual for people who come up here.

What have we got really? The big news at the present time is that the bridge

over the Newcastle Creek is about to be let to contract. The way the roads are cracking up, you won't even get to Newcastle Creek. Look at the trouble we are having between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, between Alice Springs and Pimba and between Tennant Creek and Mount Isa. I say that advisedly because the road between Camooweal and Mount Isa and the bridge over the Georgina in Queensland are very poor. The Barkly Highway, the Tablelands Highway, and the Carpentaria Highway are all cracking up through lack of money for maintenance. Nevertheless, we see Darwin is progressing.

I have no objection to Darwin progressing if it does not do it at the expense of the rest of the Territory. However, in my view, the reconstruction of Darwin really consisted of building more houses for public servants who were not here at the time of the cyclone. You just build another set of houses for another set of public servants and this is where your money goes. About \$500m in 3 years has been spent on Darwin and your communications have been neglected. This, to my mind, is not what it's all about. Darwin is not the Northern Territory,

We have no railway, we have a delicate situation with shipping and we have no roads. You will find that the Alice Springs people want both the South Road and the broad-gauge railway line. However, the big need at the present time for the Top End is this road from Camooweal to Daly Waters and this is most unpopular with the people of the deep south. It is a practical proposal; it follows what high ground there is along that fairly straight line and it would be of great benefit, not only to Darwin and not only to truck drivers but to tourists, to cattlemen and to developing areas. You must remember that most of your development will take place in the Top End. If you look at the line that road will take, you will see it goes fairly close to Borroloola and the McArthur - that is where your big development will take place. Certainly, it will benefit the Top End more than the Centre but you people in the Centre want not just the road but the road and rail. That is fair enough if you get it, but people

elsewhere must have in the meantime a serviceable road link. The quickest and best way we can get it, not only for the Top End but for the whole of the Territory, is to upgrade the Stuart and Barkly Highways and persuade the Premier of Queensland to do something about the road links between Winton and Cloncurry and Winton and Boulia and the road link between Mount Isa and the Queensland Northern Territory border.

Although I have been pressing for these road links for at least the last 10 years, I have not got very far with them yet. However, it seems ludicrous to me that you are going to spend all this money on Darwin and make plans for next year too - another high school, another hospital, another swimming pool, four lane highways - yet you are going to neglect all the Victoria River area because there are no funds available to build a high level bridge over the King River on the Victoria Highway. That too has been brought up for 10 years, but there are not any funds. We are talking about \$1m or something like that. It is just out of all proportion. I say that the Territory should not be held to ransom by Darwin. The public servants are here in Darwin, and that is what it is all about. The development of the Territory is being stifled by the selfish attitude that Darwin is the Northern Territory. Let us have some sense over the whole lot and get our communications right. We have not got many, we have only got shipping and roads. For goodness' sake, let us divert some money and put the roads in order.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I would like to discuss an answer I have received to a question I have asked in this House on numerous occasions. The first few times I did not get a proper answer at all, and the third time I was told that there were no funds, the usual story, that it was not in the Budget figures for 1976 and so on. I asked the question again on 1 March: "Are we going to get a police boat? Will it be equipped for ocean going? Will police be able to liaise with Groote Eylandt and the Elcho Island police?" The answer came back: "A 16-foot dinghy equipped with a 35-horsepower motor and trailer is planned for purchase in 1977-78." That

boat would not be capable of use outside of Gove Harbour and adjacent coastal waters. What is the use of having a boat that is 16 feet long with a 35-horsepower motor on it? Usually the spare motor should be at least 30-horsepower. I just cannot understand the reasoning of some of the people who make these decisions. I am not blaming the police force for this. I think that the Commissioner of Police is only doing what he is told. But surely to goodness they have summed up the situation. I have put in numerous appeals to them through our Executive and Cabinet Members and I have asked them on various occasions to look into it deeply. They have all the reports from all the accidents that have occurred out there.

I said the other day in the adjournment debate that one of these days some one will be killed because the police do not have a proper boat to go out and pick up people who are stranded on some of the outer islands. We could use a boat with about a 150-horsepower motor and a spare 50-horsepower motor. An ocean going craft might cost \$25,000 and I would not care if it cost \$100,000, at least you would save lives. One of these days we will have an accident like the one at Milingimbi when one of the small cargo vessels sank. Fortunately, they were close to the shore; they were able to swim to shore and they just watched their boat disappear.

What I am really crook about is that I have to go back and tell those people, if they do not already know, that we are getting a police boat. They will ask how big it is and I will tell them that it is a 16-footer. The people next door to me have a bigger boat than that. They only work as fitters and plant operators up at Nabalco yet they can afford a better boat than the police force. I hope the Police Commissioner reads this debate and has a talk to me; I am sure I could convince him in 5 minutes that there is a need for a larger and more powerful boat.

We had one occasion when 2 young Aboriginal girls were left in the bush by their mother. Nobody knew where they

were because the story came from the Aboriginal mother who was a mental case. The police looked everywhere and, in the finish, they realised they had to get to a certain spot by boat. They could not get a boat at the time so they had to borrow one. One of the local people has a good sized boat so they borrowed that. I do not know what the cost was but I guarantee it was \$40 or \$50 an hour to hire a boat like that. There are a couple of ocean going vessels out there but you do not expect a private person to lend a boat to a policeman.

There was another occasion when the police borrowed a boat to go out to some stranded people. That boat broke down and someone else who was passing by had to tow them in. That is the sort of situation that you get. The number of times that they have had to go out to rescue people who were stranded overnight is on record at the police station. One chap got his leg half severed by the propellor on one of the engines. Luckily someone else saw them. Communications can be set up with some of the people on the bigger boats. They have small radio transmitters. Even the 4 wheel-drive club has set up its own radio communications with up to 30 to 40 miles range.

What worries me is that I do not know how they are even going to go out to Melville Bay when it gets rough in that 16-footer, because I'm sure I wouldn't.

A few months ago there was an accident in the harbour with a boat that was about a 16-footer. A little baby was involved in it and someone happened to see the baby go under water. The reason that boat went over was because they had too many people in it and it was too light. This proposed boat is a 16-footer, I don't know how many passengers it can take, but I guarantee you would be lucky to get 2 or 3 heavy policemen and equipment in it, and it will sink the first time they go out in it. I don't like to sound too boring and I have repeated myself but I don't think I would have the insides to stand up here again and talk about this matter.

Mr MANUELL: I should not let this sitting of this Assembly end without making some further mention of Wales Meat Exporters. Honourable members present will recall that during these sittings I have asked a number of questions without notice about this particular company. During this adjournment debate I would like to offer my congratulations to this company for the purchase of the shares of the Alice Springs abattoir. I believe I should offer my congratulations because the people of Alice Springs and the people belonging to the Central Australian beef industry will in turn in the near future be grateful for these people's actions. They should be congratulated because they are investing in an area of high risk at a time when the cattle industry in Australia is relatively depressed, even though possibly at the moment there are brighter prospects on the horizon for the export meat trade.

I believe that the object in the purchase of the Alice Springs abattoir by Wales Meat Exporters Pty Ltd is basically export-orientated and because of this there is possibly a greater value to be gained by the local beef producing industry than possibly they have enjoyed in the last 5 years. The Central Australian pastoral industry has of recent years been limited in its export situation to abattoirs either based in Queensland, South Australia or north-west Western Australia, or our own only other export abattoir in Katherine. The one other export-licensed abattoir in Darwin has not operated, I believe, since 1974. However, this purchase of the Alice Springs abattoir by Wales Meat Exporters does represent a positive projection of export opportunities. I am led to believe, from news releases that have been made in the local press and the national press, that the possibility exists of these people exporting to the United States.

There are other markets that to date have not been explored either by this company or by the Department of Primary Industry or Department of Overseas Trade, and I have spoken about those markets in this House on previous occasions. Nevertheless, looking at the prospects of an export licence and even repeating the aims of this company in

terms of killing numbers, it would appear to me that there is a prospect of a draw-off of live stock from the Central Australian beef producing area, numbers that would be sufficiently attractive to preserve the interests of recent legislation introduced into this House in terms of soil conservation, and even going further and putting the local producer back into a situation where he can look once again towards buying in store stock as opposed to simply culling out his natural increase in herd numbers. I think it would be true to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Central Australian beef producing area, as opposed to anywhere else in the Territory, must be regarded, under favourable seasonal circumstances, as a fattening area from which is turned off fattened stock for markets either domestic or export.

The present draw off, and that which has existed over the last 3 years, has been insufficient to carry off from the region the natural increase in herd numbers and in consequence there are local producers who are currently overstocked and are faced with the prospect of either giving their stock away and making a loss on it or agisting out, hopefully with the prospect of covering their agistment costs by a natural increase in the market or, alternatively, continuing to enjoy their herd increase on an agisted basis which in itself will lower their returns. If meat exporters have done their homework correctly, there is possibly a potential to draw-off from this local producer area sufficient to restabilise cattle numbers in the Central Australian region and restore, before it is too late, the soil conservation requirements of the Animal Industry Branch and the Lands Branch and also restore the Barkly Tableland to a situation which it perhaps enjoyed some 4 to 5 years ago when it did serve as a source of stores for the Central Australian region.

Under the circumstances, I think we would see a stabilisation of industry in the Northern Territory as a whole, inasmuch as the Kimberleys would continue to service the Wyndham meatworks and the Katherine meatworks, and the Barkly Tableland, in its own right,

would continue to farm out stores to the Central Australian region, the Queensland region, the northern Australian region and possibly into the Kimberleys.

The other interesting point about the prospects of the establishment of an export abattoir in Alice Springs is the prospect of an increase in employment of people within the township. You, Mr Deputy Speaker, are well aware of this and mentioned during the course of this sitting the concern of commercial interests in Alice Springs about the drop-off in cash flow. Principally, there is one major contributing factor in the drop-off in cash flow and that is the substantial diminishing in spending by the working man. It was borne out by the Chamber of Commerce in Alice Springs very recently, that following the festive season, the Alice Springs commercial traders finished up in an overstocked and undersold situation. Any introduction of new industry into the area in the near future will be of considerable benefit to the overall economy of Alice Springs.

In closing my remarks about the Alice Springs abattoir, I do congratulate Wales Meat Exporters and I wish them every success.

In relation to the overall Alice Springs economy, there is a combination of factors which should be considered by this Assembly as contributing towards the "diseconomy" that is occurring in that township at present. It would be true to say that there has never been a greater number of homes for sale on the market in Alice Springs, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of homes built. This is a reflection of the overall "diseconomy" that exists in the town. I believe a combination of factors exists: a drop-off in the cash flow has occurred and culminated through the mining exploration industry that has diminished over a period of 3 years; the cattle industry has been in a state of stagnation for some 3 years; and to cap it all off we have had the recent tightening of liquidity brought on by the Reserve Bank. The combination of these 3 factors has taken away the flex-

ibility of commercial enterprise in Alice Springs to withstand the present drop-off in cash flow.

It would be very appropriate for the Federal Government to look very strongly towards what effect their review of cash availability to the trading banks is having in remoter areas. It is true to say that the full effects of the national policy brought down upon the trading banks by the Reserve Bank in the restriction of credit to the trading banks in remoter areas is having far greater effect there than it is in the coastal and metropolitan areas of Australia. I therefore suggest that the Treasurer of the Federal Government would be very wise to implement variations to the overall policy of the Reserve Bank through the trading banks in the remoter areas to offer relief whilst lower cash flows are being experienced by commercial trading enterprises in the remoter areas.

Mr VALE: I want to speak this afternoon about a group of squatters who got loose in Alice Springs back in the 1930s, who are still in Alice Springs, still squatting on some of the best land in town, and whose presence is costing Alice Springs individuals and industries dearly. They are apparently hell-bent on staying right where they are, regardless of the wishes of the community. I am referring to the Australian National Railways who recently announced that the Tarcoola rail agreement calls for the building of a rail station in Alice Springs proper. The community feels strongly about the relocation of this complex and surely it is not an impossible or a mammoth task to amend this act. If the railways are going to start quoting acts and agreements, how about the completion of the line from Adelaide to Darwin?

There are a number of reasons why I believe this station should be relocated either north or south of the town. The first is space. Even with a minimal growth rate, the present site and land available for expansion is limited and will eventually be exhausted. This land could be better used for light industry, as a buffer zone between residential and light industry, and parks and gardens, possibly using

sewerage water from the honourable member for MacDonnell's electorate. In the words of Brian Martin, a former Mayor of Alice Springs. "The condition and location of the present rail complex is an offence to all of the senses, particularly sight". Why do not the railways, using their own personnel, start to clean up the entire area? Even if the site is to be eventually relocated, must the residents be forced to live with this disgracefully untidy, government-owned facility? Freight forwarders on railway land could also assist with a clean-up of the areas that they lease.

While this indecision on relocation or redevelopment exists, there are a number of roads in urgent need of repairs which are being delayed because of this indecision. I refer particularly to that area known as Larapinta Drive, near the railway crossing, and that section of the Stuart Highway from Shell Corner to Smith Street. Both of these roads need major repairs and both government departments have indicated their unwillingness to do any work pending a decision on the relocation of the railway complex. The condition of the railway complex is also a disgrace to the railways and their engineers. The crossing at Larapinta Drive and Bradshaw Drive are bolt-shakers and must be expensive to all motorists who need to frequently traverse these crossings. The front wheel alignment repairs on vehicles must be very expensive. Do not let us be "conned" into believing that smooth crossings cannot be constructed. There is one out on the South Road towards Pine Gap. It may be a requirement that both the railways and the Department of Construction would get together and work on solving these crossing problems.

While I am speaking about the cost factor, the cost in time to industry and individuals is immense during the closure of the Larapinta crossing while goods trains are shunting. The following figures were taken by myself during one closure while a goods train was shunted. A total of 60 vehicles on either side of the crossing were delayed for approximately 8 minutes. Multiply that by, say, 3 closures per week

and you come up with a staggering total of 1,200 hours per year lost while cars and trucks wait for train shunting. Quite apart from this time factor, how about safety? If there were a road accident or a fire in the Gillen area, what would be the delay while an ambulance or fire trucks waited for the rail crossing to be cleared?

If you study all of these factors, then it is obvious that sooner or later the rail complex will have to be relocated and, if this is done, consideration should be given to establishing within the town boundaries a booking and small parcel office, with a siding where passengers and luggage could be set down. The train could be then moved out to the main terminal, be it south or north of town, where it can be cleaned, serviced and ready for its next trip. Alice Springs people want some action on this complex and they want it now - roads repaired, rail crossings repaired and a complete clean up of the entire railway complex.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I have listened to the honourable member for Stuart's railway reflections - if I could call them that - with interest. If I were a person in business in Alice Springs, despite the inconvenience which is no doubt caused by having railway crossings through the town, I would be quite happy to see the railway stay close to the town. I would certainly want the road to go right through the town as well because I have seen a number of towns - not in the Northern Territory - become ghost towns because the railway has been rerouted 20 miles to the east or 20 miles to the west, or the road has been rerouted in the same fashion.

Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine have fragile economies. They are hot-house towns that cannot afford to be exposed to the roughage of the weather, and the flowers in Alice Springs would wilt very significantly if the railway line was relocated 20 miles to the west because then they would build a new town around the railway line and Alice Springs would decline. I would therefore urge members from Alice Springs to see that the railway line runs as close to the town boundary as they possibly can.

I turn now to the subject of the Northumberland Insurance Company and other defunct insurance companies in general. Recently, I had the opportunity to talk on a radio show which is run by my friend the honourable member for Casuarina every Sunday morning. I asked people who were affected by the default of the Northumberland and other insurance companies to contact me or to contact the Cabinet Member for Transport and Secondary Industry. I have also, in the last month or two, conducted a survey of legal firms, which was supplementary to a survey that I conducted in 1975, to ascertain the extent of claims outstanding against the Northumberland Company. The matter of trying to seek indemnity from the Commonwealth Government for people seeking to claim against Northumberland is still under way. The delay of the Commonwealth Government was the delay of Dr Rex Patterson in 1974-75 and it has been a delay of Mr Evan Adermann since, although not personally with either gentleman - a Mr Col Stephens of the Department of Northern Territory figures largely in discussions.

I consider the behaviour of the Government, of whichever colour it may be, to be immoral. They authorise these companies to trade as third party insurers and, if they have a requirement in an ordinance that these companies be authorised and they so authorise them, then they permit these companies to hold themselves out to the public as authorised insurers. The companies then go broke and the Government runs as fast as it can in the opposite direction. That is what has happened in this case.

The Queensland Government is often held up to us as an example of moribund conservatism but that government seized the initiative in 1974 when the Northumberland Insurance Company went broke and passed legislation. We passed similar legislation in November 1974, based more or less on the legislation we got from Queensland and providing that the nominal defendant has to accept these claims, the Commonwealth had to contribute to the nominal defendant and the insurance companies had to contribute to the nominal defendant. Mr Bjelke Petersen's nominal defendant has

accepted this and Mr Bjelke Petersen in fact sponsored the legislation. What have we found? We have found that our noble leaders in Canberra, who speak in high moral tones at all times, have fled in the opposite direction. I think that there is something very wrong in all that. I do not know what it is, but there is something eating at me inside and it does not encourage me to continue in this sort of activity.

Finally, I turn to the subject of East Timor, which too has been worrying me for many months. In fact it surprises me that it does not worry the people of Darwin a great deal more, because it seems to me that we have got unexampled proof of atrocities that are going on over there - and people just hustle down to the piecart and have another pie; they do not blink an eyelid. We all go on as though this is not happening within 300 miles of us apparently. I am prepared to accept what I have heard and read of the almost daily rape, murder and torture by Indonesian troops - and perhaps the rape, murder and torture by Fretilin troops - of the population of East Timor, a people who were, prior to 1975, peaceful, happy, poor, but getting along quite fine as far as they were concerned.

There are obvious cases of atrocities. There are the Australian reporters who were shot by Indonesian troops. We seem to have it on reasonable authority that Roger East, whom I last recall in Darwin when he bought me a bottle of wine at the Olympic Restaurant one afternoon, was shot by Indonesian troops. We have a reliable report that about 20 Chinese citizens at Dili were shot by Indonesian troops because something upset them.

Our foreign policy appears to me to be - and I do not think this is a matter of party politics because Mr Whitlam and Mr Peacock are one on this - to just hush up what is going on and sweep it under the carpet. Mr Whitlam has played the role of Stanley Baldwin and Mr Peacock is playing the role of Mr Chamberlain in this matter. Both of them - certainly Whitlam and I am sure that, if one could only get at the records, one would find it true about

Peacock too - have come to an agreement with Suharto and his foreign minister to be quiet about this, hush it up, obstruct everything and do nothing at all.

The fact of the matter is that we are cynical, cold-hearted and plain nasty and inhuman about ignoring these poor people - you can call them wogs if you like, call them what you like but they are human beings; they are over there and they are being subjected to the caprices of fellows who certainly were not taught any manners by your Auntie Flo. Our policy should be to open the matter up. It should be to seek to air it as much as possible in the United Nations. The Indonesians are doing something that is very wrong as far as I can see. Two wrongs will never make a right. We are doing another wrong in hushing it up and sooner or later - it may be 20 years - the Pandora's box will open and we will cop it in the neck because of the way we have ignored these little people. We are a little people, we are a small country and, if someone was treading on us, we would be squealing like mad. I would hope that our big neighbours next door or not so far away would look to help us, but are we looking to help the poor 500,000 Timorese? They helped our soldiers in the second world war, they hid our guerillas, they made it possible for Australians to escape Japanese prison camps but are we doing anything for them? There is no way about it.

I do not say that the Fretilin forces or party are lilywhite. I do not say that I necessarily support Fretilin; I do not necessarily support anyone, but I just do not believe in letting the Indonesians run rampant through that country and, as I think they are indisputably doing, killing people, wrecking the country - and all to gain a few thousand square miles of additional territory.

I ask that Australia press in the United Nations for the imposition of a United Nations force on East Timor, not a United Nations force that will last for ever like the one it has in Cyprus but one with one target in mind to get done, to get it over and get out - that is, to impose this force on East Timor,

to push out the Indonesians, stop Fretilin carrying on, stop any of the other parties carrying on, to have a plebiscite at which all parties and persons can decide what they want their future to be, this plebiscite to be based on one man - one vote. Then, when the people of East Timor decide what they want to do, we will let them do it. I do not think we should impose a Westminster style democracy on Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines or Pago Pago, but I think we should let them start off on the right foot. Indonesia is just trying to swallow these people up like a big, greedy lizard. I want this bloodshed to stop. I have no respect for our policy. I want to see our policy changed; I want people to look after Australia when it is in need and for that reason I am prepared to look after other little people when they are in need to.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs LAWRIE: I have been sitting here with some patience waiting to talk on education, but before I do I would like to congratulate the honourable member for Jingili on the sentiments he has expressed and say that I endorse every single one of them, with one reservation: I do not think the people of Darwin are as apathetic as he believes but they feel completely impotent. There is very little we can do. Official government policy, as he stated, is one of appeasement at all costs - successive government policies; it cannot even be said that one government is more moral than the other. They have pursued a keep-the-lid-on-at-all-costs policy which is contributing to the mass murder of the people of East Timor. I too find that completely objectionable and immoral. If we look around Australia, the people who are so concerned are those with memories of East Timor during the second world war or people in Darwin who are as close to Timor as to Katherine. The vast majority of the population barely think about East Timor as they probably barely think about any of our foreign policies but because we live in Darwin and are close to Timor, we are aware of it. Most of us are appalled at the present policies of the Government and the previous Government regarding East Timor.

The honourable member for Jingili spoke of certain atrocities which are continuing. I believe that too, but what can one do? I have made certain representations to federal senators regarding a couple of East Timorese whose families are in Australia and who desperately want to come here. I know that a senator has taken it up directly with the Foreign Affairs Department and the answer he got back was that the department would look at it. These people are in a desperate plight. The senator understands that and one would think that the Foreign Affairs Department did too. However, they are so terrified of upsetting Indonesia to any degree at all that they close their eyes and ears and will not listen even when representations are made directly. It does engender a feeling of utter and complete impotence.

We have heard in this House about the very poor results at the matriculation examination. If that was all that was wrong in our education system, it would be bad enough but, in addition, in 1977, we are still turning out from our schools students who are illiterate, students who literally cannot read or write. I had one land in my office a couple of weeks ago, I handed him a document and said read through that and, if you agree with it, sign it. He said, "I can't". I asked him what he meant. He said, "I cannot read". He could just sign his name. He is not unusual yet these people have been educated for 10 years or so in our school system. In Nightcliff there is a \$50 fee per year for school books for the high school and \$25 for the primary school and I assume that applies broadly throughout the Northern Territory. It is about time some of the parents asked for their money back.

Parent involvement is supposedly encouraged by the Department of Education and, in my opinion, that is nothing more than a joke. Any parents who try to get involved in their children's education are very quickly brushed off or shown a very circuitous route. The member for Alice Springs asked a question of the Cabinet Member responsible here. He asked who had overall responsibility for setting a standard curriculum. To the best of my knowledge, I

can tell him that it is the individual school. If you get a good headmaster, you are lucky, but not many of us do and our kids suffer. We pay very dearly through our taxes for an education system which, after 10 years, produces kids who cannot read and write.

Now, to take up the theme of the honourable member for Arnhem, if you do not matriculate, you can always continue your education at any time in your life, providing you have one basic skill, and that is the ability to read English. If you have not got that, you are damned before you start; you will never get anywhere; you can never make anything of yourself. Anyone who pretends otherwise is shutting his eyes to the facts of modern living. I think it is tragic that these kids can complete so many years of school and still not be able to read. When I approached the high schools about truancy, I found that a large proportion of the kids playing truant fall into this category - they are illiterate. No wonder they play truant - they cannot cope with high school; they haven't a hope of coping. They know they cannot so they do not attend. These kids should have acquired that basic skill before they got to high school, during the 6 or 7 primary years. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say, and obviously there is something wrong with our primary school system. Are there not enough specialist and remedial teachers? If there are not, let the department admit it, say they need more specialist teachers and press for them. I am sure that all members of this House would do all they could to assist.

While the department waffles, talks about parental responsibility, and will not admit what we all know: that they are just not giving even the most basic education, we are all whistling in the wind. I am aware that there is a tremendous amount of community unrest about the paucity of our education. It is too easy to simply blame teachers. There has to be some other reason and the Education Department is the very body which must know. It employs hundreds of people. If they do not know, we had better get rid of that lot and try another hundred or so. At the next

sittings I will be raising this again
and asking the Cabinet Member for the
department's attitudes to the fact that
kids go through 10 years of schooling

and still cannot read.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly
adjourned.

Tuesday 15 March 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr ROBERTSON (by leave): I refer to my speech in Hansard of Wednesday 2 March on the formation of a consultative committee on social welfare. Page 17 is the relevant page where I dealt with a matter which was also dealt with in the Northern Territory News on Friday 4 March. The Northern Territory News headlined the article on page 2, "Gang terror claims exaggerated - police: Police denied today that there were several gangs operating in the town. Alice Springs police said claims of gang violence in the town are highly exaggerated. They said claims made by the member for Gillen, Mr Jim Robertson, that the gangs were terrorising residents were exaggerated".

I take umbrage at that very liberal interpretation of what I said as reported on page 17 of Hansard. Nowhere did I use the words "terrorised" or "terrorised citizens", or "terrorised the community". I know that we are public property, but I do not think that proprietary right extends to the abuse of my words in this manner.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE REGIONAL COUNCILS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr WITHNALL (by leave): I present the report of the select committee appointed to examine regional councils for social development. I move that the report be noted.

Debate adjourned.

SEEDS BILL

(Serial 184)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The basic aim of the new Seeds Ordinance is to upgrade and provide full information on the quality of the seed

sold in the Northern Territory. To this end, seed sold needs to be tested for purity, weed content, freedom from noxious weeds and for germination. This information is then available to the purchaser who can buy the line most fitted to his needs and decide on the most appropriate sowing rates for his particular purpose. The vendor of the seed has responsibilities to ensure that the seed packets or bags are appropriately labelled with the correct information required by the ordinance and that documentation relating to the seed is kept for a specified period after the sale. These requirements are excellent for normal agricultural or horticultural seed, most of which is sold in parcels the size and the value of which are considerable and the details required are not enormous. For the small packet trade, for home garden and small horticultural use, where sales amount or value is relatively small, some changes in procedure are desirable, although these seeds will need to meet the standards required.

As the principal ordinance now reads, section 7(1) does not apply to seeds sold in small parcels, for these are exempted in 7(2). This is not sensible for it would then be possible to sell seed in small amounts without it being labelled or tested and with prohibited or injurious weed seeds. It is not desirable for any seeds to be sold like this. It is thus proposed to delete section 7(2) so that all seeds sold will need to be correctly labelled and are free of injurious weed. However, those who sell seeds in small packets should not be penalised by the task of massive record keeping of invoices, dockets etc for small value sales as outlined in section 7(4) and section 9 of the principal ordinance. To avoid these costly and unnecessary tasks for small packet sales, it is proposed to insert a new subsection covering an exempted sale where this is defined as a sale of seeds in small parcels below a prescribed mass. These minor changes are necessary to allow for the smooth functioning of the ordinance to protect the Northern Territory from mislabelling or non-labelling small packets of seed, thus ensuring that this seed is of a suitable standard for the consumer and also erasing the administrative

burden on the vendor for those predominantly small value sales.

Debate adjourned.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 167)

Continued from 3 March 1977.

Mr ROBERTSON: There are a couple of matters that I would like to draw to the attention of the sponsor of the bill. I understand that he is aware that there is no ceiling on the amount payable under the proposal. I point out to the House that it is quite possible that, for example, with a dependent wife and 5 dependent children, a person could obtain under this legislation an amount in excess of, say, \$150. It is quite conceivable that the person would be on considerably less than that amount when actually working. I do not think that this is the intention of the sponsor of the bill and I would be interested in his comments.

This is the type of legislation that I must support if for no other reason than to give proper cover to the genuine worker who is injured or incapacitated during his course of employment and is absent from work as a result of that genuine injury. However, there are areas of concern in this type of legislation. It seems to me to be compounding the direction in which we have been going for quite some time. It seems to me to be compounding the motivation for a person to refuse to work. Looking at the amount for a single person, it ranges from around \$57 to \$80. I feel that there are many in the community who would use this as a "thank you very much, I need not work". In discussion with members of the Insurance Council of Australia you certainly find there has been a tendency in recent years for people to absent themselves longer from work for a similar reason. It is important that the Assembly should bear in mind that we are doing much to ensure the removal of motivation for people to get back to work. In other words, we are encouraging the lead swinger. I raise that as a concern but I confirm that I believe it to be desirable that basic compensation

of this nature be kept roughly commensurate with the cost of living, if for no other reason than to protect those to whom I have already referred.

Mr PERRON: The initial moves to review the workmen's compensation benefits under this ordinance were taken about July last year when an amendment was first foreshadowed to the Commonwealth act which provides workmen's compensation benefits to Commonwealth Public Servants. Since the Northern Territory, in the past, has altered compensation benefits under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance virtually in line with the Commonwealth act, I started consulting various parties with a view to amending the ordinance here. The interested parties responded to the proposal in varying ways, from strong opposition to claims that the proposed increases just did not go far enough. I suppose that it could be claimed that you just cannot keep everybody happy.

One of those groups consulted was the Insurance Council of Australia who claim to represent 95% of Australia's insurers. The council had no objection to the proposed increases. They fully appreciate that benefits have to be reviewed from time to time. I have also discussed the proposed changes with a local insurance advisory committee in Darwin so the proposal has been well canvassed through interested parties.

One valid objection which was raised to the bill was directed at the principle of using the Commonwealth as a guide as to when and to what degree the benefits under the Northern Territory ordinance should be changed. I support that criticism but, until such time as we have an appropriate review committee established in the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth guide is a reasonable alternative.

I take this opportunity to foreshadow an amendment along the lines mentioned by the honourable member for Gillen. The amendment will limit the maximum amount of weekly benefit that an injured worker may receive to the sum he would have earned had he not been injured. The Northern Territory has the only legislation in Australia which does not provide for maximum weekly

payments. I understand that the situation could very well arise where an injured worker was in actual fact receiving \$10 or even \$20 a week more under workmen's compensation than he would have received had he still been at work. This is totally unacceptable and the amendment that I foreshadow proposes to correct that situation.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Committee stage to be taken later.

MINING BILL

(Serial 181)

Continued from 3 March 1977.

Mr TUXWORTH: In rising to support this bill, I would do so from the point of view of a Territorian rather than from the point of view of parish pumping because my electorate is very heavily involved in the mining industry. I believe that it would be an absolute disaster for mining investment in the Northern Territory if this bill was to be delayed another week.

The mining industry is a unique industry. In Australia, it takes an average of 15 years to find and bring a mine into production. It takes an average of \$20m to bring a mine into production and, once in production, a mine is anticipated to have a life of 40 years. The people who are involved in this sort of investment and decision-making are not in the "quick-quit" category; they are people who have a very long term interest in the whole community as well as in their own particular field. Needless to say, the most important facet of any sort of decision-making in relation to mining these days, when we are subject to the pressures of environmentalists and other particular groups, is one of confidence. The mining industry runs on confidence. It does not matter how much is in the ground or how much they can make, if they have not the confidence to get it out of the ground and sell it to somebody, it is not worth a tinker's cuss.

This particular bill will help estab-

lish the credibility of the Northern Territory attitude towards the mining industry. We have a situation that has been developing now for some time where companies which took a tenement out as far back as 5 years ago, companies which have complied with the work conditions of their exploration licences, which have spent millions of dollars, which have sold forward contracts, which are ready to do everything that is required of them by law - yet because of procrastination over environmental considerations, land rights considerations and whatever, they find they are not in a position to develop their holding and sell their product. There may be very good reason why these holdups should occur and should be very closely analysed before any company is given permission to embark on a 40-year project. However, the other consideration is that a company which has a commitment from government allowing it to enter into these arrangements should be allowed to do so.

We are now trying, with this bill, to alleviate the position of land tenure. We offer, in the Northern Territory, mining tenements that are renewable annually, they have very little security, they may be cancelled or granted at the whim of an administrator and they require enormous amounts of investment. This bill will enable the industry to retain or be granted a lease over exploration licences that they have legally held and they will retain certificates to the land to which they are legally entitled under the ordinance by virtue of the work they have carried out and the work that they propose to embark on. It is a blot on the Northern Territory's copy-book that the situation ever arose where people who were entitled to land could not gain access to that land for one reason or another. I would like to ask the support of the other members of the House in having this bill dealt with quickly because it is imperative to the development of all mining industries in the Northern Territory.

Mr POLLOCK: There is nothing much to say in reply to the debate other than to emphasise the urgency of the matter. I think that the lack of people wanting to speak demonstrates support towards

the content of the bill. The mining industry's confidence has been knocked about in the last few years and, to stimulate the economy of the country, it is very important that mining is further developed without hindrance.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr WITHNALL: I move that the committee stage be taken later. I have some doubt - and it is only a doubt - as to the accuracy of the drafting in clause 4, and I would like the opportunity to further consider the matter before the bill goes to committee.

Motion agreed to.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH - ADDRESS
IN REPLY

Continued from 3 March 1977.

Mr TAMBLING: I am pleased to participate in the address in reply to the speech made by the Administrator. There were a number of significant policies enunciated by both the Administrator and the Minister for the Northern Territory in this House on 1 March. Probably the most important topic was the statement of the Administrator that this year sees the beginning of executive government in the Territory and the establishment of a new, modern and developing public service in the Northern Territory.

The honourable member for Port Darwin is always a cynic. I believe he always chooses to hear the things that are not said rather than what is said. I would offer the following comments on the speech that he made in the subsequent debate. I would ask him to perhaps look at action rather than be so specific and nit-picking and looking for what is not in the words themselves. A lot of the points that the honourable member for Port Darwin alluded to are actually in train. They have been taking place for some time. In the field of constitutional development, the last year has seen tremendous changes in both this Assembly and in all of the political developments of the Northern Territory.

The Administrator dealt specifically with the proposals that budgetary arrangements would be made for transferred functions and that they would become the prerogative of this Assembly. Mr Speaker, you would be aware that in the last week the Majority Leader and I visited Canberra. We spoke with a number of ministers with regard to the future arrangements for the Northern Territory, including the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Treasurer, and we had a number of important concessions granted as a result of those discussions. With regard to budgetary arrangements, we will be moving in the coming year to the setting up of a Northern Territory fiscus. This was of course enunciated to us that day by the Minister for the Northern Territory. The Department of Treasury and the Department of Finance have been co-operating with us for some time now in the detail that is required to set up a treasury in the Northern Territory. It was very pleasing last week to be informed that the Treasury felt that this matter was of such significance that they seconded a very senior officer to my staff to assist both for this year's budget preparation and in the subsequent policy determinations that will have to be made with regard to the legislative arrangements for the future financial arrangement. That officer will take up duty in the Northern Territory next Monday.

We have also established that this Assembly will have a one-line appropriation from the federal budget this year for all of the transferred functions. This Assembly will be given the utmost flexibility in the handling of budgets and the Executive will determine - and then it will be subject to debate in this Assembly - the priorities to be accorded the functions for which the Assembly is responsible. All financial arrangements for transfer of functions will be handled on a state-type basis and the process of budget estimating and consideration will be as is handled in the states, that of a Cabinet consideration. For the first time this year, the Northern Territory Cabinet will be making those decisions with regard to a significant amount of government expenditure in the Northern Territory.

Of course, the future transfers are very important, as the honourable member for Port Darwin sought to establish in his address. There will be machinery set up whereby the Commonwealth Government will consult and seek the advice of Cabinet Members in respect of matters relating to all other statelike functions that are not yet transferred to our direct control.

Several other policies which related to future legislation were brought out by the Administrator in his address to this Assembly. Probably the most important was the one that relates to new town planning legislation. The Majority Party has been concerned ever since Cyclone Tracy that the Town Planning Ordinance is totally inadequate and that the Darwin Reconstruction Act did nothing to alleviate or assist the people of Darwin with regard to town planning. I agree with the constant criticism that has been levelled at the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, that it ought never to have been involved in town planning. Town planning legislation is terribly complex; it is terribly difficult to put policy into a suitable form that is then implementable across the whole spectrum of requirements for the Northern Territory. However, the Majority Party has spent a great deal of time and consideration on this in the last year and, in the next few months, the new ordinances will be presented and debated fully. I would anticipate that it will take some considerable time for the community liaison that will be necessary.

The issue of a housing policy for the Northern Territory was also referred to critically by the honourable member for Port Darwin. He was critical of the role of the Home Finance Trustee in the Northern Territory. I would like to remind the honourable member that the Home Finance Trustee acts as an agent in replacement of what in the states is a function usually carried out by building societies. In the Northern Territory, we only have one or two building societies with a limited scope in their activities and therefore the Home Finance Trustee has to fulfil the role. It is wrong to expect that the Home Finance Trustee ought to operate on any different arrangement to that

which operates financially in the states and I believe that last week we did establish, through a number of questions and comments in this House, that the Home Finance Trustee is operating most effectively even though it is necessary to bring his interest charges up to those that are of a commercial nature.

The action taken by the Majority Party with regard to housing policy generally has been very innovative. We have introduced a number of pieces of legislation to date that have altered quite substantially the concepts and the roles of the Housing Commission and, as that commission was transferred to our executive control on 1 January, obviously the ball game will be different from this budget onwards. There is currently before this Assembly a bill which deals with the sale of Housing Commission homes which in itself breaks completely new ground in Australian public housing and which is now being studied by a number of the states in relation to arrangements for the coming 1978 Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Act. In that respect, we have made major contributions to housing and housing policy.

The Northern Territory Cabinet is looking closely at the need to establish a satisfactory housing policy for government employees of the Northern Territory Public Service. With constitutional development over the next couple of years, probably 80 per cent of the public servants in the Northern Territory will become Northern Territory Public Servants rather than Australian Public Servants. We will have to ensure that the housing policy that we devise will meet the needs of the next 10 or 15 years, and not just live with the mistakes that we have inherited from many past federal administrations. I hope that the policy will be finalised with Treasury and with Government officials within the next month or two and will then also reflect a number of very significant and major changes.

The Administrator's address was very timely. It outlined what will happen in this Assembly within the next 8 months and certainly provides a sound basis

for the remaining life of this Assembly.

Mr TUXWORTH: In replying to his Honour the Administrator's address, I would like to deal with a small matter which relates to the activities of our federal counterparts. I refer to the very serious consequences for Tennant Creek if the activities of our federal brothers follow their current lines. On 6 June 1975, the government of the day received a report from the Industries Assistance Commission relating to the imposition of a tax on the production of gold. Late in 1976, it referred the matter back to the Industries Assistance Commission asking whether, in the light of the developments in the gold-mining industry since the commission's report of 6 June, any changes were necessary in the assistance accorded to the production of gold, including assistance by way of taxation treatment, in order to sustain economic production in Australia and, if so, the nature and extent of such changes to assistance. The reference also specified that the commission was to report on the economic and social consequences of both the existing assistance and any changed assistance recommended, taking particular account of the impact on isolated communities. This I believe refers particularly to the Kalgoorlie, Tennant Creek, Mount Morgan, Telfer gold operations of which there are very few left in Australia.

There are several implications. One that I refer to again is the changing of the rules and the giving of confidence to industry. The companies that operate in the town of Tennant Creek are operating under a tax structure that has been in existence since 1938 in relation to the production of gold. They started looking for the mines in 1959; they started mining in 1967 and they are now one-third of their way through production life and find that tax rules have changed and the viability of their projects is challenged, not only by the influence of any tax rules but compounded by the falling world price of copper which is mined in conjunction with the gold and also compounded by the technical problems the company is involved with in the production of bismuth. Bismuth is of particu-

lar interest to our community because this company is currently producing 50% of the free world's consumption of bismuth and that is no mean feat.

The terms of reference for the Industries Assistance Commission to study the impact on isolated communities have not been met with because there is no evidence at all of anybody doing any study on the impact that any imposition of gold tax would have on the community of Tennant Creek. This should be the first consideration should any proposed tax be considered. The commission has intimated that tax should be phased in over a 5-year period. They have also intimated that the Commissioner of Taxation, in doing so, will collect the total sum of \$7m per annum. Tennant Creek is surviving solely on the production of gold, a product which has in the past 12 months suffered very serious fluctuations in price, some so serious that several mines have had to trim their operations back and defer expansion programs. In an effort to gain the \$7m, we are now looking at the prospect of seeing the Tennant Creek community rendered totally useless as a contributing part of this nation. We are very proud of the fact that we pay our way in terms of contributions to the national reserves. We are only a small community but we are very productive in overseas export income. However, we stand to have unemployment rise to levels never known. All the people who are now paying tax and the companies that now pay tax and other things in the production of gold will cease to pay tax. We will see employees who are paying tax move onto the dole and we will see a town with a very large proportion of government investment turned into a ghost town in an effort to collect \$7m a year.

I am very concerned that the Industries Assistance Commission which is to report to the Federal Government has not been to the Northern Territory, has not sought evidence from the Cabinet Member for Resources, has not referred the matter in any way to this House, but is quite prepared to recommend the decimation of our town. I have been accorded an opportunity to present myself before the IAC next Monday and to give evidence as to why gold tax should

not be introduced in this country. I am very pleased to be able to say that I will be in Canberra next Monday to give evidence one way or another because this matter is so crucial and critical to the survival of our town.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to comment only briefly on the Administrator's address and our address in reply. I had hoped that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government could have been more explicit in those areas which the Administrator seemed to ignore, and I echo the sentiments of the member for Port Darwin when he said that the address seemed to be memorable for what it left out rather than what it said.

For example, we were not given any indication of the type of revenue raising, the extent of revenue raising within the Territory which we are to expect with the transfer of powers. I am aware that there will be a full budget debate later this year, with the coming of the new financial year, but I think it would have been fitting for the Administrator to have indicated the amount of extra revenue raising which we are to be expected to face. Honourable members will remember the acrimonious debates on the introduction of various stamp bills by official members in the old Legislative Council and all elected members are aware that it is something in which the community expressed a great concern. It is a pity that the Cabinet Member responsible could not have elaborated a little more on this point.

Another example - I believe the honourable member for Port Darwin also referred to this - was the lack of any explicit statement on land tenure within urban areas. We are left to surmise that the Majority Party agreed broadly with the Else-Mitchell Report. It is a pity that we are still supposing and did not have a definitive statement ...

A member: Didn't you read the debate?

Mrs LAWRIE: I have just finished re-reading the debate.

Another example to which the honourable member for Port Darwin referred was the omission of specific assistance

to the rural industry, and I cite as an example the ailing cattle industry in the Northern Territory. Honourable members are surely aware that cattle are to be exported from the Katherine meatworks through Wyndham, completely bypassing Darwin, and yet the Government has a large financial stake in the operation of the Katherine meatworks. How then could they allow this bypassing of the Territory port? Does the Majority Party intend to take this up directly with Canberra or with the Katherine meatworks? This is an issue which rural Territorians feel very strongly about. I am aware that the Territory does not begin and end with Darwin yet the Administrator completely ignored this point. Some honourable members have spoken of the need for the mining industry to gain confidence. The mining industry was conspicuous by its absence from references by the Administrator. It is my opinion, however, that the mining lobby in this Assembly is well looked after. It is also my opinion that the cattle industry is not so well looked after.

Another example of people fearing costs they may have to bear is the extension of electricity supplies further down the track. The Cabinet Member with responsibility to this House for such matters made submissions to the inquiry into electricity but there was no indication in the Administrator's speech or that Cabinet Member's speech as to whether the Majority Party sees the cost of extensions of electricity being borne by Darwin consumers or whether they will be seeking special assistance from the Australian Government for this purpose.

I am grateful for the positive aspects of the Administrator's speech. He spoke of the introduction of certain legislation and some of that has now been introduced. I echo the sentiments of the member for Port Darwin in saying that we would have wished for more definition of the policy of the Majority Party. It is not of course the prerogative of members to ask questions on policy during question time because that is specifically precluded by standing orders. The Administrator's address would have been an appropriate time for policy to be clearly enunciat-

ed and I feel extremely sorry that, in these important areas, it was not.

Dr LETTS: I had not intended to speak in reply on the address in reply. However, there are a couple of points just mentioned by the honourable member for Nightcliff which require brief comment.

The first one is in relation to revenue raising in the Northern Territory. This question of revenue raising in relation to annual financial subventions and budgets is an important part of Commonwealth-state financial relations and an important aspect of the Grants Commission operation. It is a matter which is broadly covered already by the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report on the Northern Territory, where the recommendation of the Government was that the Territory should be adequately looked after in terms of finance for its services and operations and capital works, provided that the Territory made efforts commensurate with the states in revenue raising in similar fields. I think this principle has been accepted both by the Commonwealth Government and by the elected representatives of the people in the Northern Territory. The actual details of how this will be achieved are in fact at present under review and not the least of the elements which are under review is the revenue at present being collected from sources connected with lotteries and gaming which is the subject of an inquiry mounted by this Assembly. The review cannot be completed until the report and recommendations of that inquiry are to hand. It will be the job of the Majority Party to set priorities in respect of any specific changes which are made in the revenue collecting fields.

The honourable member for Nightcliff referred to stamp duty and the long term attempts of the Commonwealth Government over many years to have the stamp duty levels of the Northern Territory reviewed and upgraded. Representations have been received on many hands, from people who are expert in business enterprises in the Northern Territory. It was pointed out to me that one of the reasons why certain businesses have been attracted to the Northern Territory is that our stamp

duty rates are somewhat lower than can be found elsewhere. This is the kind of consideration which has to be given. In any review of revenue sources, we do not wish to do anything which would cause a precipitate diminution or withdrawal of interest in investment in the Northern Territory. We would work on the general principle that, if revenue sources are to be raised, they are best raised in the public interest and, at the same time, doing least damage to the majority of people.

Having said that, I am aware also that the present general levels of internal revenue raising in the Northern Territory are nothing to be ashamed of in comparison with some other state systems. The last figure which we can account for was something in the order of \$47m which was attributed to internal revenue sources in the Northern Territory. By comparison with the state of Tasmania and subventions which they get from the Commonwealth and which we get from the Commonwealth, we are not too bad. However, there would be some individual fields which would need looking at. In the event of uranium mining proceeding in the Northern Territory - and we do not know what the outcome will be until the Fox Committee Report has been tabled and considered by the Government - the royalties from mining sources in the Northern Territory would be considerably enhanced. Any majority party would argue that those revenue sources would be counted, for the purposes of book-keeping, as internal revenue as they are in the states. Our financial position in relation to the Commonwealth could only be markedly improved by such a development.

In relation to the cattle industry and to the particular criticism or query which the honourable member for Nightcliff raised in respect of the Katherine meatworks and the proposed export of processed and packaged frozen meat through the Port of Wyndham rather than the Port of Darwin, let me say this: the principal problem of the cattle industry today is the price received by the producer and the amount paid to the producer. This can only be improved through the guaranteed operation of meatworks in the Northern

Territory, the Katherine meatworks, hopefully the Alice Springs meatworks, and hopefully the reopening at some stage in the not too distant future of the Darwin meatworks. The future of the Northern Territory cattle industry during the course of this year depends very much on the opening of those meatworks and the payment of a fair price related to the cost of production to the producer who is the greatest sufferer of any person involved in the beef industry. The Northmeat Company has been in considerable financial difficulty and in fact has had to dispose of a number of its assets including both retail shops and refrigerated stores in Darwin. However, those stores are now owned by other people.

If, in the interests of the opening of the Katherine meatworks and the efficiency of the operation vis-a-vis transportation and rationalised shipping, the transport to Wyndham makes this possible and makes it more efficient and makes it possible to pay a higher price to the producer, then I am sure that every producer in the Northern Territory would welcome such a development. The widespread advantage which would come from that compared to the small disadvantage in terms of employment and use in the Port of Darwin would have to be balanced and I am sure the balance would come down in favour of the producer and the industry.

I am aware that the Majority Party made some contribution to the ideas which were contained in the Administrator's address and, within the reasonable time and scope of such an address, it is impossible to cover every detail that somebody might like information on, either generally or in respect of his particular electorate. However, it was a useful address. Of probably more interest to us and more significant to us was the Minister's address to which we made virtually no contribution. It was his job on the occasion of the opening of the Assembly to indicate what government policy is in respect to us, what they are prepared to give us - and that is all we can take; what the Commonwealth is prepared to give us - and what their general attitude and specific attitude is towards the people

of the Northern Territory. I found a good deal of hope, promise and reassurance in the remarks made by the Minister on that day and I commend him, the Government and the Administrator for their words.

Motion agreed to.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION REPORT ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND DRIVING

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr RYAN: The Law Reform Commission report on alcohol, drugs and driving is a very comprehensive report and contains a lot of information which I am sure will be useful in drafting legislation to improve the laws relating to driving under the influence in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt that there is a need for a change to our legislation. We are all aware of the problems that confront the police force in getting the evidence together and obtaining a conviction against the offenders. It is important that it is possible to convict these people.

The attitudes towards driving under the influence are gradually changing throughout Australia. We have a slightly different situation in the Northern Territory from the rest of Australia and possibly from the rest of the world. In the Law Reform Commission Report, there is quite a long chapter on comparisons between Australian states and international law - everybody seems to have a slightly different approach. We are possibly on the right track with our laws in the Territory and in Australia generally. We only need to tighten them up to solve the problems that now exist.

I am concerned about one aspect of the attitude towards driving under the influence. There seems to be no mercy at all in the courts for people who are convicted of this particular crime yet there does not seem to be anywhere near the same attitude towards people who break the drug laws. I do not know why this attitude exists. I am not saying that the courts should be any less strict on people who offend the breathalyser laws but I cannot understand why

there is a certain amount of hysteria about driving under the influence yet people tend to be very lethargic and matter-of-fact about the people who use drugs. I am just talking about the offence of drug use not driving. I could have something to say about that at a later date, but it just concerns me that we have this inequity in the attitude of the courts and it worries me because I do not myself consider that driving under the influence is as serious as using drugs. That is my personal opinion.

The toughest laws relating to driving under the influence are in Victoria where they have lowered the blood alcohol level permissible to .05.

Mr Pollock: They have not lowered it; it has always been so.

Mr RYAN: I have been corrected. Apparently that has always been the case. I was under the impression that they had lowered it. They do have the most stringent laws. They have recently introduced a random testing attitude which there has been much comment on in the report. There has been a decision not to implement random testing in their bill.

In referring to that, I would just like to read a couple of sections which relate to random testing. One relates to the fact that random testing is unlikely to deter some people, and I think that this is right. There are some people who will drink and drive unless they are in gaol. If they are out of gaol, I think they will ...

Mr Tuxworth: Bigger and better gaols.

Mr RYAN: I am not suggesting that they should be put in gaol. What I am suggesting is that certain people will drink and drive whether they have a licence, whether they are suspended or whether they have been apprehended 50 times. Whenever they are out and have access to a motor vehicle and beer, I suggest that they would do just that - drink and drive. So that is one argument against random testing. The report says: "On consideration of the arguments and the submissions put to it, the commission is persuaded that random

breath tests in the sense stated above are not justified at this time. Police, within the limits of the proposed prerequisites for preliminary testing, will have potentially very wide powers". They are referring here to the draft bill. "These could be exercised to apprehend a great number of drinking drivers, including drivers leaving hotels, clubs and like places. This is the approach favoured by the commission, based upon the current evidence, it is the only approach consistent with our statute and with the role of the police and the criminal justice system we have inherited in this country".

I agree wholeheartedly that random testing at this time would not be appropriate in the Northern Territory. I have no doubt that certain people would disagree with me both in the Assembly and outside the Assembly but I believe that the Territory has a slightly different situation facing it with regard to drinking driving. Over last Christmas, 13 people were apprehended for failing the breathalyser test and, in the same period, there were no fatalities on the road. There may be some good luck in that, but to take action to introduce a random testing would impose itself upon the general social attitude of the Northern Territory. We have to look at the situation in the Territory when we make laws relating to the breathalyser. There has been some question raised about the accuracy of the breathalyser but it is generally accepted that, within the limits of the machine, it is accurate enough for the assessment of the blood alcohol level of a person at the particular time it is used.

I now refer to some notes I have which relate more closely to some of the items raised in the draft bill and compare them with the present legislation in the Northern Territory. "Should the relevant provisions of the Traffic Ordinance be replaced by new provisions to be inserted by way of amendment or should a new ordinance be enacted, separate from the Traffic Ordinance?" The Law Reform Commission favours the latter approach and this would result in a complete code on all aspects of drunk or drug driver problems. There

are some problems associated with implementing this in our legislation but, in general terms, I agree with separate legislation to cover that particular offence.

"Should the existing offence of driving a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol level exceeding a specified level be replaced by a new offence of failing an approved test after driving a motor vehicle?" The Law Reform Commission favours the latter approach. This removes the statutory lie. In our present legislation, there is a lot of argument concerned with when the blood test is taken and what happens between the time the driver is apprehended and the blood test taken or how long it was since he had the drink, and we have to try to get a satisfactory situation. A lot of arguments have taken place in the courts to try to establish a satisfactory arrangement, but it seems to me that this is one of the large loopholes in our present legislation. If we can come up with a law which says exactly what has to be done within certain limits of time after the offence, this should make the law much easier to administer.

I am not going through all of these, I am picking out the ones which I think are relevant and which may receive some comment from some other members.

"For the purpose of the above offences, should the terms 'public street' and 'public place' be extended to include bridges, wharves, loading areas, piers and jetties, entrances to driveways and the environs of licensed premises?" That no doubt should raise a few eyebrows. The Law Reform Commission has advocated such an extension, particularly in the case of licensed premises. I have an open mind; I am just not sure how far we should extend those provisions but it is an area which needs consideration and will definitely be taken into account in the drafting of any legislation.

"Should a screening test be used as a prerequisite to a breath analysis and, if so, should there be flexibility in the choice of the device?" We have the bag which is used now. You blow into the bag and it discolours the crystals

if you are in a certain state. The colour the crystals turn determines whether or not you graduate to the breathalyser. The Law Reform Commission did favour the use of screening devices approved by the Minister and notified in the Gazette. It thought that the use of screening tests could be retained but the procedure governing their use should be left to regulations.

"What grounds should exist for a police officer to require a person to undergo a screening test?" This once again gets into the area of random testing and the comments are: "The Law Reform Commission suggested that the grounds should be whenever the member reasonably suspects that a driver, or a person suspected of being a driver, has alcohol or a drug in his body, or that the person was involved in an accident and was the driver or was in the vehicle at the time and there is doubt as to who was the driver, or that the person is guilty of culpable driving." The commission did not favour random tests nor the present wide provision in the Northern Territory enabling a breath test to be administered to any person involved in an accident whether he was the driver or not. Thus, there is conflict between our own legislation and the proposals by the Law Reform Commission. We will have to look closely at that in establishing the criteria for police officers to apprehend and require persons to undergo a screening test.

"Should there be power to administer a screening test on private premises?" The Law Reform Commission favoured it "if a person is reasonably suspected of having been involved in an accident or of having committed the offence of culpable driving or where a member has followed a driver in hot pursuit and the driver has stopped at or near his home and has reasonable cause to suspect the person has alcohol or a drug in his body". I agree with this; a police officer should be able to enter a person's home or wherever he has taken refuge. We should enable the police force to take tests ...

Mr Everingham: An Englishman's home is his castle.

Mr RYAN: The Englishman's home is his castle. Well, we are not Englishmen, we are Australians and we might be a little bit different, I think we should enable the police force to take tests under such circumstances.

Mr Everingham: You Irishmen can do what you like.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are one thing, but a running commentary on the member's speech is not called for or allowed.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. They are becoming rather unruly.

Mr SPEAKER: Reflections on the Speaker's ruling are not allowed either.

Mr RYAN: The Northern Territory Traffic Ordinance has a number of additional requirements for administering breath tests or screening tests. Should these be retained? There are 5 or 6 provisions which exist in our legislation: the member must have satisfactorily undergone an approved course of instruction; the member must inform the person before the test that he is a member of the police force and that the device is approved etc; the member must be satisfied that the person has not consumed liquor within the preceeding 15 minutes; the member must take reasonable steps to ensure that it is not readily apparent to the public that the test is being carried out; the member must use an unused mouthpiece; evidence as to the result of the test is not admissible. The Law Reform Commission did not advocate the inclusion of any of these requirements in the new legislation, although some of them could be included in regulations. I agree because this is one of the areas which cause most problems in bringing people to court and proving the offence.

"Should there be flexibility in the choice of devices for carrying out a breath analysis? It was advocated that the devices should be approved by the Minister and notified in the Gazette, thus enabling the introduction of new devices without the need for further statutory action." This is a wise move because obviously the devices will im-

prove as technology improves and we should gradually go to more accurate instruments,

"Should there be, as in the Northern Territory Ordinance at present, provision for the police to require a second mandatory breath analysis, a third analysis test at the request of the person and a blood test at the request of the person following a positive breath analysis or should there be just one breath analysis with one admissible result and with no provision for further tests arising out of the same accident?" The Law Reform Commission favoured the latter course and the abolition of all options. It thought that the present instruments in use, although not absolutely reliable, were reasonably accurate. This is the breathalyser itself. I will just quickly refer to a comment made by an expert on the breathalyser which relates to that particular comment. This was the evidence made by Doctor McCallum who is the reader in Forensic Medicine at the University of Melbourne. He concluded that his own tests over many years and his reading of the scientific literature generally supported the use of the breathalyser as a reasonably accurate instrument to determine blood alcohol concentration. There were other conflicting views in the report. I am not suggesting that the views on the breathalyser were conclusive. There were other suggestions that it was inaccurate. However, the general opinion as I can establish it in the report was that the breathalyser is satisfactorily accurate to perform the job of testing for blood alcohol level.

"The Northern Territory Traffic Ordinance has a number of additional requirements for administering a breath analysis test as set out below. Should these be retained?" I will not read them all; they are contained in the legislation. The member of the police force has to advise the person of certain things. Once again, if the officer forgets to advise the person on one small matter, this could mean that the case is thrown out the window, when in fact the person is guilty of the offence. The Law Reform Commission advocates that those requirements be taken out, apart from the entitlement

to a medical examination, This was only to apply after arrest and not simply detention. The commission suggested that notification of the right to a medical examination should be contained in a notice handed to the accused.

"Should a person have a defence to the offence of refusing a blood test or the offence of refusing a medical examination on religious or conscientious grounds?" The commission advocates this although it does not presently exist in the Northern Territory. I do not think that it will cause a lot of problems. We may suddenly find that a lot of people turn religious.

"Should certificates be admissible in evidence and, if so, what evidentiary value should they carry?" The Law Reform Commission favoured a wide use of certificates to prove the facts of a case. The contents of the certificates to be prima facie evidence. In the Northern Territory ordinance, certificates are only evidence. We can see here that they have made provisions slightly stronger in favour of certificates. This is a controversial part of the legislation and we will have to look closely at this. I feel that we have to give these certificates more strength in the court.

"Should there be a power in certain circumstances to cancel a licence or disqualify a person from holding a licence until a court otherwise orders?" The Law Reform Commission favoured this as a mandatory requirement for previous offenders.

"Should a special licence provision be inserted in the ordinance, applicable only to driving offences involving drugs or alcohol?" Although such a provision is proposed by the Law Reform Commission, it is to be noted that the equivalent in the Northern Territory has recently been revised by amendment. I do not think that we would need to revise that again.

"Should provision be included in the ordinance for the establishment of referral centres?" This is an area which has been raised on many occasions by people concerned with driving under the influence, places where you could

put people to be looked after, to try to get over the problem; we have no legislation provision in the Territory at the moment. The Law Reform Commission saw such centres as an important and urgent aspect of its counter measures, with courts having power to release offenders on the condition that they attend such referral centres.

There are other areas that could be mentioned but it would take quite a long time to go right through the report. I have picked out the areas that I feel contain some of the interesting points. A lot of work has to be done to prepare legislation, which I intend to do, to try to establish consistent and strong breathalyser legislation.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Alcohol, drugs and driving, these three words encompass 3 facets of our lifestyle that have assumed monolithic proportions in this country since the last war. Previous to that, all three factors were there but the mere battle for existence by the population was serious to the extent that these 3 factors did not assume the proportions that they have in today's society. We now have more time on our hands, more money and many more opportunities to use and abuse alcohol, drugs and the motor car than ever our forbears had.

Governments have approached the problems raised by these factors in a half-hearted way over the years since the second world war, mainly spurred on by the mounting fatalities on bad roads. There has been a huge cost to the country in terms of hospital and medical expense, social services, man hours lost, man hours wasted by doctors and nurses, man hours wasted by physiotherapists and social workers who have to treat accident victims and who have been diverted from preventative medicine. Were our society not so greatly in the grip of the motor vehicle and driving of it, we should have a great deal more resources to turn to for the betterment of our society. More and more powerful cars are being built for more and more crowded roads. Even if we seized the profits of the motor vehicles concerned, they would not pay for the casualties that arise from the use of the motor vehicle - or the abuse of

the motor vehicle. There is a desire, and no doubt a proper one, on the part of many people to see increased penalties for the abuse of the motor vehicle, especially when that abuse is coupled with the abuse of alcohol or drugs. Should we not consider, in conjunction with new laws and heavier penalties, provision of a better road system so that there will be less opportunity for abuse of the motor vehicle?

The commission report with which we are now concerned is a most exhaustive one. Research overseas has been undertaken, especially in those northern countries of Europe where quite radical laws in relation to drunken driving have been in force for some time. It is impossible to handle this report fully. It is, however, a credit to all those persons - not just the commissioners but the research people and the people who put in submissions - who have contributed in any way to it. Suffice it to say that it is an in-depth report and its conclusions seem to be well-founded on solid material.

There are quite a number of conclusions and I think those numbered 453 to 461 on education and research are perhaps those which might be most easily neglected. But these perhaps could well be the most significant.

In conclusion 453, the commissioners recommend that the introduction of any legislation should be accompanied by a campaign to alert and educate drivers concerning the dangers caused by the consumption of alcohol and drugs and the provision of new laws designed to deal with these dangers.

In 456, recommendation is made that consideration should be given to the reduction or the total prohibition of media advertisement for alcohol or that such advertisement should be accompanied by warnings of the dangers involved in the consumption of alcohol.

No. 457 adverts to what I mentioned earlier: "Appropriate authorities should keep themselves informed concerning research into measures designed to reduce the road toll including road design, vehicle design and particularly

the development of devices aimed at preventing an intoxicated driver from starting his motor vehicle". Further research is obviously necessary but the public must be alerted by a concerned campaign of education if the new laws are to have any substantial effect.

Recommendations 366 to 413 relate to the main offences which are proposed and I agree with almost everything that is recommended. In 383, however, there is provision that a member of the police force should not require a person to submit to a screening test if more than 2 hours have elapsed since the person was the driver of the motor vehicle. I do think that 2 hours is perhaps a little too long. I would have thought that 1 hour after the event would be the longest period that should be permitted.

In relation to blood tests, recommendation number 402 says: "The option of a blood test in lieu of or following unsuccessful completion of a screening test or breath analysis is not recommended." I would quarrel with that conclusion because I do believe that the alternative of a blood test should be available if a person would rather a blood test than a breath analysis. Also, a blood test should be available to those persons who have failed a breath analysis test.

The penalties recommended in conclusions numbers 432 and 452 largely meet with my approval. The public is often curious about the question of penalties and we have had some examples in Darwin recently where the public finds it hard to reconcile the different penalties that are being meted out to offenders. For instance, in the Northern Territory News of 8 March, it is reported that a magistrate gaoled a man on a driving count. I would ask members to bear with me whilst I read these reports because it would be unfair to comment on them if I did not read them at length:

A magistrate said yesterday that he was by no means satisfied that gaoling breathalyser offenders reduced the number of alcoholic drivers on the road. However, he had decided to give a man who pleaded guilty to driving with a blood alcohol content

of 0.32 a taste of gaol. Mr Michael McDonald, SM, was convicting Erwin Toy, foreman, of Roberts Place, Rapid Creek. He sentenced him to 6 weeks gaol, but ordered that he be released after serving 7 days on his entering a bond to be of good behaviour for 3 years. He also disqualified him from driving for 3 years. Prosecutor, Serjeant Kevin Malley, said that Toy left his place of employment in Bishop Street at 4.50 pm last Thursday. Police saw him drive onto the incorrect side of the road, swing left, hit the gutter and bounce back onto the road. A short distance further on, Toy mounted the footpath while trying to negotiate a driveway. He told police he had been drinking since 7 that morning and that he did not feel too well. Mr McDonald said Toy must have consumed a vast quantity of liquor to reach 0.32. Toy told the court he had no work on that particular day. He was the foreman of a road transport depot and there were no transports in. Toy said he was married and was supporting 3 children and 1 grandchild. Mr McDonald said he had no intention of punishing Toy's family because of his misdeeds. However, after coming out of gaol after 7 days he would have plenty of time to think of what it would be like to go back in, he told him.

The second report concerns the use of drugs. Headline: "Judge warns man over drugs use". The report in the Northern Territory News on Monday 14 March goes on:

A Supreme Court Judge warned a young man last Friday that his continued use of drugs would possibly lead to complete destruction of his future happiness. The man, Richard William Bell, appeared for sentence before Mr Justice Muirhead after pleading guilty to charges of burglary, larceny and malicious damage by knife. The judge said the charges all arose from the depredations Bell committed on the night of December 17. "On that night you with others had been drinking at the Marrara Hotel", he told him, "You consumed much liquor and I am told you purchased and consumed tablets believed to be a hallucinogenic drug. You

left your companions and deliberately set out to steal. After taking a cassette player from a car, you broke into Mr Robert Thorning's home at Jingili. You removed articles and despoiled his home in a malicious and vindictive manner". The judge said that the offence, which was similar to one with which Bell was charged earlier last year, indicated an unusual and worrying propensity to take out his frustrations on the property of other people.

He had obtained a pre sentence report and it seemed that Bell came from a good home. He had had good opportunities but he had remained in conflict, not only with his home environment and its training, but also with other people of his age. "You have had good work opportunities but you have not had the stability or the guts to settle down and take advantage of those opportunities", Mr Justice Muirhead said, "Your continued use of drugs of this nature will, I warn you, possibly lead to complete destruction of your future happiness. You are indeed fortunate that your family continues to stand by you. You have plenty of intelligence, the problem is how to persuade you that it is worth your while using it".

The judge said that, although he had placed Bell on a bond last year for breaking, entering and stealing, he had decided to give him a further opportunity. He sentenced him to 18 months gaol for burglary and 6 months for larceny, the sentences to be served concurrently. On the charge of malicious damage, he sentenced him to 9 months to be served cumulatively on the previous sentences. He also sentenced him to 5 months cumulatively for breach of bond but directed that, providing he entered into a \$300 bond to be of good behaviour for 3 years, he be released forthwith. "I stress that I think this is the first occasion that I have made such an order where I have previously suspended a sentence of imprisonment on a bond quickly broken", he said.

The judge made it a condition of the bond that Bell place himself under the supervision of a probation

officer for 2 years and not leave the Northern Territory without his consent being obtained. He also ordered Bell to make restitution in the sum of \$557 to Mr Thorning or his insurer within 14 days. "The future is now in your hands", he told Bell, "and I trust, having had a short period of incarceration, you understand what a futile life lies ahead of you if you do not take advantage of the help and care that is now available".

I do not wish it to be taken that I am criticising either of those learned gentlemen for the sentence that they imposed on those 2 different people. However, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, one gets reaction from the public and the public are curious why people who commit the offence of the type that Mr Bell committed are let out on a bond twice whilst people who drive a motor vehicle and cause no harm to anyone - in this case certainly a great potential of harm was there - can be sent to gaol. I might say that the reaction that I have had from my electorate and other members of the general public is that there is a widespread disbelief in the efficacy of bonds. I do not know the full circumstances of either of these cases because I do not have the full reports. The only persons in possession of all the facts were the learned magistrate and the learned judge and the counsel appearing before them. I cannot criticise these men, and I do not criticise them, but the public do find these conflicts in penalties hard to understand. I do believe that perhaps the men on the bench should take this factor somewhat more into account when they are imposing penalties.

Conclusion number 445 is to the effect that, where a person's driving licence has been cancelled, it should be necessary for him to apply to a court for the restoration of the licence. "The court's attention should be drawn to appropriate criteria to be considered before the licence is restored." Whilst I approve of that conclusion or recommendation in principle, in practice it would lead to an almost intolerable burden being imposed on the courts. Unless a special magistrate were appointed and a special court set

aside, it would be almost impossible for the courts to deal with the business.

In conclusion, this report overall is possibly one of the best reports I have ever had the opportunity to read. I believe all members of the commission should be congratulated. I think the report should be adopted and I believe that legislative effect should be given to many of the conclusions of the report with as little delay as possible.

Mr DONDAS: "Oh God! that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal their brains" is the opening part of the report. I have found this report to be both comprehensive and interesting.

As the report is a lengthy document, I intend confining my remarks to mainly section 13, "Countermeasures". If we are to make laws for the person who drives whilst under the influence, then some attempt should be made to offer some prevention as well as cure, as it has been proved that an excessive consumption of alcohol does cause road accidents, in many cases fatal ones. What countermeasures can we offer to reduce the accident toll? Do the realities of our current legislation offer any measure of countermeasures? Perhaps they do but we must examine this situation constantly and endeavour to improve it so that legislation can be updated to save people's lives.

Conventional penalties - what are they? Fines, imprisonment, cancellation of licences or suspension of licences. Do they deter the drunk driver? The report which we are debating does not clearly indicate in paragraph 334 whether the breathalyser is completely successful. In New South Wales, convictions for drink driving offences actually increased in 1974. Apparently this type of offence is now again on the increase. The report indicates that the reason for the increase could be because of the degree of police activity aimed at the drink driver offender, although staff shortages or availability of overtime could also effect a decrease in the number of offenders convicted. Are these conventional penalties sufficient to deter the drink driver? The fines system - at the

moment in the Northern Territory we hear of huge fines being imposed on drink driving offenders. Apparently severe fines deter drunk drivers. Before the breathalyser was introduced, Fridays and Saturdays were a nightmare for the St John Ambulance Brigade. Now they work at a nice steady pace on those nights attending the occasional motor car accident. It is proven that the breathalyser is working in the Darwin area.

The report advocates an increase in the maximum fine for offences whilst driving under the influence and also makes recommendations as to the flexibility of fines that are imposed, as a large fine would not affect a rich driver as much as it would a poorer driver and justice must be done to rich and poor alike. I would agree with that.

The report is of the opinion that imprisonment should be a penalty of the last resort and also states that prison is not an effective countermeasure for this type of offender. I offer no constructive information other than to say that, if a drunk driver causes a fatal accident to another person, then the authorities should imprison him and throw away the key.

Cancellation or suspension of licences - the experts who gave evidence to the commission are of the opinion that licence revocation is a most effective countermeasure against drink driving offenders. However, there seems to be some argument that suspended drivers will continue to drive in breach of suspension. I would agree with the recommendations of the commission as set out in paragraph 346 of the report, that a maximum penalty of \$4,000 or 12 months imprisonment be imposed on a person who drives whilst under suspension. This severe penalty could deter a person driving whilst under suspension.

The subject of special licences is discussed at great length in the report. I am satisfied that we in the Territory have this facility available to the persons in this category.

First-year drivers - it is apparent that the commission has decided that the Tasmanian legislation was too severe on first-year drivers who offended by drink driving and further stated that driving education should be promoted in schools and be thoroughly tested in police licence tests. The commission was apparently impressed by the countermeasures in the USA and states that the American experience can therefore be of assistance in designing proposals for treatment of educational schemes in Australia. I would bring paragraph 351 on page 150 to honourable members' notice although I regret to say that, in the Northern Territory, the objectives of this paragraph seem impossible at the moment. However, in the near future, this topic of US countermeasures for drink driving could be investigated and implemented. Once again, I say that prevention is better than cure. I am happy to say that the commission did advocate that funds should be made available for the ACT in line with the Victorian St Vincent's Hospital drink driver education therapy program. With a little luck, we will eventually get something of the same kind in the Northern Territory.

In the conclusion of the section on countermeasures, I find the committee thought the constant education, treatment and rehabilitation of drink drivers commendable. However, unless funds are made available to reduce the extent of this problem, we are taking our lives into our hands every time we drive a motor vehicle. Fines in the Northern Territory for the 0.08 offences are severe compared to the other states in Australia but, if we are to learn anything by this exercise, then I would bring to honourable members' attention that the fine for a similar offence in the USA or Canada is double that here.

The subject of random testing for drink driving has recently been in the news and has been mentioned by the 2 previous speakers. I am happy to accept the commission's recommendation that random breath tests are not yet justified. To sum up the situation, the commission has decided that important liberties should not be surrendered on

the basis of a hunch or as a consequence of wishful thinking.

In conclusion, I will reiterate that I found the report very interesting and I commend the commissioners for producing that report.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to support the report from the Law Reform Commission. As the honourable member for Jingili said before, this is not a new problem. It will probably still be a problem after every one of the members of this Assembly is gone from this existence. If we look at the terms of reference on the first couple of pages, as laid down by the Attorney-General, this was all instigated from the Australian Capital Territory. It could have been instigated from this Territory, it could have come from other states as well because no matter what laws we bring into operation to any legislature, we are never going to have everybody one hundred per cent happy with them - you have only to hear the mumblings and dissatisfaction even in this Assembly at different times when we talk about drugs and alcohol and dangerous driving and such.

I am sure that anyone who has the opportunity to read this report will see there has been a tremendous lot of work put into it. I am sure that if they sat down again for another length of time they could even put more into it. No matter what report is written, someone else could probably sit down and write a better one or amplify some of the things that are spelt out. Yet when you look at the number of people who gave submissions and the qualifications of those people, you would think that you would have a perfect report which I think we have in a sense here; we will never satisfy all the people.

The report covers all the facets: blood alcohol levels, how they should be taken and how the breathalyser should operate, screening tests. It goes on with a lot of detail on some of the cases that have been brought before the courts and argued. I daresay there will be many others brought before the court. As the honourable member for Jingili said, there was one case the other day that we could probably argue about.

Sometimes I wonder whether the best thing to stop all this would be, as a person comes out of a hotel or motel, to grab him there and then. You would not have the problem then of him getting into a vehicle. He could go in one door sober and come out of the other door drunk. You could have a screening test out there and then say, "You go home by train - you go home by tram". You would not pick them up on the roads then. You could probably pick them up walking down the street, but you cannot do that because we have decriminalised drunkenness.

It goes into detail on page 31 about the Northern Territory ordinance. You will remember that we have had changes to that in the past 12 months. The Cabinet Member has said that he is going to introduce more changes. We will never get a perfect piece of legislation but we hope it will satisfy everybody in this Chamber at least.

On page 64, it spells out the statistics on road accidents and road safety. In paragraph 139 it says that the national trend in Australia during the 1960s of an increasing annual road toll rising in correspondence with the increasing motorisation of the population did not continue into the 1970s. The expert group on road safety has pointed out that, in each of the years from 1970 to 1974, fewer people were killed on the Australian roads than in 1970 and this trend continued in 1975. The table then shows the number of people killed in road traffic accidents in Australia over those years. From 1970 to 1975, the figures decreased by about 100. In 1970, it was 3,798 and, in 1975, it was 3,691. In other words, we are making big steps with our road safety and the number of accidents have been decreased.

Paragraph 140 spells out the number of persons killed in the ACT in those same years. There has been an average of around about 30 people killed. I cannot remember the exact figures, but I think the Northern Territory figures can outdo the Capital Territory figures. Our figures are probably among the worst for Australia. I do not think that they are all attributable to drunken driving or persons under the influence of drugs. The roads, the road

lighting and the safety of the vehicles themselves are also important. We have spoken about some of the unroadworthy government cars and police cars around the place.

There has been a lot of work done on prevention of people driving under the influence of alcohol. I do not think that there has been a great deal done about driving under the influence of drugs. Some have been picked up for smoking marihuana or other drugs, but many people do take drugs in their normal life to keep their health in a balance and they can sometimes be affected by whether they have eaten during that day and, when they have taken these drugs, they can be overcome by drugs through no fault of their own.

The statistics do not lie. There are a lot of road safety campaigns in each state and in the Territory we lack this. Probably one of the biggest reasons why we have so many accidents here is because our road safety programs are practically nil. Also around Darwin the lighting is so poor; it is a wonder there are not more accidents. You have only to walk up Mitchell Street at a night time and you can hardly see because the lighting has not been attended to.

There has been quite a bit of discussion about drugs over the years and this report is from some of the foremost experts on drugs, both alcohol and narcotics. Page 94 of the report spells out the estimation of the problem and Dr Milner, who is one of the foremost experts on drugs in Australia, says that drugs such as alcohol probably play the major role in causing 5% to 10% of the traffic and 10% to 15% of all road deaths. They probably determine this through the police surgeons who keep statistics on all the road deaths relating to drugs and alcohol. Dr Birrell in Victoria has done a tremendous amount of work in this field and, in every state, they have experts working with the police on these issues.

I was particularly interested in the matter of random tests. The commission has seen fit to disregard this as a way of controlling people who may be under

the influence. If you have these random tests, you could have some policeman out on the road all day trying to pick up people whom they suspect may be under the influence. I am sure there would be a lot of wasted time and those people could be out doing other jobs. A lot of the police work would be involved in this sort of thing when they could be out patrolling the highways. Many of the problems in the Territory stem from the fact that there are not enough patrols on the highways. Of course, it is not always the fault of the driver who may perhaps be under the influence. There are animals which stray onto the road and there are other drivers who could be quite sober, but who might have a faulty vehicle or be unable to handle the vehicle properly and could cause a death or serious accident on the road.

I would just like to read what paragraph 254 says about random testing: "It would be premature to decide to introduce random breath testing in the Australian Capital Territory before there is substantial experience gained as a result of introduction of random testing in Victoria." We know that Victoria has fairly stringent rules on driving under the influence, I think 0.05 is the figure there while in most of the other states it is 0.08. There are a lot of people moving from state to state these days and I think it would be better to try to make those laws uniform, I should like to see the states have a look at it themselves. I should imagine that the Capital Territory Legislative Assembly will take up this report and act upon the recommendations of the commission. I am sure that the future will look a little bit brighter, and perhaps we will be able to look at the statistics in another 5 years' time and see perhaps the result of this report if it is adopted.

There is a comparative table in appendix B in the report. It does list all the places, prescribed levels of alcohol, the type of tests required relating to that state, the powers of the police and the penalties for exceeding the limit.

I would like to see this report adopted so that we can make the laws in

Australia uniform and make people more conscious of the consequences of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We should have a bigger road safety education program, starting with the school children and going right through to the adults. We should spend as much money as we can, within reasonable limits, to educate the people and even to try to educate the hoteliers in the operation of their hotels. You do not have to go very far from this building to see a lot of people who are under the influence. There are many people who know quite well that they may be potential killers yet they go out in their cars and perhaps maim other people. That is where the education program has to come in. It has to go through the hoteliers and give them more power. The police should go to the hotels a little bit more than they do and remove those people who are well under the influence.

I would like to thank the Cabinet Member for bringing this report into this Chamber. I only hope that some sense will reign and that one report that we have debated in this Chamber will be adopted. I support the motion.

Mr KENTISH: I am pleased to be able to talk on the noting of this very thorough report. We have spent a lot of time over the years talking about this scourge on our community. It is a much greater scourge and has claimed many more victims than all the wars that Australia has ever fought in. More people have been killed and more people have been mutilated on our roads than in any of the wars that we have fought since 1914 or going back to the South African war. It is my conviction that this slaughter on the roads will continue while we continue to talk about it because talking does not do very much good at all. It is not until some action is taken in the matter that the slaughter will cease or be reduced to a more acceptable level.

The breathalyser testing apparatus has been one significant measure which has had a remarkable effect on the accident rate. We have in the report a lot of recommendations for an improvement, for a realignment of the use of the breathalyser testing equipment.

Providing that in all respects it is an improvement and is producing greater efficiency, I think that it would be all to the good that those suggestions be incorporated in our law. We have in the states and in Canberra some different approaches to the breathalyser and it was Victoria which just recently adopted random tests. Here we would be opposed to random testing. However, I am very much in favour of testing before an accident rather than after an accident occurs. The only use then is what can be done in the courts concerning the results of the breathalyser tests. As for testing before an accident, I think we are actually doing that, at least if the person is driving erratically or he appears to be not perfectly in control of his vehicle. I am in favour of that continuing.

The member for Jingili remarked that we should have better roads. I am aware of the fact that, on the stretch of road out of Darwin, the worst accidents occur on long, straight stretches. I would support the member for Jingili if he had said we need wider roads. I have often felt that the roads are not wide enough. I have gone right off the side at times when I have seen a car weaving towards me. At such times, I have wished for wider roads to give me more room to escape from the oncoming driver. However, there must be a limit to things like that.

I have read many things about the alcohol and driving problem. It is not one that worries me greatly. I always have a spare driver with me. I just cannot understand why people get tangled up with alcohol and drugs considering the enormous amount of trouble it causes themselves and others. However, there it is; it is a social habit that we have got into. Sweden has a very unusual approach to this and I have read something about Swedish regulations and penalties. If we ever get serious about this, by "serious" I mean stop talking about it and do something, we may study what Sweden is doing with its problem. I think they have had rather substantial results in that country.

I did mention that the death toll was terrific. I think that somewhere - I have not seen figures lately - between

5,000 and 6,000 people a year are killed on the roads, greater than all the battle-fields ever claimed from our people. It often strikes close to us; we have all had some sad occasions with road fatalities, although we can be a little light hearted about it today. A young couple, both related to me, had an accident at the Caloundra turnoff, north of Brisbane. They were celebrating their first Christmas, 6 months married. The woman was killed outright and the man is just learning to walk and learning to talk again. I did not expect that he would live. It is on all the time of course. But the death toll of 5,000 and 6,000 a year is not the worst of it. They are finished with their troubles, of course; they have gone, but many more thousands are mutilated and spend the rest of their lives maimed or disadvantaged in some way. They are taken care of with pensions and insurances, and the insurance bill is mounting and mounting. Third party insurance goes up and up. I think that there should be separate insurances for teetotallers and perhaps a separate road system for them as well, to try to preserve their lives.

The loss of a licence is a very useful deterrent, there is no doubt about that. It hits hard at people who are careless about drinking and driving but the loss of a licence is pulling people up very sharply. I am aware of that in a number of instances that I know of intimately.

Improvements of roads - well lighting is bad and there are dangerous spots. I have often noted spots where you have a moment of confusion a few seconds of confusion due to poor lighting and that is enough to cause an accident. For years, they kept a little island off the end of the street that comes out of the hospital to join the end of Mitchell Street and goes down Gilruth Neck. There was no white paint on the walls of the island, no reflectors or anything. Things like that are often allowed to go on for years and must be the cause of many accidents.

The report mentions something about referral centres. I would think that, if people are to be referred to a centre for alcoholics, it should be

done long before they are apprehended for drink driving. They would have lost their licence a good while before they needed taking to a referral centre.

I congratulate the people who compiled the report for doing such a thorough job and I hope it is a help to us in the Territory.

Debate adjourned.

POLICE AND POLICE OFFENCES BILL

(Serial 191)

Bill, by leave, presented and read a first time.

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

The bill is introduced to clarify the position of members in the police force as a result of the introduction of the new Public Service Ordinance. Members may recall that previously members of the Northern Territory Police Force were appointed under the Police and Police Offences Ordinance and, upon appointment, were deemed to have been appointed under the old Public Service Ordinance. However, the relevant provisions of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance, other than those dealing with police cadets, were repealed by the Transfer of Powers Ordinance as from 1 January 1977. In place of the former provisions, the police became members of the new Northern Territory Public Service under the new Public Service Ordinance and the Commissioner of Police was given the powers of a departmental head in that service. I would refer members to sections 19 and 38 of the Public Service Ordinance. The various members of the police force have acquired new public service designations which are the same as their old ranks, this being as a result of bylaws made by the Public Service Ordinance pursuant to sections 27 and 60 of the Public Service Ordinance.

As a result of these legislative changes, whilst it is clear that members of the police force are members of the Northern Territory Public Service, a few doubts have been expressed about their status independently of

their status as members of the public service. Members will be aware of the complicated nature of the public service arrangement and the consequent difficulties of interpretation that can arise. To remove any such doubt, it was decided to introduce a bill designed to clarify the matter. The bill now before members seeks to amend the Police and Police Offences Ordinance to make it clear that persons holding police designations under the Public Service Ordinance are members of the police force with the rank so designated. It will make it clear that this has been the position since 1 January 1977. The bill will therefore maintain what was intended to be the present position and indeed what may well be the present position as to the police appointments and will put the matter beyond dispute. As a matter of supplementary importance, the bill continues the old statutory preference previously given to police cadets in the appointment of new constables.

I would like to make it clear to members that this measure is only a temporary one and the position as to the appointment of members of the police force is under review as part of an overall review of the Police and Police Offences Ordinance which is an outdated piece of legislation. I am not satisfied that appointment of members of the police force through the Northern Territory Public Service Ordinance is the most satisfactory manner of dealing with the police force, and I intend to give this matter careful consideration. Because of the nature of this bill, I am anxious for it to be dealt with at the earliest possible time and I understand that your assistance, Mr Speaker, has been sought in this matter. It is most important that there be no doubt as to the status of the police force, and accordingly I seek the urgent passage of this bill. I commend the bill to members.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from the Majority Leader an application under standing order 152 for the declaration of the Police and Police Offences Bill Serial 191 as an urgent bill. I have considered the reasons supplied in support of the application and am satisfied that hard-

ship would be caused by delaying consideration of the bill. The Police and Police Offences Bill Serial 191 is therefore declared to be an urgent bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Mr PERRON: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

This afternoon I intend to bring to honourable members' attention a few of the anomalous situations which I have found regarding the unemployment figures which it is claimed are a guide to the economic wellbeing or otherwise of the country. I find that the way in which these figures are gathered and some groups which are included in the unemployment figures make the whole exercise almost meaningless as regards gauging the economic wellbeing or otherwise of the country. As an example, any person who finds himself out of work for any reason can register as unemployed even though he may have just completed 6 months work or so and may have earned a year's wages in some industry. In this category, we find people like meatworkers, fishermen, cane cutters, just to name a few. Despite the fact that they may have just completed a seasonal operation and earned themselves \$10,000 or \$15,000 or \$20,000 for the year, the next day they can go and register as unemployed and, indeed, in actual fact they are unemployed. However, when we are gauging the state of the nation, I do not think that all these people should be taken into consideration.

When a person registers as unemployed with the Commonwealth Employment Service and that service has no position to place him in, he is required to leave an address so he can be contacted in case employment is found. He is also told to call back in 2 weeks. During this 2-week period, he is listed as unemployed even though he might have found himself a permanent job the next day and failed to notify the Common-

wealth Employment Service, or he may find one or two or more days casual work per week and still not notify the Commonwealth Employment Service and he remains listed amongst the unemployed as well. After a 2-week period, if the employment service has not heard from him, then he is taken off the list and regarded as having found some work. In actual fact, the person might register as unemployed and next day disappear interstate. However, for the next 2 weeks, he is still on that particular state's unemployment list.

I doubt if many people are aware that some of the Aborigines listed as unemployed in the Northern Territory have probably never worked for anybody in their lives. The Northern Territory statistical summary of 1975-76 shows that, at the time of the 1971 census, 7,132 Northern Territory Aborigines aged 15 or over were neither employed nor listed as unemployed. The title given in this section in the census was "not in labour force". Many of these people are what I would call traditionally unemployed. They have never sought work, but would rather live as their ancestors did and shun the European work ethic. I do not deny them this right for a minute, but now we send government officers into the field to locate these groups and try to find suitable employment in the area for them and such suitable employment is very difficult to find for some of these people. However, if a group or an individual wishes to claim unemployment benefits or register as unemployed, he only has to say so and immediately he is on the list as one of the Northern Territory's unemployed. If we are to continue to gauge the state of the nation by our unemployment figures, then I do not believe that the traditionally unemployed people should be included in those figures. In January this year, there were about 981 Aborigines in the Northern Territory's unemployment figure of 2,452. If we take even half of these as being traditionally unemployed, it would bring our unemployment figure down from 5.8% to 4% - the lowest in Australia.

Another area of concern with the employment situation in Australia is the number of married females who in-

flate the figures out of all proportion. I believe that the dramatic increase in wives who are either working or seeking work is a major factor in Australia's record unemployment. I quote figures taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force publications of 1968 and 1976 and I point out that the figures are based on sample. The publications have tables of standard errors printed in them and I refer honourable members to those tables if they wish to quote these figures. In November 1968, there were 860,500 married females either working or seeking work in Australia. That was 31% of all married females in Australia. In November 1976, the figure was 1,351,700 married females either working or seeking work. That is 41% of all married females in Australia. Married female participation increased by an enormous 57% over the 8 years, while the male and unmarried female groups increased by only 11%. The Australian Bulletin of Labour published by the Institute of Labour Studies at Flinders University summed the situation up by saying: "The continued rise in married female participation in the labour force in Australia is quite remarkable". Quite remarkable is right - a 965,000 increase in the work force, 491,000 of whom were married women.

I do not deny we have a grave unemployment problem in Australia today. And I do not deny married women a right to work ...

Mrs Lawrie: Thanks, Marshall.

Mr PERRON: ... but let us get the whole picture in the right perspective. If we are to gauge the state of the economy by our unemployment figures, look at those persons who have been thrown out of work for various reasons not at those who register for work to provide a second family income. These figures show that more people seeking work is not necessarily a sign that fewer jobs are available. The overall situation is not as bad as opponents of the Government would have us believe.

Lastly, I touch briefly on the payment of unemployment benefits. One major flaw in the present system - and I repeat this is only one of several

but I touch on one for today - is that applicants for benefits do not have to be in need. Benefits are assessed purely on a weekly income basis. A worker may have just completed a term of lucrative work and received, say, \$10,000 for 6 months work, which is not unusual in some industries. He is eligible to register as unemployed, and to receive weekly cash benefits, the first week after the work he was engaged in stops. There is no checking of his financial status other than his weekly income. The man may have a fortune in the bank and may have just earned a fortune but it is not taken into consideration. This ludicrous situation is quite unfair and a waste of taxpayers' money.

We do need to keep employment statistics, but the present system is full of holes and should not be used, as it has been, to gauge the performance of government or the state of our economy. For this, we need accurate figures related to family income and the performance of industry, something which we do not have at the moment.

Mr POLLOCK: I picked up a newspaper from Melbourne the other day, the Melbourne Sunday Observer, which carried an editorial headed "Time to get tough", and I thought it would be appropriate to read it to members:

It is time to get tough. If we are to protect our way of life, we must crack down on those who wish to destroy it. The Observer is sick and tired of psychologists, prison reformers and academic society watchers who continually want us to soft pedal on the very elements amongst us who have no respect for the majority's way of life. Federal Cabinet is considering a crackdown on dole bludgers who have quit their jobs voluntarily. A secret report presented to the Committee of Inquiry into the Commonwealth Employment Service states that 30% of those on the dole quite their jobs voluntarily. We will not brand them "bludgers" but they should be made to answer for their actions.

Next on the list comes prisons. Rip out their bloody colour televisions, hot water appliances and everything

that makes life enjoyable. They are supposed to be serving a sentence not having a ripper time at a health farm.

And there is nothing wrong with a good boot up the arse for vandals. Their activities are too often surrounded by numerous reports and academics, mind benders and those who wish to blame society as a whole for their actions. The fact of the matter remains that these whackers, individually or in a group, have taken upon themselves to wreck somebody else's property and they should pay for it. There was a time when the local cop could employ a little curbside justice to curtail the activities of these fools and now of course the well-meaning cop would have his career on the line if he gave some young pup a clip under the ear. We have those supposedly more educated than the masses to thank for this attitude. We also have them to thank for increasing vandalism, crime, rape and a host of other serious acts which strike at society as a whole.

Mr Ryan: Hear, hear! I couldn't put it better myself.

Mr POLLOCK: This morning there were some questions asked in relation to the road construction of Larapinta Drive from Alice Springs to Jay Creek and the honourable member answering the question advised that in fact the contract had been let but the details were with the federal member for release. I contacted the federal member's office later this morning and, delivered to his office at ten to twelve were the particulars of the contract which he has been able to relay to me. I am happy to say that a contract for some \$299,445 has been let to McMahon Constructions to widen 27 kilometres west of the Flynn grave on the Larapinta Drive or, as they call it, the Jay Creek Road, the widening to provide a 2-lane sealed surface of 6.2 metres wide with a 1.2 metre shoulder, completion in July 1977. That is great; that is a start, but there are a lot of roads in that area which need grading and improvement. Of course, this gets as far as Jay Creek but it does not get you into one of the leading tourist

attractions in Central Australia, Standley Chasm. Some 60,000 or more people visit Standley Chasm every year. As members who have had the good fortune to visit the place will know, the last 3 or 4 kilometres into the chasm are up the rocky bed of a creek which from time to time floods and results in inaccessibility to the area and a great disruption to the tourist industry. It is time that those responsible, the Department of the Northern Territory principally, get on with the job that they have been promising for years and provide the necessary funds to upgrade some 9 or 10 kilometres of road from the Standley Chasm itself to the car-park and kiosk. It urgently needs to be upgraded to a sealed standard which would allow people access to the attraction more frequently. Every time there is an inch or so of rain around Alice Springs district, the access to the chasm is put out and it takes a couple of weeks before Construction get around to getting a grader in there. They do a good job but, if the road was constructed properly, then we would have access to this area all the time and much less need for continuing maintenance.

I would like to mention 3 innovations which have happened in recent weeks. There is now a jet aircraft service from Alice Springs to Cairns via Mount Isa and last week we saw the service commencing between Sydney, Alice Springs and Darwin. They considered that there was something new in a jet from Sydney to Alice Springs and on to Darwin. I am not sure why. Apart from that, it is very good to see that these services have been implemented by the big two, Ansett and TAA, and it is easy to forget those who have pioneered those services. It is appropriate that a tribute should be paid to Connair and Bush Pilots who pioneered the Alice Springs, Mount Isa, Cairns route and operated it for some years and also to East West Airlines who a couple of years ago pioneered the direct service from Alice Springs to Sydney or Sydney to Alice Springs. After they have proved the service economic and worthwhile, the big two have come along and stepped over the top and, as a result, East West Airlines have had to reduce their services as they are unable to

compete, with the smaller type aircraft that they operate. Unfortunately, I feel little recognition has been given to those 3 airlines that I have mentioned for the pioneering work they have done in that field.

I would like to raise another matter and feel it is about time something positive was done about it. It is time government departments stopped duck shoving and buck passing in relation to waste water which rises from evaporative air conditioners, particularly from large business establishments in main streets. In Alice Springs, there are a number of premises which have large evaporative air conditioning units which discharge a quantity of water as part of the system, and they discharge it straight into the gutter and into the street. The water usually lies there in a puddle, cars come along and splash it up over the pedestrians, and the next thing there is a pothole formed there. Outside the Territorian Hotel in Todd Street, there is a pothole which is filled by the council every week, and every week it is washed out again by water discharged from the airconditioning. The Department of the Northern Territory says this is not waste water and you cannot put it into the sewerage system; it is not allowed to be discharged into the sewerage as I believe it should be. The council says it is not storm water and therefore it cannot be discharged into the storm water drain, so instead, the water is run into the street where it stinks and is a damn nuisance. The Health Department, the council and the Department of the Northern Territory, although they have all been together and talked about it, have all agreed to disagree and nothing has happened about the matter. It has been continuing for years and years, and I feel that it is time that somebody in those departments took hold of the situation and prevented what I believe is not just a nuisance but a health risk and an inconvenience to many people who are using the streets.

Mr Perron: Put it on the gardens; water the trees with it.

Mr POLLOCK: There are not any trees; they have ripped half of them out. I believe it does happen to a degree here

in Darwin, with the type of airconditioning you have here, but in Central Australia at this time of the year, it is a particular nuisance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, on the last two occasions I have assumed the Chair in place of Mr Speaker, the general behaviour in the House has been quite unacceptable. While I am willing to allow a little more latitude to honourable members during the adjournment debate than would otherwise be normal, I would ask honourable members not to overdo it and necessitate the strict imposition of standing orders.

Mr RYAN: In speaking on the adjournment, I have a couple of points that I want to raise although I do not think that I could continue without making some comments about the previous speaker's remarks. He did us the service of sending copies of that editorial to all members and I must admit that that is the sort of editorial that I enjoy. The language is similar to that in the Tribune only it seems to be this time the responsibility of a rather conservative journalist. I agree that that is the attitude that may improve things. Certainly, the attitude that exists at the moment does not seem to be doing much good.

I was aware that, while I was away last week, my friends down at the wharf decided that they would have another little set-to because of the attitude of the Federal Government to the 6% CPI claim that is currently before the court. They called a 24-hour stoppage and a 24-hour stoppage is not all that catastrophic under normal circumstances. However, our friends down on the wharf seem always to be able to pick a day when there is a ship in port and 24 hours delay for a large ship is big money. The ship in this particular case happened to be one of the Western Australian ships that have been servicing Darwin for years and all of us in the Territory appreciate and realise the importance of its service. The wharfies do not seem to recognise the importance of anything other than the small problems that they think need strike action to bring attention to.

In addition, the Chamber of Commerce president, Mr Kevin Lang, who also happens to be the manager of State Ships in Darwin, made some comments relating to the sacrifices that this 24 hour strike would bring upon wharfies. He said that there were no sacrifices because, whilst they had 24 hours off, they knew full well that they would get some overtime a bit later on in the week which would make up for it. This seemed to offend them greatly and they wanted the statement withdrawn because it was terrible that anybody should think that the wharfies would take strike action knowing full well that they would receive certain benefits which would cover the cost of the strike.

This is something that bugs me. I know a little bit about strikes and I know a little bit about the union movement. The reason for strikes is to protest against actions that the worker feels are unjust and, to add weight to the strike, the striker says he is willing to forgo payment to make his point. That, in the case of the wharfies, is non-existent. They make their protest by stopping work for 24 hours which puts extra costs on the shipping line and which in turn puts extra costs on to the wharfies and to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and everybody else in the Northern Territory. But they know full well that they are going to recover those costs, that they are going to get overtime, that they are going to be asked to work at penalty rates and it is not going to affect them at all. So far as I am concerned, their protest is a complete waste of time. They are not sacrificing anything for their point of view. All they are doing is sacrificing the rest of the people in the Northern Territory. The wharfie will get his pay and his 24 hours rest and he goes down to the Workers' Club where he fills himself with grog and forgets all about why he is on strike because it is no different from yesterday anyway. He knows at the weekend he will be working overtime and he will pick up the money he has lost. The reason for the strike is really lost; they are not sacrificing anything to put their point of view across; all they are doing is making things difficult at a time when we have problems on

our roads. And Western Australian States Ships are operating under difficulties; I think they lost \$6m last year.

Unfortunately, it is very hard to argue with the likes of the executive of the wharfies because, when you point out that State Ships are operating at a loss of \$6m, they seem to think it does not really matter because they are getting paid. But we are reaping the benefit of that \$6m loss because the Western Australian Government could forget about going to Darwin and pull its ships off to save money. Then what are our friends the wharfies going to do? They will scream their heads off because they are not being supported, because the subsidies are being withdrawn. Quite frankly, I do not think these people will ever learn the lesson until some day somebody walks down to the wharf and says, "Look, I am sorry fellows, there are no more ships coming in and you are going to have to find yourselves other jobs". While I am being critical of wharfies in general, I know there are people down there who are prepared to work, who are responsible, but they are led by people who have no idea of the repercussions their actions cause. I only hope that the Western Australian Government and State Ships can bear with the irresponsible actions that our wharfies' executive impose upon them.

There is one other small matter I feel I should raise because it is generally in line with the type of statement that the Cabinet Member for Resources made. Travelling back to Darwin on Sunday, I was standing in the terminal in Alice Springs talking to some people and I overheard a conversation near me that caused me to prick up my ears because I heard the words, "Letts" and "lack of information". I listened. I do not consider that I was eavesdropping. I thought there might have been something I could be interested in and, always wanting to be helpful, I thought there was a possibility I might be able to help these people who were obviously concerned with the fact that they had not received certain information from the honourable Majority Leader. Always being prepared to protect the honourable Majority Leader, as is any other

member of the Majority Party, I listened and it would appear that the people who were talking were fairly active in land rights for Aborigines. One particular person advising the Central Land Council was a lawyer whose name is Eames. He was quite upset that, after a week, they had not received copies of the land legislation that the Majority Leader introduced. This legislation had in fact been a public document for in excess of a week. I could not understand how these people with their contacts - I have noticed that they always have been able to get information extremely quickly, even before we get it - in this particular case, their communications broke down and a week and a bit after the introduction of legislation in the Territory relating to land for Aborigines, these people were unable to get copies. One would think that there was a conspiracy against them to ensure that they would not know what was going on in the Territory. I would suggest that they don't, but I would be most upset if I found out that we were trying to keep this information from them.

I happened to have a copy of the relevant legislation in my bag, so I introduced myself and said: "Perhaps I can be of some assistance, I heard that you have a problem and I heard that you are being victimised. However, I happen to have a copy of the legislation and I am sure that Dr Letts would be most upset if he felt that you were not aware of what was going on in the Northern Territory in relation to Aboriginal legislation". I handed a copy to Mr Eames. He was very grateful that I had given him this legislation. He asked for 100 copies and I told him that I carried copies but not a copying machine. However, I felt sure that he could gain access to a copying machine. From the amount of literature that seems to come from the centre of Australia relating to Aboriginal land legislation, I am sure they could produce a million copies in a very short time if it was to their advantage.

While I was standing there, I had a quick look around the group so that I would know who they were and then I got on the plane for Darwin. There was a young fellow sitting in front of me who

was with the group and obviously coming north. I had never met him and they didn't introduce me to him. I didn't particularly want to meet him but I did take note of this particular fellow. We got on to plane and he was reading a book. Once again, being an observant sort of fellow, I wondered what sort of book this chap would read. I thought he might be reading "Atlas Shrugged" because I believe that is a book that everybody should read. In fact, the Majority Leader has asked me to read it because it could enlighten me. However, he was not reading "Atlas Shrugged", he was reading "Rules for Radicals", I thought, "Here we go; this is the sort of person who is leading the Aborigines to land rights". I did find it difficult to actually read the book but I did read a couple of paragraphs and it was quite interesting and I intend to buy the book because I would like to know exactly what the purpose of this particular piece of literature is. The idea is that it tells you how to go about causing a real stir without any chance of being thrown in the clink. That is basically what it is.

Getting serious for a moment, I was annoyed - not concerned, but annoyed - that this is what we are up against. When I say "we", I don't mean the Majority Party alone. Everybody in the Northern Territory who has an interest in the Northern Territory is up against the people who are precipitating confusion amongst the people of the Northern Territory. I walked to the terminal alongside this young fellow and I suggested that I was not very impressed with his literature and that he might like to read something more constructive, I did not think of "Atlas Shrugged" at the time but maybe that would be an appropriate book.

We are up against people who are reading books on rules for radicals. I do not know a hell of a lot about radicals, never having been one, but I can suggest that, while we are faced with trying to introduce into the Northern Territory legislation which in my opinion is reasonable, we are going to have a lot of problems while there are people who are prepared to study and read such books. It is a free country so we cannot stop them, and I do not

suggest that we do, but I do suggest that more people should be aware that, in trying to introduce in the Northern Territory legislation which will look after all the people of the Northern Territory, we have to contend with people who are not interested really in any group. They are only interested in provoking anarchy and I think that is not too strong a word. I hope that we can convince people in the Northern Territory and the rest of Australia, because the rest of Australia has not got a clue what is happening up here, that what we are trying to do is for the best. We have the best intentions for all people living up here.

Mr KENTISH: This afternoon, I rise to make some remarks about a country called East Timor. We heard something about them last week in this Chamber. We hear about them very constantly over the wireless and I have gathered some literature - it is sent to me but I am not a subscriber actually - from a paper called "Bunji". I notice that they have a new editor, Mr James Brown, but the material remains much the same - a judicious mixture of truth and rubbish, perhaps less truth than usual in this particular edition. It says that for 500 years the tribes of East Timor were slaves of European colonialism. Well, our people from Darwin have been going over to Timor for 10 years or so, visiting and on holidays - I haven't been myself, I often wished I could go but never had quite the opportunity I wanted - but I have never heard any of them come back and tell me about the slavery over there. They seemed to regard the people as all quite happy and independent small farmers. However, they say here that for 500 years the tribes of East Timor were the slaves of European colonialism. The Europeans got out in 1975 and the Indonesian army attacked the new nation of East Timor. That is not quite the order of things as we know it, but there it is. "Although the Indonesian army is supported by America and Australia, the brave tribes of East Timor are winning their way. The people of East Timor want control of their land. They say independence or death. Without any outside help, the people of East Timor are now learning to read and write. They are learning to understand politics even as

the war goes on. In the mountains, they have their own radio station broadcasting 3 nights a week. They are very smart people, our brave nextdoor neighbours. Let us stand side by side with them for freedom and independence." This article, or whatever you may call it, is addressed mainly to Aboriginal people.

Looking around at home and unpacking boxes - I have moved from one part of Darwin to another, out to the 19 mile - I came across an old newspaper. I am sorry I don't have it with me today. It is 2 or 3 years old and the headlines say: "Fierce fighting in Dili. The streets of Dili are a shambles with bodies lying everywhere, men, women and children, dead in Dili, a great struggle going on, the capital torn to pieces". That was in the NT News of 2 or 3 years ago,

Who were concerned in this? We have to remember that the Indonesians had not arrived there at this stage, but there was great slaughter going on in the country. The parties concerned, as far as I can find out, were people supporting an independent Timor, the pro-Indonesian Timorese and Fretilin. Fretilin is a name that doesn't convey a lot to us. People are not aware of the connotations of the word "Fretilin". I remember Mr Gough Whitlam's remarks once. He said we had to proceed cautiously. He said we had no indication really that these people calling themselves Fretilin were communists. He said we were not quite sure yet. While Mr Whitlam was saying those things, it was very evident that the local communist organisation had no doubts whatever what Fretilin were. The leaders of the local party here knew very well and they knew whom they had to support. A great slaughter went on through the island for a considerable time and the Fretilin people were winning.

As I understand it and from what we can find out from newsprint and watching and reading - although even after looking at all these things we have to realise that we see the situation through a glass darkly; we haven't a clear view of what is occurring there - it would appear that the Fretilin people, apart from being communists,

were also the rump of the Portuguese garrison. Part of the Portuguese garrison went back home to Portugal and part remained to impose their kind of government on East Timor. Not only were the leaders of the Fretilin well-trained and well-disciplined fighters and army men, it seems apparent that they inherited or took over a good deal of the armaments which the Portuguese army left. So it is not to be wondered at that, as the fighting went on, they began to prevail against the 2 other organisations. They appeared to be fighting the independent Timor people and the pro-Indonesian Timorese. The Fretilin "coms" were doing very well with their superior arms and possibly better preparation and planning to cope with the situation. Then at a certain stage, I don't know the exact date, the Indonesians came onto the scene, allegedly by invitation of the pro-Indonesian group. I am not sure about the predominant attitude of the independent Timor group. Whom did the Indonesians fight with? We hear that they have clashed with people there and are fighting with people in East Timor, and all the information we get from this wireless that "Bunji" tells us about, the Fretilin wireless, the communist wireless, is that they appear to be fighting the Fretilin section. What has happened to the other two groups? Fretilin apparently are not doing so very well now that their opponents have arms and ammunition; they were doing better when they were fighting people who only had hoes and axes and things like that. But now their opponents are well armed and the Fretilin party, the Communist Party, is not doing so well.

It would appear also sometimes, although we get very little information that we can rely on, that the other 2 groups are also not doing very well. In a primitive country like that - and the same situation happens in Africa of course - we find that the other groups would become the meat in the sandwich torn between two major, warring elements. Each side would be demanding their loyalty. Fretilin are demanding that each little village be loyal to them and Indonesians would be demanding the same. In that primitive situation, as you would find in Angola and Mozambique and in parts of Africa, the pen-

alty for disloyalty is death, often a complete wiping out of a village. This probably happened in Vietnam and in other places. Now we are getting these regular reports. "Bunji" says that Fretilin wireless is on the air 3 nights a week. The wavelength is either the exact wavelength of our outpost radio station along the coast or very close to it, so anyone who has a wireless with that band can listen to this. The gist of the message passed on to us through the printed media is that we should do something to assist the hard-pressed East Timorese people. Fretilin are now purporting to be the champions of the other 2 groups whom they were massacring before the Indonesians arrived. This is a strange turnabout, that they are now the champions of the people that they were massacring previously. It is hard to believe and, in fact, I do not believe it. I have never been in the habit of believing communist propaganda. This wireless operates on a certain wavelength, outpost radio, and anyone who has that band can hear it. The people along the coast are listening to this. I was out there a few weeks ago and I heard some of the remarks. Anyone who listens to the full text of this radio conversation has no doubts of what it is all about.

The local press presents us with selected passages from the radio but along the coast, where they hear the full message, there are no wrappings on it at all and they have no doubt about the blatant prevarications pouring out from this radio. It is in fact so blatant that, as a propaganda medium, it defeats itself. The people in the towns of the Territory who are able to hear it frequently quickly dismiss it for what it is worth. Unfortunately, we are only hearing carefully prepared pass-

ages. What amazes me is that the printing of some of this communist propaganda appears to have sucked in apparently otherwise intelligent people - people who have got into the same boat as Mr Brian Manning and Wesley-Smith and "Bunji" - and it is incredible to me that this could happen.

I have never been in the habit of regarding communist propaganda as the truth, because 70 years ago they purged the word "truth" from their vocabulary. It has no meaning in the communist world, it is only a word of convenience which is used occasionally to confuse the capitalist world which still believes in the word and is still impressed by it. In the communist world, "truth" has no meaning whatever. I have had a hand-to-hand communication with communists for 40 years or more and in the north Queensland industrial areas I know very well their attitude towards these things. I just hope that people will realise the true nature of the Fretilin movement as our local communist organisation knows exactly what they are. People will recognise that you don't get the truth from a communist organisation and we are not getting any other truth provided to us. We are getting nothing from the other side whatever. Possibly it would be optimistic to think that we would get the truth from there too. However, this is a thing we rely greatly on in our social set up. It is not a new problem. It would be quite a long time now, nearly 2,000 years ago, since a Roman governor sardonically asked, "What is truth?" However, until we are sure we know the truth, I would think that all of us should be very careful about being sucked in by propaganda.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned,

Wednesday 16 March 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

NORTHERN TERRITORY LAW REFORM
COMMITTEE

Miss ANDREW: I present the Constitution of the Northern Territory Law Review Committee.

This committee was formed last year, initiated by His Honour Mr Justice Muirhead, and it is now meeting regularly. Already 2 pieces of legislation have come before this House at the instigation of this committee. I trust honourable members will read the constitution with interest and give it their full support.

MINING BILL

(Serial 186)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill establishes a new form of title to be made available under the Mining Ordinance and to be known as a "mining development lease". Before proceeding with any further explanation of the proposals contained in the bill, I would like to briefly outline for the benefit of honourable members the considerations leading up to the introduction of these proposals.

For some time now, it has become increasingly evident that any mining legislation, whilst recognising the considerations which must be given to the protection of the environment and assessment of alternative land use proposals, must provide adequate protection for capital expenditure undertaken on mineral exploration and allow for some security of tenure pending the determination of proposals relating to the development of mineral deposits.

The question of preservation or protection of the environment has been one of the most emotional issues to affect mining in the industry's history and the controversy surrounding these

issues has become very complex. Members are all aware of the situation which presently exists in relation to our uranium resources and the length of time which has been involved in these matters. Besides the example of environmental issues, there are many other considerations which must be taken into account in assessing proposals for the development of any mineral deposits. These essential determinations often lead to substantial lapses of time between applications for mining rights being submitted and the approval of development proposals. Whilst these delays are not unduly critical in places where applications for mining leases have been made by applicants who may not have previously undertaken major work in the area concerned, in the case of leases applied for as a result of activities conducted under an exploration licence, severe hardships are being experienced. The persons involved in such situations have in most cases spent substantial money and effort in discovering mineral deposits with a possible economic potential and, with the expiry of their exploration licences, as is now often the case, find themselves without any adequate protection for their exploration expenditure or the authority to continue with assessment of their discoveries pending the determination of negotiations for mining rights.

There is a need to provide some positive relief in these circumstances and to this end the present proposals envisage the introduction of a mining development lease available only to the holders of exploration licences and which will form the basis of a holding title with the right to carry on further geological and feasibility work pending the final outcome of mining rights proposals. In general, it is proposed that a development lease will confer on the lessee a right to execute such works and perform such operations, as approved from time to time by the Administrator, as are necessary to evaluate the development potential of mineral deposits, but will not authorise the recovery of any minerals. It is intended that there will be no discretion attached to the grant of development leases; that is to say, providing an applicant for a lease com-

plies with the legal requirements of the ordinance controlling such applications, he must be granted the lease. The provision for an obligatory grant is considered essential to complement the purpose for which this type of lease has been devised, as any discretionary power would only extend the hiatus which currently exists in relation to exploration licences and applications for mineral leases made by virtue thereof.

The bill proposes that a development lease would remain in force for an initial period of 3 years and at the expiration thereof can be renewed for a further term of 3 years. Most of the intended operational and administrative provisions are similar to those which exist with regard to exploration licences and there is power for a development lease to be cancelled if it is not being used for the prescribed purposes.

I would also like to draw to members' attention that, while as a general rule it is proposed that a mining development lease would only be available to holders of a current exploration licence, provision has been made in the bill to allow former exploration licence holders who have outstanding mining lease applications under consideration to take advantage of the development lease proposal. This allowance is significant in relation to mining companies involved in the Government's considerations on the future development of uranium resources.

Finally, I point out to members that in clause 3 of the bill there is an incorrect reference to the proposed commencement provisions in respect of section 8. This should read section 9 and will be the subject of an amendment which will be proposed at a later date. The implementation of these proposals will provide a long overdue form of security to mineral explorers pending the determination of mining development negotiations. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

STUART HIGHWAY - UPGRADING AND SEALING

Mr RYAN: I move that this Assembly

requests that the Federal Government make a special grant to the South Australian Government for the upgrading and sealing of the Stuart Highway from Port Augusta to the Northern Territory border in accordance with national highway standards.

Mr Speaker, I am beginning to feel the way you do in relation to the cattle industry. I seem to be always on my feet complaining about the Stuart Highway and people always seem to be asking for more money for the Stuart Highway. The importance of this particular link with the Northern Territory is something which we just cannot ignore. A committee has been formed in South Australia to look at the sealing of the road in South Australia and a meeting was held last Friday. I feel that we also should endeavour to contribute as much pressure as possible on the Federal Government to try to convince them that a special grant is needed to upgrade that section of the highway. I do not think there is any other way we will see money allocated to the construction of the highway unless it is by special grant.

As I said yesterday, the South Australian Government will be spending no money on the road next year, apart from what would be called minimal maintenance. The Federal Government has been approached by all state governments because of the lack of funds for highways. Their approach to the Government occurred at the ATAC Conference where they agreed that they would meet a week later after the Minister for Transport had a chance to return to Federal Government and ask for more money. The answer came back that there was no more money available. We are up against a fairly tough situation. When 6 states have been knocked back, one wonders whether we can put enough pressure on the Government to give funds to a particular state for a particular project which is of vital importance to the Territory. However, I would prefer to think that, providing we keep putting the pressure on, sooner or later the message will sink in that this road is terribly important.

South Australia's attitude is that the road connecting Adelaide with Melb-

ourne is more important and I could not very well argue with the Minister for Transport in South Australia because that is a vital link to them. He did admit that they could see the importance of the Stuart Highway to themselves and to the Northern Territory but their priorities were in other areas. We find ourselves in the situation of passing a motion which would ensure our support for the South Australian Government which is a government of a different colour from ourselves. However, I am not particularly concerned because of that. I think we should in this case work with the South Australian Government in putting pressure on the Federal Government. Certainly the members of the opposition in South Australia will be assisting wherever possible but I think we can all agree that the opposition do not have a lot of power and I would prefer that the South Australian Government be assisted by us in this particular case.

When they were building the highway, you might recall a similar situation arose whereby the Western Australian Government took up the cudgels on South Australia's behalf. They were more interested in Western Australia and we are now placed in the same position. We have to ensure that the money is made available. I do not know what will happen if the money is not made available; even if it was made available next year, it could be 12 or 18 months before any start could be made because of the planning that is necessary. I might also point out that they still have not decided which route will be used, so there are some decisions that have to be made. I would expect that the decisions could be made quickly before the money is actually received. We could probably see an improvement on the timing that some people suggested would be necessary before they would be able to start. Even being highly optimistic, we could not see much action to relieve the total problem for 4 to 5 years. This is the time it would take if the job was given top priority and money was made available to ensure that the road could be built at top speed. It is an extremely long road and has to be constructed from scratch through some pretty harsh country.

In 5 years' time, if the road was built, we would see a tremendous improvement in communications with the southern states. We have the bitumen road through to Queensland which is not all that good a road but at least it is bitumen and makes it a little bit easier to get from Queensland to Darwin than it is to get from Adelaide to Darwin. But we would see a tremendous increase in traffic from the south, tourism would be boosted, and for these reasons I think it is vitally important that we get money made available so that this job can start. If it started now, we are 5 years from it being completed and every year that goes past adds another year and another loss to the Territory. Therefore, I hope that all members of the Assembly will support the motion. It is extremely important. We should continue to impress upon the Federal Government the importance of that road link.

Mr TUXWORTH: I commend the honourable member for Transport and Secondary Industry for proposing this motion. It gives me a great deal of pleasure for 2 reasons to speak to it. One is that I believe that, second to the improvement of land tenure in the Northern Territory, the development of the South Road and its final sealing are of paramount importance to our ultimate development; in fact, it is going to be in tandem with our development; we will never really get off the ground until the South Road is sealed and open to the rest of the country.

Australians are a very mobile people compared with other nations in the world and, considering the size of our country and its present stage of development, we have perhaps the most sophisticated modes of travel that exist in the world today in relation to our population. We have several flaws in this magnificent network of communication and one of them is the South Road. Up until recently, the sealed road between Townsville and Mount Isa has always been a problem but a remaining one that has a very important bearing on the Northern Territory is the sealing of the South Road. It is one that we must push for at every opportunity.

The importance of sealed roads between the states has been emphasised. I would like to bring attention to the state of the road between South Australia and Western Australia up until recent times. The Western Australians believed that their unsealed highway was one very big barrier between them and the rest of Australia. They believed the only difference between Perth's and Auckland's connections to the eastern states was 2,000 miles of sea and 2,000 miles of sand. They believed they could attract up to 80,000 vehicles per annum across a sealed road from South Australia to Western Australia provided they could get the road sealed. One of the things Australians like to do is to travel on good, safe, well-made roads. The Western Australians were not wrong in their assumption. Their road opened last October or November and they estimated that, with 80,000 vehicles per annum which was equivalent to one car every 6 minutes in every 24 hour period, they would improve the communications a bit better and they would improve the business done between their states and other states. A pilot and passengers of a light aircraft which flew along that highway for a period of 3 hours counted cars at intervals of 1 minute apart on the highway. That was only an isolated occasion on a particular day when cars were travelling approximately 1 minute apart between Perth and Adelaide. It does give an indication of the increased volume of traffic that is available provided sealed roads are an option for the driver to take. Many people would like to travel on the train because it is different, they would like to fly but they cannot afford it, but I believe that the concept of the Australian driving his own car around this country on his holidays is as important to him as it is to own his own house. It is a part of our way of life.

The significance of this to places like Alice Springs and Darwin would be very important. If the South Road was sealed and we could attract just one half the number of cars that would be travelling between Perth and Adelaide, with the great tourist attractions that we have in the Northern Territory, we would need a town the size of Alice Springs to cater for an influx of 200

cars and 400 people a day, just from the tourist point of view. And that, as the honourable member said in his opening remarks, is very significant.

It is also timely to point out that the development of this country has always followed the introduction of railroads and roads into remote areas. If we look at the map, we will find that the greatest areas of development are beside roads and railways. Even in the Northern Territory this has been so. In my own electorate, the improvements that the beef roads have made to the way of life, the efficiency of operation and the turnoff of the stations in the area have been enormous and have perhaps contributed to the capacity of the stations to stay in business in these very poor times. We should never lose sight of the benefits that will come with the sealing of the road.

One other consideration that I regard as important is the investment that will follow the introduction of good sealed communications. I refer to investment particularly by large companies - cattle companies, mining companies, entrepreneurs or tourist developers who would perhaps be interested in developing Ayers Rock. When anybody these days looks to spend money on a large development, there are several things that he is particularly conscious of and the environment and land tenure are but two of them. Continued access to his development is of prime importance. If people are denied access because of poor roads, the entrepreneur shies away from the project. I believe that the sealing of the South Road would see an enormous interest in the development of the Ayers Rock village concept because of the guaranteed traffic that it would bring into the area. We would find entrepreneurs and investors begging for an opportunity to invest in the area because they could be guaranteed clientele, something which is not available to them at the moment.

In my closing remarks, I would like to allude briefly to the benefits that I would see coming in freight handling. There is always a running argument about the superiority of road freighting over rail freighting. One of the

things we have proved in the Centre over the last few years is that the day of the railway is coming to an end. The sophistication and development of handling methods allied to the trucking industry are such that it is just about in everybody's interest to avail themselves of trucking opportunities before rail. When railways were first installed in the early part of the century, they were cheap to build, they were cheap to run and they were very easy to amortise over a long period of time. This situation has reversed. The sophistication of trucking and the improvement of roads over the years has developed to the stage where the trucker is in a much better position to offer a freight service to his customer. I believe we will see a much more competitive field of trucking if the South Road is sealed. I also believe that the benefit to the consumer from this would be enormous in the time that the goods would be available to him and the price he had to pay for them. I believe that the motion is most timely and it is one we should press for without any hesitation and at every opportunity.

Mr MANUELL: I would like to lend my support to the motion. The bulk of the remarks about the subject have been covered by the previous speakers but it is fitting that the member representing Alice Springs should make some comment in support of the motion. Alice Springs is the first major town in the Northern Territory that comes into contact with the southern routes.

I do not think there is any need to stress the importance of an all-weather link with the southern states. Honourable members are only too well aware of the bitumen road that links the Northern Territory to the east through Mount Isa and the difficulties we face with the closing of that link through heavy rain and flooding. I do not suppose for a moment that, if the South Road was sealed to Port Augusta, there would not be the occasional breaks by exceptional rain or flooding. It only came to my notice the other day that a section of the road that has already been sealed by the Department of the Northern Territory between Alice Springs and Kulgera was rendered unserviceable be-

cause of unusual flooding. This piece of road is approximately 10 miles south of Eridunda and crosses Crazy Creek. The last time it flooded was 10 years ago but, in those days, the road was unsealed and the road was cut until such time as the flooding subsided. Once the flooding had subsided, it was only a matter of hours before the road was reopened. Under present circumstances, if we look at the situation that exists in South Australia, particularly around Coober Pedy, Marla Bore and Hawks Nest Well, the road can be out for a fortnight and longer. We can have the situation that occurred in 1967 - if my memory serves me correctly - and again in the early 1970s when we had tourist buses and their passengers stranded around Marla Bore for weeks. We had these poor people being fed from aircraft which dropped loaves of bread. I suppose by the time the bread was sorted out from the mud and sticks and stones it was fairly well coloured and had a rather unusual flavour. Those people were able to survive, but in this age of technology it is unreasonable to expect that we are going to develop our Territory, our country, our nation, if we subject our tourists and our industry to this condition of communication.

It is very appropriate that the honourable Cabinet Member should put forward a motion to the Federal Government suggesting that funds for the development of a national highway - or a highway of national standard - linking Port Augusta with the Northern Territory through Kulgera and Alice Springs be earmarked. I have the very strong feeling that in the past there has been an appropriation of funds from the Federal Government to the South Australian Government and they have been placed elsewhere as opposed to developing the link between us and South Australia. I expect that is not unreasonable from the South Australians' point of view, but I think it is quite obvious to us here in this House that we have to look after our own interests and, unless we can have it clearly identified, we are going to be the people who miss out.

I would strongly suspect that, over the period of time the link between South Australia and the Northern Terri-

tory by the southern highway has existed, the cumulative costs that have been incurred in the maintenance of the existing road would have gone a long way towards the construction cost of a sealed road. It is known only too well by members of this House that private contractors tender to maintain the southern route with graders and rollers, water tankers and so on. But the ridiculousness of this situation is clearly illustrated when we experience rain. The dry times are not quite so bad; the graders and the water trucks are able to maintain to the best of their ability the condition of the road and limit the corrugations and potholes that develop. But the ridiculousness of the attitude of maintaining an unsealed road is easily realised when we consider that the road can be compacted and upgraded and the section completed but the rain, within 6 hours, will render that road useless and the work has to be done again. In the long term that is not rational thinking in terms of national development. We should give serious consideration to continuing our pressure, as is proposed in this motion, to ensure that our southern communication links are upgraded to national standard with the sealing of the road.

The other obvious factor that arises with an unsealed road is the cost component to the contractor for the transshipment of goods to and from the Northern Territory. There would not be one road carrier you would speak to who could deny that the cost of freight to the Northern Territory would have to be cheaper with a sealed road as opposed to an unsealed road. It must be appreciated by members of this House, even without any experience in trucking, that untimely delays because of punctures, untimely delays because of unnecessary repairs and the maintenance of prime-movers and trailers due to travelling on undesirable road conditions, must add to the ultimate cost of our freight into the Territory, and it also slows down the process.

I see no reason why the development of the southern road link cannot carry on in parallel with the development of the rail link. Obviously, if we were to get a sealed road to the south and an

upgraded standard gauge railroad connecting Alice Springs to the south, there would be an increasing spirit of competition between the railway and those that tranship by road.

The honourable member for Barkly mentioned the changing pattern in the carriage of goods. Some consumers prefer to use road transport because of its increased flexibility and I would not deny that for a moment. However, there is still a service to be rendered by the rail. I do not think there is a service in this country that can tranship vast quantities of material as effectively as rail, apart from national shipping. However, in terms of flexibility and as an alternative, there is no doubt that the roads are of the utmost importance. It is not only important to the commercial carriage of goods but also to tourism. There is an increasing movement of Australian people on conducted tours on bus lines.

There is no need for me to remark on the tourism potential that exists in the Northern Territory. Our greatest market for tourists in the Northern Territory must exist in the southern states or at least in the eastern states. If the road to Alice Springs from Port Augusta is completed, we will service people from Western Australia as well; they have the alternative of travelling up the western highway, in through the Victoria River District if the bridge is open, but we have the ability of attracting them from the south. If they travel up the western coast, they can travel home through the centre and down to the south. This will open up the tourist potential that already exists and to some extent is utilised at Ayers Rock. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr ROBERTSON: I too would like to be associated with the comments of honourable members in support of the motion proposed by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry.

Last week, during the opening of the Regional Government Centre in Alice Springs, the Minister for the Northern Territory said that public spending by the Commonwealth must in the future be directed towards the benefit and en-

couragement of the private sector. It was not coincidental that in this place in the Address in Reply on the very same day, I used words identical to those the Minister used in Alice Springs. I repeat them now. The Government must, in its spending, channel its resources into areas which benefit the private sector. I have previously pointed out in this place that there is little point in the Government building offices for itself unless the private sector is viable and is able to use those facilities. I also repeat in this debate my belief that the South Road to Central Australia is the most important item that the Government can spend its funds on. Any other capital work that the Government is able to do pales into insignificance in my view.

Last week I was speaking to a transport operator in Alice Springs who has operated between Alice Springs, Adelaide and Melbourne for years. The gentleman's name is Mr E.C.W. Ohlmus, a man I have known for quite some time. He has recently bought himself a new 200 series Mercedes truck and new equipment to drag behind it, new dogs, new trailers. Since purchasing that truck, he ploughed the route between Melbourne and Adelaide for 6 weeks without 1 single hour's down time. He did one trip to Alice Springs and spent a week conducting repairs. He now informs me that, as a result of that trip, which finally broke his heart, after all those years, he is selling his business in Alice Springs, selling his home in Alice Springs and moving to Adelaide. Not only does he face the continual demolition of his equipment on the South Road, he also faces, of all things, the insult of paying on a round trip approximately \$120 in road tax to the South Australian Government. He is paying tax in respect of something which smashes his equipment up, which takes away his livelihood, and on top of everything it is a national highway funded by federal funds. While I do not want to blame particularly the South Australian Government, it would seem to me to be a piece of fraud.

The present Federal Government came into office substantially on the basis of "Let's get the private sector moving again". I really wonder what this pres-

ent Government of my political persuasion has done in that direction. I would suggest to this House that it is very little. I would certainly say that it is not embarking on a deliberate campaign of destruction of the private sector as the previous government did; rather it is doing nothing to recover the situation caused by the previous government. It is time we stopped getting talk about encouraging the private sector and it is time we saw some action in that direction; this is the best opportunity for them to commence that action.

Mr VALE: I rise to speak in support of the motion. The unsealed section of the Stuart Highway, or South Road as it is more commonly known, on the South Australian Northern Territory border to Pimba, is really the last unsealed national highway in Australia. The up-grading and sealing of this road is of the utmost importance to the Northern Territory generally and specifically to the Central Australian region. The up-grading of this road is required for economic stability and growth. During 1976, traffic counts indicated that in excess of 33,000 vehicles traversed this section of the road. Given a sealed road, it would be impossible to estimate how many more vehicles, particularly tourist cars and coaches, will use this road. The increase in traffic numbers would obviously be dramatic.

There are quite obviously a number of reasons why this road requires sealing and requires sealing immediately: tourism, an alternative freight method to the rail service, economic competition to the railways, and defence.

Looking first at the tourist industry, it is probably not generally well known that the cost of a train fare from Adelaide to Alice Springs is more expensive now than an air fare. That factor alone tends to dissuade people from travelling by train. The cost of the air fare, of course, is also prohibitive. The unknown condition day-to-day of the Stuart Highway between the Northern Territory border and Pimba is an inhibiting factor for the average working man, be he in South Australia, Queensland, Victoria or wherever, in

traversing that section of the road with his family. Given a sealed, all-weather road into the Northern Territory, the number of families that could afford to tow a caravan into Central Australia, thus having transportation when they arrive there, would be a tremendous benefit to the economics of the Central Australian tourist region.

The present rail service from Port Augusta to Alice Springs is now fast costing itself out of business. While we appreciate that we are going to receive, in the distant future, a standard gauge railway from Alice Springs to Port Augusta via Tarcoola, that freight service also is fast reaching freight rates which are unusable in direct economic competition with the road freight hauliers.

I refer now to the defence issue, which is a popular one to bring up. Maybe the Federal Government could consider, in the short term at least, allocating defence funds for the amelioration of this problem. As I see it, in Central Australia we have 2 problems, a long-term one and a short-term one. Our immediate short-term problem is to get an all-weather surface link between Alice Springs and Port Augusta and my suggestion is that, in the sealing of this road, we should start at the South Australia-Northern Territory border and move south to Manguri near Coober Pedy. This sealed road could then link up with the Tarcoola railway which is scheduled to reach that area on or around July this year. In emergency situations of floods or derailments on the old line, this would provide an all-weather link.

The Queensland Government "one-upped" the South Australian Government by sealing the roads to their border, thus ensuring Queensland of increased trade with the Northern Territory, particularly the Top End, worth in excess of millions of dollars per year. The South Australian Government, in the words of the present Prime Minister, have been caught with their pants down. It is a much shorter route to come out of South Australia into the Northern Territory, and the sealing of this road would, hopefully, see the re-routing of trade out of South Australia into the North-

ern Territory. If the Federal Government is fair dinkum about employment, inflation and development, maybe it can divert some overseas aid money now to get this Stuart Highway sealed. It is not a question of whether it should be sealed, it is a question of how quickly we can get it sealed - our economic growth depends on it.

Mr POLLOCK: I rise to support the motion but I view with some concern the remarks made about the railway. One would almost think that we are saying, "Pack up the railway because we will have the road instead". I do not think we should give that impression at all. It is important that we acquire both these important links. Some years ago, I lived at Kulgera for 5 months when the sealing of that road extended only some 12 or 14 miles south of Alice Springs. The road south of Alice Springs to the border was a horror stretch. One used to dread that particular section of the road. Fortunately, the road is now sealed from Alice Springs south to the South Australian border. The benefits of the road are easily seen by the number of people who now take advantage of even that short section of the road. Even the sealing of the 200 miles from Alice Springs to the South Australian border has stimulated road traffic on the highway. It will be very interesting to see just how much it will be stimulated if the highway was sealed.

The advantages to the Territory have been mentioned and they would be felt by the whole of the Northern Territory. The speakers in this debate have been predominately from the southern end of the Territory but I believe that the sealing of this road has benefits for the whole of the Northern Territory. That is how people in the Centre look at it. They do not just look to the 40-kilometre radius, they do look to the whole of the Northern Territory and I believe the road would have benefits for the whole of the Territory.

As the member for Stuart said, it does have benefits for South Australia too, for Adelaide, for its industry and so forth, and for the centres along the road from Port Augusta north to Pimba, Woomera and Coober Pedy - those areas

will be assisted in their development. I am sure a lot more people would take advantage of travelling up to Coober Pedy to the opal field area; tourism or a bit of digging itself would further stimulate the economy and in many ways the road would pay for itself.

Most of the areas have been covered by previous speakers but I do support the motion and wholeheartedly. I ask the Federal Government to make some positive steps in providing grants to the South Australian Government for upgrading the road and at the same time keep going with the railway.

Dr LETTS: I would like to make a couple of brief comments; most of it has been said. The lessons of history, as far as the Northern Territory is concerned, are very clear to anyone who cares to look at them but they are usually totally ignored by the planners and policy-makers in Canberra.

When we talk about the communication system in the Northern Territory - and this is what we are talking about; a vital link in the communication system - we ought to look back to some things that have happened not so long ago. The Alice Springs district was the first district to be settled pastorally in the Northern Territory and the first livestock to come in here were taken into the Alice Springs district from South Australia in the 1860s and 1870s. Although it has had a flying start, as it were, in the establishment of pastoral properties, between 1870 and 1930 the Alice Springs pastoral district had only grown to include 14 pastoral leases and the total cattle population of that district by 1930 was about 40,000 head. That was over a period of 60 years. In those days, the communications between Alice Springs and the south were very poor, the nearest rail-head by 1929 being at Oodnadatta. In 1929 the railway was extended from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs.

I suppose if it had been the day of economists and feasibility studies and environmental impact studies and cost benefit analyses, that railway line would never have been extended from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs on the justification which existed then of the

size of the town and the size of the commerce and trade, particularly the cattle industry in the district. But some people had enough vision and enough faith to realise that there are occasions when you have to provide something to be the catalyst for development, and the planners and politicians had enough strength to extend the railway through from Oodnadatta in 1929.

In the following 20 years from 1929 to 1949, the industry in that district grew to station numbers of over 80 pastoral leases and a cattle population of over 200,000 head. The main thing which brought this about was the strengthening of the communications between Central Australia and South Australia. This faith and imagination seems to be something totally lacking in governments and politicians and planners in this day and age, but it still is an important element.

I saw it demonstrated also in Southwest Africa which I visited some years ago. Southwest Africa is not an area well endowed with natural resources, apart from a supply of diamonds which keeps them going, and some very wonderful national park resources, particularly Etosha Pan National Park, the second largest national park in the world, which is right up in the north end of Southwest Africa - very remote and very isolated. Some years before I went there, the South African Government in combination with the Southwest African Administration, extended a bitumen road from Cape Town to Windhoek and beyond to Etosha Pan, a distance of well over 1,000 miles. Up until then they had practically no tourism or visitors coming into this area to look at the wonderful wildlife they have to offer. Within 2 years of 1,200 miles of bitumen being established there, tourist visits to Etosha Pan grew to over 100,000 people per year and it was rivalling Kruger Park as the second biggest tourist attraction in southern Africa. If a cost benefit analysis had been done in advance, nobody could have guessed just what the volume of traffic and trade might have been stimulated by such a move. Somebody had enough initiative and enough courage to do the job and the results

are now paying off. When it comes to Australian development in the Northern Territory, a little bit more of that kind of approach is what we need.

When I saw this motion first proposed, I thought perhaps we should be looking closer to home. If we are going to ask the Commonwealth Government to make a grant and spend money, we should be looking within the Territory. That is what our people would expect us to do. We should be looking at the road from Erldunda to Ayers Rock; we should be looking at the King River bridge; we should be looking at the many internal and secondary road links and communication breakdown points which we know want fixing in this Territory. Those things will still be pursued. As one who has travelled on that road, in good and bad conditions, I recognise what tremendous benefits would accrue, not only to our own people in travelling in and out of the Territory but to the whole of Australia to come and see this place, in the stimulus to the economy, in tourism, in mining, in the cattle industry, from the implementation of the recommendations contained in this motion. I wholeheartedly support the motion.

Motion agreed to.

LAW REFORM COMMISSION REPORT ON
ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND DRIVING

Continued from 15 March 1977.

Mr ROBERTSON: In the consideration of this report, the first thought that comes to people's minds is not so much the risk that intoxicated drivers pose to other road users but the question of civil liberties. In all the times that I have been approached on the subject by people in my electorate, and by people in Alice Springs generally, usually in a rather hostile manner, I have certainly found this to be the case, particularly if the venue that you meet them happens to be the hallowed grounds of some club. Nevertheless, I think it is an area of great concern and I will confine myself to that.

I have always had the attitude in relation to the use of the breathalyser equipment that it should be used as

further evidence of an already conceived opinion in the traffic officer's mind that the person is driving under the influence. I find myself in great difficulty in subscribing to the direction in which we have found ourselves heading. That direction is, of course, that the instrument is an end in itself. We seem to have reached the stage where we concoct some excuse to pull a person up and then we check him on a breath analysis instrument. In the past I am quite sure - in fact I know from my own observation and I know from the number of cases that used to come up in the courts of summary jurisdiction - that the police were never very interested in a person failing to put on a direction indicator; they were never very interested in things like an exhaust pipe falling off and creating sparks on the road - and that is the excuse that has been used to pull one person up who was convicted of over .08 - never greatly interested at 7 o'clock at night, just after dusk, in someone having one tail light out, particularly if it was a tail light out near the kerb; never greatly concerned about someone having a number plate light out. We find now that every person who is spotted with one of these trivial breaches of regulations, many of them merely matters relating to the registration of a motor vehicle, is pulled up with great frequency. I wonder, as has been suggested to me, if the reason for it is not that we have all of a sudden become very diligent in our duties towards minor matters under the Road Traffic Ordinance and apprehensions are being made because there is a prospect of a better class of pinch on the end of it. Certainly this has been suggested to me.

I do not wish to denigrate the police force generally; they do a magnificent job and we have a very hard working traffic branch in Alice Springs. But I can only relate to honourable members, unchecked as it may be, unverified as it may be, that there is a concern in the community in Alice Springs that a pseudo-form of random breath check has been adopted. I have had a person come to me - he is very well known to me and I trust his veracity implicitly - and telling me that he was subject to a random halt of his motor vehicle in

Todd Street, Alice Springs 3 or 4 Sundays ago. Again this is unchecked, but I think it is worth while that the honourable Cabinet Member for Law be aware of this. This person said he was pulled up by a police officer and was asked if he had been drinking. He responded with, "Why have you pulled me over?" He was again asked by the police officer, "Have you been drinking?" He said, "No, I just came off night shift and I am going home". The police officer said, "Well, on your way". That was an attempt at random breath analysis.

If this is going to be accepted as the norm, if it is going to be accepted in legislation despite the recommendations of the commissioners, is the infringement of people's civil rights and their freedom of movement on our roads worthwhile? Is that loss of freedom commensurate with any possible benefit to the community? The commissioners would refute any such contention. It is dealt with in detail on page 109 by Dr Henderson, apparently a highly regarded witness. It is pointed out and agreed to by the commissioners, and also agreed to by Mrs Castle, a former Minister for Transport in the United Kingdom Parliament, that it would not be a wise move and would not benefit the community very greatly at all.

It had been argued that random tests coupled with a very intensive education system would give at least a short-term reduction in the number of people driving with excess blood alcohol content. I recall that when the breathalyser was originally introduced into Alice Springs, after a false start, there was a massive campaign to educate people as to the existence of this instrument and to the danger they ran if they drove their cars on the road after too much drink. It would certainly be true to say from any balance sheet taken from any club in Alice Springs that there was certainly a marked run-off in on-premises consumption of alcohol in Alice Springs shortly after the breath analysis equipment came into use and there was a corresponding increase in take-away drinks. That trend has now been quite reversed. Indeed, I think court records would indicate that there are far more apprehensions and convictions per month now than there were

initially. I think court records would bear out that this is still increasing, therefore 2 things have happened. Firstly, the fear of being apprehended and placed on the analysis equipment is dying, people are no longer quite as concerned about it as they were. Secondly, the education program which was mounted initially has proven to be largely ineffectual. That education program was as massive as is humanly possible. We had the police visiting all licensed premises, giving up their own time in most cases and doing it voluntarily - I understand there was no overtime involved in most of it - to educate the people as to its use. We had the Road Safety Council, in issue after issue of papers, not just one but issue after issue, with a rather staged photograph of a gentleman being apprehended by the police. We had the Road Safety Council doing radio programs educating the people as to the breath analysis equipment and its existence and what would happen to them if caught. Its effect was very short-term indeed. So history has borne out that this equipment is not going to be a great deterrent to people who wish to drink and drive, and if education is going to be effective at all it is only going to be effective for a very short period of time.

I would like to leave with honourable members, while they are considering the contents of this report and the area with which I have been dealing, my thought on the reduction of civil liberties and I would define it as this: the reduction of people's civil rights as citizens should only be infringed when it is quite clear that it is in the interests of those same citizens to do so, and even then such action would be taken by me only with the greatest of reluctance. I would also leave members with the thought that the police force in its operation in a community requires the goodwill and respect of that community. No police force can be effective without the people of the community having high regard for it. Let us not do anything in this House which is going to cause a breakdown of that relationship.

Motion agreed to.

MINING BILL

(Serial 181)

Continued from 15 March 1977.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr POLLOCK: I move circulated amendment 3.1.

This is designed to clarify the point which the member for Port Darwin raised yesterday.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL
COUNCILS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Continued from 15 March.

Mr PERRON: I have been looking forward to receiving this report because, for some time, I have had some reservations about some of the activities of the Regional Council for Social Development in Darwin. I read with interest the report that has been put together by the committee. I notice that the committee has come to the conclusion that the councils have provided a useful and needed service. When we talk about spending roughly \$150,000 a year for these regional councils throughout the Northern Territory, I wonder whether we should really use for a criterion, when determining the future of these councils, the fact that they are providing a useful service as against a needed service. As I understood it, these councils were set up to investigate needs within the community and to see if they could satisfy some of those needs by playing a co-ordinating role as well as an involvement role. We are dabbling in an area where

you could spend absolutely unlimited sums of money if you formed an organisation and said: "We are going to give you \$100,000 or \$200,000. Go out into the community and see if you can find a useful way of helping the community and spending this money". There is absolutely no question whatever that you could find a useful way to spend that money, and much more.

Whether it is a needed service is more the question. Governments themselves have limited amounts of money to spend at any time, and before we give people large sums of money and then give them the task of finding out where it would be nice to have this money spent, we have got to be very careful, because I do not think that anyone seriously considered that a council might come back to the Government and say, "We could not really find anywhere to spend it. We hand you back this money for next year's vote". Obviously that would never happen.

Some of my concern about the Darwin Regional Council stems from the fact that I was presented with some photographs of its office in an arcade in Darwin which was set up, at least from an exterior appearance, like a political party headquarters. It had large political stickers all over the windows and there were quite a number of publications inside the office lying around on the desk - rather radical publications. I just wonder, Mr Speaker, apart from the office being used, as it was obviously used, in a political promotions campaign, I wonder just how much of the photocopying, typing and printing, which the council has obviously been very heavily involved in, may also have been directed to political aims. This concerns me very deeply because, if this has happened, it is a travesty of justice as I understand it and completely beyond the original intention when these organisations were set up.

I have no evidence to suggest that the Darwin Regional Council was involved in an organisation in Darwin which was set up, or loosely organised I should say, at the height of Darwin's squatting problem after the cyclone. That group set about printing documents - they obviously had photocopying

equipment - that they distributed around Darwin to squatters. These documents set out how you could obstruct for the longest possible time any actions to evict you. As I say, I have no evidence that the council was connected with this organisation but it certainly had some very sympathetic supporters with facilities somewhere in the town.

The committee has suggested in two places that the Darwin Regional Council tended to be very conscious of current politics in areas beyond its region and some of its work was affected by political attitudes. That statement surprises me somewhat. I did not really regard it as proper for it to play politics even within its region. It is also mentioned that the Alice Springs Regional Council, while not so affected by political views, seemed inclined to dabble in activities on the edge of politics. I do not believe these councils should have gone anywhere near politics other than to lobby governments, any level of government and any colour of government, to obtain some assistance for groups or persons they felt were in need of assistance.

The committee has suggested a form of control which is obviously very desirable. It is not a control requesting councils to seek permission to spend funds but a general co-ordinating control by an authority which could list the "do's" and "don'ts" that these organisations can be involved in. If the concept of regional councils is going to continue, this is certainly very necessary and I believe that it should be structured as the report suggests - that is, chaired by a government officer responsible to the relevant Executive Member.

I notice that while the Darwin corporation came before the committee and sought to have some involvement in this area, the Alice Springs municipal council showed no interest in either performing the tasks of the regional council or in being associated with it. Whilst I did not necessarily expect the municipal council to welcome the job, I thought it would be somewhat concerned that a regional council might be performing in areas which are truly the

function of a municipal council. I believe that municipal councils should fairly strictly protect their own rights of involvement in as many areas as they can in their own communities. I do accept the point put forward by the committee, however, as regards local government taking over these roles, that it could create some severe difficulties when a lot of the matters to be handled may have effect outside municipal boundaries. It could prove particularly difficult constitutionally for city councils to do the same job.

In closing, I just reiterate that I do have some reservations about these organisations which were basically set up, given a sum of money, and told to go into the community, identify needs and try to assist where they possibly could. That is a pretty loose sort of an arrangement for the Government to undertake inasmuch as it does not matter how much you give these people, they could certainly spend it; not only spend it in areas of need but spend it in areas where it is useful. It is just opening up a mouth that is a bottomless pit and it would be forever seeking ever larger amounts from the Government to expand its role because it just did not seem to have any boundaries whatsoever as to how far it would go.

Mr MANUELL: I rise to make some comment about the report. I do not have a great deal of comment to make and I apologise to honourable members because I have not had time to read it completely enough to make full comment. However, honourable members present will recall that at an earlier sitting of this House I raised some doubt as to the value of the Regional Councils for Social Development as institutions in the community and, frankly, notwithstanding the recommendations and conclusions of the report, I still suffer from that doubt.

I refer to page 5, to one of the tasks and to one of the conclusions drawn by the select committee. It says at the bottom of paragraph 1: "Advising on value of the councils as a means of community development". The committee reports that it is satisfied that these councils have a real value in the community. Frankly, I would not ques-

tion that, I am sure that they would have to come up with that conclusion. However, I am wondering whether in fact they have a value to the community. There is no doubt they must have a value in the community - \$150,000 worth.

I can see that, in today's society, we ought to endeavour to assist the community in its cultural growth to the best of our ability but we have to look at priorities. I noted with interest the remarks by the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning that there was possibly a responsibility that could be undertaken by local government, that municipal councils could incorporate the type of activity that is being undertaken by these regional councils for social development. I do believe that there is probably a benefit to be had by the community in having a form of contact with people who are able to offer advice that is remote from government. There seems to be some stigma amongst communities that people in government are far too high up in the scale to talk to, whether it be at local government level, at a state government level or a federal government level. There seems to be the impression that there is a degree of independence and interest beyond that which is available through any form of government. I would hope that that did not exist. However, amongst some segments of the community, it does and therefore perhaps, under these circumstances, this type of institution does serve and fulfil a positive value.

If the select committee is satisfied that regional councils for social development are of value to the community, they should be of a continuing nature. The consideration that we have now to give is what priority it takes in terms of our funding within the Northern Territory. I am of the firm opinion that, if the councils are to continue in their role and functions, there must be rigid control as far as expenditures are concerned. We should not be prepared to let this type of institution go on without control at a financial level. I do draw to members' attention that when the Regional Council for Social Development was established in Alice Springs it was better

equipped than the offices of the elected Legislative Assembly members in Alice Springs in terms of secretarial service, secretarial equipment and equipment to process and reproduce matters of importance on paper. The community is entitled to receive some service from those elected members, but it is beyond the personal capacity of some of those elected members to produce it without a support system. I am suggesting that we get our priorities right. I am not suggesting for a moment that we do not continue to have these regional councils for social development, if in fact they are justified in the eyes of this select committee, but I am simply suggesting that we should have our priorities right; it does involve dollars. So I believe that these regional councils in their activities and expenditures should be closely followed and guided, and that there should be an audited report from each council submitted to this Assembly each year for tabling in this House.

Mrs LAWRIE: May I indicate at the outset my appreciation of the report and that broadly I support the recommendations of the committee. Honourable members will be aware that the Australian Assistance Plan was an attempt by an Australian government, subsequently supported with some reservations by a subsequent government, to involve the community in the expenditure of money for the community's good. Because it was an innovation, it was as unstructured as possible. The results of the various regional councils right around Australia will show that the experiment has largely been a successful one. My opinion is shared by Senator Bowen, a Liberal Senator and chairman of a senate committee dealing with social welfare. He is one of the greatest supporters of regional councils. Let us remember that these councils have not been in existence for very long and that members of the councils were drawn from the community and, as such, were not necessarily experts in administrative matters.

By and large, the regional councils operating within the Northern Territory have done a very good job. Having listened to previous speakers, it seems to

me that they are somewhat fearful of the continued operations of the councils if they are to remain largely unstructured. I take issue with that. We have many welfare services rigidly structured and then funded by the Australian taxpayer. That is not what regional councils are all about. They are not to be seen as just another arm of government unless we are to entirely lose their original concept. They have to be seen as representative of the community at a very grass roots level and the community for once saying without too much interference, how it would like its money spent. No doubt there have been mistakes but then government departments are not immune from mistakes any more than are politicians.

Mention has been made that this is taxpayers' money and it has to be used wisely and well, and few could take issue with that. The report gives 2 basic recommendations which would bear out broadly that intention. The first is: "We are satisfied that these councils have a real value in the community". I endorse that. The value has been twofold. The community has been able to identify with them as not being a very rigidly structured governmental group but as a group of largely voluntary workers with whom they can identify readily. They have another value in the community in that, because of their lack of rigid structure - but that does not necessarily mean lack of control over funding and expenditure - they have been able to offer a variety of diverse roles as it has become apparent the community needs them. One of the better tasks undertaken has been the Homemakers Service which is one of the projects undertaken by the Darwin Regional Office.

In recommendation 4, the committee of this Assembly has made a basic suggestion regarding the basis of financial assistance if the responsibility for funding the councils is assumed by the Legislative Assembly. I commend the committee for the care with which they made this recommendation. They have said in short that a regional council shall be answerable through this Assembly eventually for the expenditure of moneys but that it shall have the widest possible acceptable degree of lati-

tude in that expenditure. This is where these councils have their value and why, in my opinion, they will continue to attract the support of the general populace.

One of the other speakers spoke of government funding for this new concept. When we speak of government money being spent in a welfare sense, let us put it into context and have a look at some of the moneys given through the tax paying public to other organisations doing worthy works. For example, church organisations attract capital grants running into millions of dollars with a 1% interest over either a 45 year or 60-year term. The Baptists in the Northern Territory have fared particularly well in this regard. They have attracted millions of dollars at 1% for capital grants; I believe there is a hostel in Alice Springs which cost \$1m. The YWCA attracted a grant of \$660,000 and the YMCA \$600,000. These are large amounts of money, not begrudged, and given with a minimum of control. So let us not run away with the idea that it is unusual for welfare bodies to receive funding from the taxpayer - and these are private welfare bodies.

It is easy for members to say that in no sense organisations such as the regional councils should become political. If we examine that statement closely, surely we would all agree that, whilst it may be undesirable for them to take a political stance, would we not all hope that the widest variety of political material should be freely available to the public in such an office? I would for one. I would like to see them having political material available for public scrutiny, material from every political party. I would like to see them have the Hansard of this House available. I would like to see regional councils having copies of legislation introduced in this House available for scrutiny along with the second reading speeches, not to be taken away but made available. Not enough dissemination takes place of legislation which is before this House.

Honourable members will be well aware that members themselves can become discouraged when they send copies of

legislation and speeches to community organisations, specialist groups, and receive very little response. Nevertheless, having listened to the Cabinet Member for Education and Planning and his fear that they were becoming too political, let me say that I would not wish them to become one-sided, but I find no quarrel with the widest dissemination of political literature through such regional councils or any other organisation.

I hope that the Cabinet Member and this Assembly will endorse this report and will ensure that funding is made available to the regional councils with a minimum of direction and control but with adequate safeguards. Mention has been made of audited reports being presented in this House. That would be regarded as acceptable to everybody. However, let us not create another rigid structure in place of what was seen as an expression from the community as to how they wanted their money spent. By and large, I agree with Senator Bowen, Liberal, that the money has been well spent, that there has not been undue waste and that the regional councils should continue to be funded and should continue to function.

Mr ROBERTSON: I note that every member today has touched upon the political aspirations of regional councils and the political motivations perhaps behind their establishment. When it was first mooted to establish regional councils in the Northern Territory, I too was very suspicious of the real motive behind the forming of regional councils throughout Australia. I note from the select committee's report that in 2 areas in particular they reflect a concern about political bias and political meddling, if I may put that construction upon the report. In 2 other areas, there does not seem to be any indication of that being the case.

As I have already said, I was very suspicious. Notwithstanding that, however, I would remind honourable members, as I think I have pointed out in this House before, that I was the inaugural chairman of the inaugural meeting of the Regional Council for Social Development in Alice Springs so I had it in mind that the regional council as

such and regional councils as such would outlive the original motive which I suspected as being behind their original formation. I never had any real proof of that motive from the Australian Labor Party in Government at the time until, having picked up a Hansard from the Federal House of 30 November last year when doing research on Aboriginal land rights legislation, I found a most incredible excerpt inserted into Hansard by the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, Prime Minister. The excerpt was from a speech given by the Leader of the Labor Party in the Ben Chifley Memorial Lecture of 1957. In order to enlighten the House as to exactly why regional councils were originally set up, I think it is worth reading some extracts from the Hansard of the Federal House. The lecture was entitled: "Constitution versus Labor, by E.G. Whitlam BA, LLB, MP - the role of state members". Mr Whitlam said: "Much can be achieved by Labor members of the state parliaments in effecting Labor's aims of more effective powers for the national parliament and for local powers and local government. Their role is to bring about their own dissolution". Coming from Hansard, this is an exact copy of the Right Honourable E.G. Whitlam's speech. "Most of the state governments retain the administration of many things which concern their own capitals and larger cities alone. Again, many regional areas, such as the Riverina, the Hunter Valley, the Clarence River and Central and Northern Queensland might have had more attention paid to their conservation and conservation development programs if they had more effective co-ordination and consultation with the areas concerned".

There in a nutshell, honourable members, is why I still believe and I now am convinced that regional councils were originally set up as part of a system to bring about the dissolution of state parliaments, confining them to the activities of their capital city, and setting up regional governments throughout the country. It is irrefutable. I think the nature of the people who originally went into the regional councils also bears that out; they invariably had socialistic tendencies - I am talking about the original organis-

ers not the people, fortunately, who eventually got in control of these things, people like Mr Bob Gaff referred to by name in the select committee's report. He is an outstanding citizen of Alice Springs and he has done an outstanding job.

I am pleased to say that I support the report almost entirely. It would seem to me, from the inquiries and investigations of the select committee, that indeed these surreptitious motives behind the original setting up of regional councils have not been realised and they have been converted into what I believe now is a very worthwhile operation in the community, particularly in the Northern Territory. As a reasonable example of that, I can cite one of the functions that the Regional Council for Social Development in Alice Springs has been responsible for with its Alcohol Action Committee. Looking back through the records of this place and through the records of the Legislative Council before it, we find people pleading year after year for something to be done about alcohol and, more than that, about alcohol rehabilitation night shelters. Nothing was ever done until the Regional Council for Social Development, through a committee of that council, the Alcohol Action Committee, got to work and actually did something physical and tangible about it. That is a very great plus for them.

I support the concept as proposed by the committee in relation to funding. I do not think it is going to become bureaucratic and top-heavy as may be suspected by some honourable members. I think it is probably a good system of accountability, through a central co-ordinating body and ultimately responsible to this Assembly. I would like to commend the members of the committee for their efforts.

I note, going through the lists of witnesses, that for the most part, particularly in Alice Springs of course, those who gave evidence were those who are most interested in it. I notice that 2 of the 4 people cited in the report are in fact members of the council, in fact high level members of the council, one being a research officer and another being its chairman. I

would hardly suggest that that is necessarily a reflection of a community wish that the council be maintained.

However, on the facts contained in the report and the facts as determined by the committee, I think there is a very valid argument for the retention of regional councils throughout the Territory. I see once again that the Alice Springs Town Council has been an ostrich. I have not in this place nor in any other place been a knocker of the Alice Springs Town Council, but it seems to me that they really want to confine themselves to the trimming of trees over footpaths. That seems to be the extent of the drive of our Alice Springs Town Council. It was quite clear from the report that they wanted absolutely nothing to do with the regional council's work. It has been clear from other indications that they want nothing whatever to do with the child care centre in Alice Springs. It reflects a general lack of thrust in these directions by the town council. For that reason, I must support the retention of a regional council for social development along the lines of the one that exists. I would continue to do so until such time as the Alice Springs Town Council assumes a little more responsibility in the area.

Miss ANDREW: I congratulate the chairman and the committee on this report. I have had a long association with the Regional Council for Social Development in Darwin from its inception until the middle of last year. I have been to Australia-wide conferences as the Northern Territory delegate and I would like to commend the committee because there was a certain attitude amongst members of this House that any investigation should become a witch hunt into the political comings and goings of the various branches. The committee have overridden those suggestions and come up with a very factual and sound report and what I believe to be excellent recommendations. I was concerned at the further aspersions that were cast this morning by a couple of the earlier speakers. In my association with the Regional Council in Darwin, I did not notice any political propaganda being printed on the premises of any council.

Darwin and Alice Springs have assumed largely a co-ordinating role. The Darwin Regional Council suffered a lot of setbacks in the post-cyclone period with problems of personnel and facilities. Katherine, a most remarkable council, has been inclined to take a much more initiating role and this has filled a need in the community. Although it is straying a little from the original concept of regional councils, it has certainly done its job. I was delighted to read about the establishment of a Northern Territory Community Council. This should be an advisory council but I do not necessarily agree with the chairman being a member of the Northern Territory Public Service. It would have an added advantage to the regional councils throughout the Territory in that it would give them greater opportunities of closer consultation and co ordination.

Any organisation is as good as the people in it and, like the honourable member for Nightcliff, I would like to draw attention to the Homemaker Service that the Darwin Regional Council has so successfully operated. It has been particularly successful because of the kind of people who have been involved in it.

I applaud the recommendation that councils should be composed of persons representing organisations. It is most important that any representative on the council does have a back-up. I have not always agreed with everything that has been done by these councils. I agree with the committee that it is very difficult to evaluate projects and, Mr Deputy Speaker, you mentioned the alcohol action program conducted in Alice Springs. Examples such as these give some indication of the worthwhile work that these councils have done. I too was distressed by the attitude of the Alice Springs Town Council. The effect that any takeover by the Darwin city council would have in restricting the work of any social development work does concern me.

In conclusion, I believe these councils have a real job to do in the Northern Territory. We have never had a proliferation of community action groups on a co ordinated Territory-wide

basis and I see this as becoming one of them.

Debate adjourned..

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (TOWERS AND PRIVILEGES BILL

(Serial 195)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

I propose to ask that this bill be passed today. If honourable members need time to consider the bill, I am quite happy for it to be adjourned for some little time. However, the matter is so important that the passage of this bill at this sittings is vital.

During last week, a question of privilege was raised by one of the honourable members of this Assembly and, since I was concerned with the Committee of Privileges, I undertook the examination of the present situation relating to privileges. I discovered to my dismay that the Legislative Assembly has never had privileges since it first came into being in October 1974. One would have thought that the Commonwealth of Australia, in preparing and passing a Northern Territory (Administration) Act to create the Legislative Assembly, would have had some regard for the application to that Assembly of privileges that had already been very carefully defined in the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance 1963. This was an assumption that I had always made but on the occasion of the matter coming up for my consideration last week, I examined the Northern Territory (Administration) Act and I found to my dismay that the provisions of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance 1963 had no application at all to this Assembly. Consequently, I immediately embarked upon the proposal that a bill should be introduced as a matter of extreme urgency to secure the powers and privileges under which honourable members of this Assembly have thought they have been operating since the Assembly was created in 1974.

To detail the situation which I think exists - which I am quite certain exists: when the Legislative Council was put out of existence in 1974, there were only 2 sections of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act, as amended by the 1974 act, which could have had application to the question of the powers and privileges of the new Assembly. The first one was section 19A of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act, which was inserted in 1974, and which said that a reference to the Legislative Council should be taken to mean, after the passing of the 1974 act, to include a reference to the Legislative Assembly. Now, to my way of thinking, that was scarcely a sufficient basis upon which to put the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance on a footing such that it applied to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. But even if it was effective, further amendment to section 4SA of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act made it quite clear that, as from the date of the operation of the 1974 act, the Legislative Assembly would have no privileges at all. Section 4SA is the section which used to provide that the powers and privileges of the Legislative Council were such as should be declared by that Council. Those powers were declared in 1963. In the amendment of 1974, the Commonwealth Government have provided that the powers and privileges of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly should be such as were declared by the Legislative Assembly, and we have not done anything about it. Since our powers and privileges are to be determined by us and there has been no determination, we have had no privileges since October 1974.

This is quite a serious provision because, in the absence of privilege, every legislative body is hampered in its criticism of actions taken either by public servants or the private sector. That sort of hampering ought not to be permitted. The British House of Commons has claimed privilege since time immemorial because, in a legislative body, the criticism of other persons' actions ought to be free and unfettered.

The bill is a copy of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance with necessary amendments to make it applicable to the Legislative Assembly. Clause 22 proposes that the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance shall be deemed to have continued to operate till the date of commencement of this ordinance as though on the date on which the first Legislative Assembly was first called together it has been amended by omitting the word "Council" wherever occurring and inserting the word "Assembly", and consequent amendments by omitting "President" and substituting "Speaker". This will effectively backdate the operation of this Ordinance to the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

Although I have informed honourable members that the bill before them is in effect almost a Chinese copy of the old ordinance, going through it yesterday I considered clause 6 again and although clause 6, as it is printed in the bill, is in exactly the same terms as the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance, it seemed to me that it could be said to be defective. Clause 6 deals with the attendance of members and officers of the Assembly as witnesses and says that the section does not excuse the attendance of a person as a witness in a court unless that person is required to be in attendance at a sitting of the Legislative Assembly or of a committee. I do not think members are required, as a matter of law, to be in attendance and I do not think officers of the Assembly are required, as a matter of law, to be in attendance at a meeting of the Assembly or of a committee. Consequently, I propose, when the bill gets to the committee stage, to omit the words which relate to the requirement of a person to be in attendance and to substitute that it is a duty for that person to be in attendance. It is a minor amendment but I think that when one comes to consider a matter of prosecution of a member for not attending, he would be very hard put to prove that the law did require him to be here. Obviously, it is his duty and that duty springs from the Northern Territory (Administration) Act itself, but there

is nothing as a matter of law which requires a member to be here.

I commend the bill to honourable members. I am prepared to deal with it this afternoon and to move that standing orders be set aside so far as it is necessary to enable this bill to pass at this sitting. If honourable members, however, want to consider the matter and consider the bill as presented until tomorrow, I have certainly no objection to that. But I give notice that tomorrow I will seek leave to move the suspension of standing orders.

Debate interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Dr LETTS: I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the passage of this bill this day.

Motion agreed to.

Debate resumed.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I would like to say a few words on this ordinance for the powers and privileges of the Legislative Assembly. It was probably my question to the chairman of the Privileges Committee which caused this bill to be brought into the Assembly. I do agree wholeheartedly that it should be done with very swift and prompt action. I commend the member for Port Darwin for acting so promptly and having the draftsman draw up the bill. I am sure that it will be accepted by all the members here that we should give it all speed through the necessary committee stage.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Mr EVERINGHAM: I would like to ask the honourable proposer of this bill one question. I have obviously only just seen the bill and I have not had a chance to obtain a copy of the previous

ordinance relating to the privileges of the Legislative Council, but I am not quite satisfied why the words in clause 5(2) "nor any other person" at the end of the first and commencement of the second line appear.

Mr WITHNALL: The terms of clause 5(2) have been taken from other legislation. Obviously, clause 5(2) relates to something which is said or done in the course of the conduct of the business of the Assembly. Section 5(2) therefore protects not only members, it protects the Hansard staff, it protects the Government Printer, it protects any person who publishes a statement in the course of the conduct of the business of the Assembly. This protection must apply not only to members of the Assembly itself but to its officers, to the Hansard staff, to the printer and indeed to persons who make statements before a select committee which is investigating a matter. I think the honourable member for Jingili will approve that members giving evidence before a select committee ought also to be protected for the things that they say during the course of that committee's investigations.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6:

Mr WITHNALL: I move that there be inserted in subclause (3) of clause 6 a new paragraph (c).

Subclause (3) of clause 6 relates to the power of the Speaker to issue an evidentiary certificate and it seems that, in order to get round the possible difficulties of proving what any person's duty is at a particular time, some such formal certificate as is proposed by the amendment ought to be made.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr WITHNALL: I move that there be omitted from subclause (4) the words "that person is required" and that there be substituted for those words the words "it is the duty of that person".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 29 agreed to.

Schedules agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

HOUSING BILL

(Serial 183)

Continued from 3 March 1977.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to support this bill. On the previous occasion, I expressed some concern that there were not any provisions in the bill allowing for people to buy cyclone-damaged homes, especially in the Darwin area although it could apply in Alice Springs or Tennant Creek if a house was burnt or damaged by some natural calamity. A person is not able to purchase such a house because there are no provisions. The honourable Cabinet Member has advised me that this sort of provision is a policy matter for the Housing Commission and I eagerly await a decision from them in that particular area. I hope they will overcome the problem and allow people to buy damaged houses because there are a lot of people who are probably capable of buying their house now and repairing it, possibly more quickly than the Housing Commission and maybe a little bit more cheaply.

Mrs Lawrie: Hear, hear!

Mr DONDAS: We will wait and see what happens with the Housing Commission policy in that area.

Another area of concern I had with the bill was that it did not allow for single parents or childless couples or families with one child. These people were relegated to flat-type accommodation and I expressed some concern that if they were not allowed to participate in the scheme it would be a bit unfair. Now we know that, if they have been Housing Commission tenants for a period of 5 years, they can qualify and eventually buy a home.

The sponsor of the bill is to be congratulated once again because he has achieved some more breakthroughs in the final form of his bill, firstly in his win on the low interest rates for home purchasers in a certain income bracket. I think this particular win will be appreciated by a lot of people, not only in Darwin but right throughout the Territory. A possible loophole could exist in clause 7 which repeals section 13B of the principal ordinance. That is to ensure that the resale of the building is not permissible for a period of 5 years after original purchase. I ask the Cabinet Member to carefully examine this provision and to make sure that this section is kept pretty tight to stop any particular sharp operator or speculator from spoiling it for others. I supported the original bill that was introduced into this Assembly last November and I would like to see this bill pass through all stages as soon as possible because there are many people waiting for this bill to receive final approval by this Assembly.

Mr TAMBLING: I thank members for their support and for their comments. A number of important policies have been referred to by all speakers. I was pleased that no major points of criticism have arisen and that the scheme envisaged does meet the community requirements generally.

Both the honourable member for Ludmilla and the honourable member for Casuarina referred to the eligibility criteria in relation to childless couples. I would refer them to the original speech of 13 October last year where I stated that the following tenants will become approved tenants for the purposes of this scheme: a married couple with or without children; a person with dependent children; a widow or widower of a tenant with dependent children; and a couple living in a bona fide de facto relationship with or without children. I believe that the eligibility criteria cover the concern expressed by the honourable members and in my subsequent discussions with officers of the Housing Commission I have stressed that it is certainly our policy that any person who has been a satisfactory tenant of the Housing Commission for a 5 year period ought to

be eligible to purchase a home. In the case of a childless couple or a single parent, it will be necessary often to transfer the tenant from an existing tenancy, which would generally be a flat, to a house. The Housing Commission has accepted and endorsed that policy.

Several members alluded to what they consider to be a rather rigid formula in determining 5 years as the required residential qualification period. Whilst I accept that it would be very desirable to make that qualifying period shorter, it is just not practical nor probable. The Housing Commission is required, as its major objective, to provide housing for lower income families and, if housing were to be sold off at early dates, the commission would be in a very embarrassing and invidious position in that it would not be able to meet its major commitment to the community of providing housing where most needed.

I have referred a number of times to the Housing Agreement Act which is the act that binds the Commonwealth and the states to a standard, set formula with regard to the low-interest funding made available to the states. That in turn has naturally to affect the percentage of houses available for sale and the income structure of people to whom homes are saleable in the states. I refer members to the Housing Agreement Act because the terms and conditions that we have been able to negotiate for the Northern Territory, not only in connection with the number of houses that will become saleable under our 5-year formula but also under the qualification for eligibility for people to purchase at the low-interest structure, are both substantially different to the Housing Agreement Act as it applies to the Commonwealth and the states. As I think I have mentioned previously, the total sales of the Housing Commission which will now become available and have been made in the past will exceed 40% and probably grow close to 50% of all houses that have been built by the Housing Commission. That is far in excess of the saleable number of units that have applied in any state.

With regard to the cut-off limit point for income determination for the application of the low-interest structure, the acceptance of 125% of the average weekly male earnings as a formula for the Northern Territory is a major breakthrough because the formula that applies under the Housing Agreement Act to the states is 85% of the average weekly male earnings in those states, with some slight upward variation for larger families. The acceptance of the principle of 125% recognises that housing does cost more in the Northern Territory and has a certain relation to income and the fact that the higher living cost and requirements of our community have been met. I was very pleased that Treasury did accept and endorse that particular formula. In fact I was rather surprised that we were so successful.

The member for Gillen referred to the average weekly male earnings for the Northern Territory and was keen to ensure that there were figures available specifically for the Northern Territory rather than applying the national figures. I would like to assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there are figures available from the Commonwealth Statistician with regard to the Northern Territory and I believe my office has now made these available to you.

The equity component which is to be a deduction from the purchase price of a Housing Commission home has been mentioned a number of times as breaking new ground. Again, information was sought as to how this could be related to a percentage of the purchase price or an easy determination of a percentage of the rent that was paid. I am afraid that I cannot provide that information as a simple formula because it is a rather complex actuarial calculation. I refer anybody interested in pursuing this matter to section 31(1) of the principal ordinance where the calculations for the determination of annual economic rent are set out, and I point out that the component of rental equity alluded to in the bill is an amount not less than the part of the annual amortisation allowance referred to in that section; that is, the section that relates to an economic rent.

That means that if you were to take the annual rent that applied to a particular property, a very detailed calculation has to be made of what section of the rent applies to maintenance, rent of the land, rates, taxes, charges, insurance, vacancies, defaults, the administration of the annual rent and the actual payment of interest that would be applicable to any money borrowed by the Housing Commission. The remaining component is that proportion of the annual rent that has been paid and is a repayment amount of the amount of capital cost. Whilst I cannot put that into a percentage form, I am sure that the officers of the Housing Commission will give it close attention in the information that will be available to eligible home purchasers,

I indicated that commencement of this scheme would be "in due course". I apologise for having made that statement in such broad terms. It is the intention that as long as assent is given to this legislation within the next few weeks - and this can be expected as the Minister has made a strong commitment to the terms and conditions of the bill - the Housing Commission will have full information available for eligible applicants from 1 April and would naturally process applications from then on.

The honourable member for Casuarina referred to the problems that could arise with the sale of homes in a substandard condition. This is particularly relevant to the Darwin situation because approximately half of the homes occupied by eligible tenants are still in a substandard condition. The commission will be proceeding to upgrade those homes progressively as part of its work program and, as they become upgraded, they would be eligible for sale under the policy of the commission. I have spoken to the Housing Commission about making arrangements for people who would elect to transfer to a new or upgraded home and choose to exercise that option rather than waiting for the particular home. However, if they choose to wait in the home which they have established, then I do anticipate that they may have to wait some time in order to be able to purchase. The main reason for this is that

the sale of a substandard home poses problems where there is a mortgage involved. If the Housing Commission have to provide the funds for that particular house, particularly if the applicant has only put up a \$500 deposit, the house would be uninsurable and the mortgage would not be fully protected. I am sure Treasury would have something to say about that and that causes the complication.

This bill and the associated action of the Majority Party takes a great step forward towards the creation of a single housing authority. I do not believe that we need any separate legislation to create a single housing authority in the Northern Territory. I would see a situation emerging over the next year or 2 that, with progressive transfers of constitutional functions to this Assembly, we will in turn pass on to the Housing Commission the role of housing all Northern Territory public servants and that the Australian Government will co operate with us.

With regard to resale within the 5-year period from original purchase of the home, I have circulated for the information of members an amendment to clause 7 of this bill to ensure that the rules of resale are tight enough. The existing clause prevents subleasing of the dwelling during the 5-year period except with the consent of the Housing Commission. However, it could be argued that, if a purchaser were to pay out the full price and then convert to freehold title, he would not sublease but would lease. So that the restriction may apply equally to all classes of purchasers, it is the recommendation that the subclause (1) be amended by inserting before "subleased" the word "leased" to cover this contingency.

Whilst this bill is before the House, I have taken the opportunity to circulate an amendment which applies to section 33A of the Housing Ordinance dealing with approved persons or groups of people to whom the commission may let or sell outside the normal rental aspect of the commission's activities. This situation has arisen because of an application to the Housing Commission by the St John Ambulance Brigade to

have housing allocated under the Industry Housing Assistance Scheme. The present application of section 33A would not allow such an operation although it would allow housing to be made available to a number of other community organisations that fall into a less needy category than some of the community activity groups. I therefore propose to amend section 33A to permit incorporated bodies such as St John Ambulance to be given the right to apply for this type of community housing. This is a most desirable action even though it is not necessarily closely linked to the main proposals of this piece of legislation.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr TAMBLING: I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the passing through all stages this day of the Housing Bill 1977 (Serial 183).

Motion agreed to.

Original motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Clause 7:

Mr TAMBLING: I move an amendment as circulated.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

New clause 8:

Mr TAMBLING: I move that new clause 8 be inserted after clause 7.

New clause 8 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION BILL

(Serial 167)

Continued from 15 March 1977.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.

Clause 6:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 6.1 at the beginning of clause 6 to insert a new subclause (1).

It is usual when a bill has urgency that amendments to that bill are in line with the urgency of the bill itself and that new matters should not be introduced and dealt with as a matter of urgency which may not be urgent. In this case, there is an urgency about the amendment. The amendment provides that no worker can receive as part of workmen's compensation benefits more than he would have received from his normal course of employment had he not been injured. As a result of the amendments it has now, this bill, if passed, will bring an injured worker with a dependent wife and 4 children, for example, up to receiving a figure of \$141 per week. There are quite a number of awards in the Northern Territory which provide for less than that amount as normal weekly earnings and it would be inconceivable for us to have a situation whereby a chap is actually encouraged not to go back to work because he is receiving more money away from work than he is at work. Therefore this amendment is very important; it provides that, where the benefits total more than the worker would have received in the normal course of his employment, the amount he would have received in the course of his employment is the maximum amount payable.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 and 8 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

CEMETERIES BILL

(Serial 180)

Continued from 2 March 1977.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I would like to support the urgency of this bill. We will probably be making quite a number of amendments to ordinances because of the Aboriginal Land Act which was proclaimed on all Aboriginal reserves on Australia Day. There were many decisions that had to be taken. It was necessary to look at all the leases and areas which were prescribed in other regulations in relation to Aboriginal land. One area is the Nhulunbuy public cemetery which has been under the control of the Director of Social Welfare since 1973. The trustees of the cemetery have been managing that cemetery through the Nhulunbuy Corporation since that day. It is necessary for this change to be made and it is to be backdated to the original gazettal date.

There is some urgency because, if the permit system is eventually taken out of the ordinance, there will be problems. It now brings it back into a perspective; people can have free access to this area. Cemeteries are areas that are sacred to us as much as such land is sacred to the Aborigines. This provides that the trustees can legally control the cemetery. I do commend the Cabinet Member for bringing this to the attention of the Assembly.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

(See Minutes for amendment to clause 4 agreed to without debate.)

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mrs LAWRIE: I want to refer to a question I asked of the honourable Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government this morning concerning the presentation of the monthly reports of the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund. Article 14 of the trust deed states, and I quote from the deed: "The trustees shall at intervals of one calendar month, commencing the first day of March 1975, present through the chairman to the Australian Government and to the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory and the Corporation of the City of Darwin a written report with accompanying financial statements showing details of the administration and distribution of the trust fund during the preceding calendar month". Article 16 states: "The trust hereby created is a trust undertaken and to be executed subject to this deed but, not inconsistently with that operation, the trustees acknowledge the interest and concern in the distribution of the trust fund of the Australian Government and the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory and the Corporation of the City of Darwin and will be concerned at all times to take into account in their deliberations the views of those authorities in the interests of the persons intended to be beneficiaries of the trust as expressed by the chairman or by resolution of the said Legislative Assembly or the corporation".

After I have quoted those 2 rather important parts of the trust deed, articles 14 and 16, I am sure honourable members are appalled to find that although some monthly reports were presented as a bunch to the Australian Parliament in February and were alluded to by the chairman of the trust, the Minister for the Northern Territory, the Honourable A.E. Adermann, no such reports have been tabled in this Assembly although such tabling is required by the trust deed. I asked one of our members who is a trustee - we have one other, the member for Jingili - why they had not been tabled. His answer was that he did not know and he would try to get them.

I am quite sure that the honourable Cabinet Member will try to get these reports but I am appalled that they were not tabled here on the first of

our sitting days, given the fact that weeks have elapsed since they were tabled in the Federal Parliament. I hope that other honourable members share my extreme concern. We appear to have been totally ignored even though it is of considerable interest to the community of the Northern Territory to study and evaluate those reports.

A member: Hear, hear!

Mrs LAWRIE: I advise the Cabinet Member that, because these reports have not been presented and we are having difficulty in obtaining information which is our due, tomorrow at question time I will be asking him the following questions, and I hope that before that time he will be able to elicit the pertinent information. The questions I will be asking are as follows. Following the Minister's statement that certain funds will be returned to the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund from the Mayor's Trust Fund, have those funds in fact been returned? Are they held in the Commonwealth Bank as prescribed in the trust deed, and what was the date of their return? Have any funds subsequently received following the initial announcement of the winding up of the trust, funds which were collected for the relief of the victims of Cyclone Tracy, been received by the executive member servicing the trustees? If so, to which trust fund have those funds been directed, and has the chairman of the trust been informed of their receipt and subsequent direction? This becomes important when one remembers that the chairman of the trust is very properly concerned that all disbursements of funds shall be in accordance with the trust deed, and of course all honourable members would share his concern, I assume the trustees would be particularly concerned.

I shall also ask the Cabinet Member if he can ascertain for me if any outstanding applications for relief are presently with the executive officer servicing the trustees and, if so, how many there are and their approximate date of receipt. I am aware that these questions involve him in some work and they are matters of some detail but they are also matters of prime importance.

Monthly reports were previously tabled in this House by the honourable member for Jingili. I have been looking through my records and I stand to be corrected - we have not had a monthly report dealing with the operation of the trust since the June 1976 report. I want no ambiguity here: reports were tabled in this House later than June 1976 but I do not believe they dealt with the operation of the trust subsequent to the month of June. So here we are in March 1977 waiting with bated breath reports relating to the operation of the trust for July, August and September when I believe the decision was taken to wind up the trust. These reports cover 3 very important months of operation of more than passing interest to the community of the Northern Territory; they were tabled in the Federal House but not tabled here, something which I deplore.

Following the reactivation of the trust, I must assume there will be further monthly reports yet to be collated and presented. I hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the chairman of the trust will take all necessary steps to ensure they are presented in the shortest possible time to this House where, if necessary, they can be debated. Quite obviously they are going to be scrutinised somewhat carefully.

I assume that members of the Corporation of the City of Darwin have also not received monthly reports of the operation of the trust. I also assume they would share my concern at not being kept fully informed as the Federal House has.

Mr KENTISH: I asked a question this morning concerning the sealing of the Umbakumba Road. I have a brief letter which outlines the position quite concisely. It is dated 1 October 1974:

On the last day of our Legislative Council sittings you asked me a question about the Umbakumba and Angurugu road access. I have been able to ascertain that the Department of Housing and Construction have completed major maintenance on this road - \$50,000. This work, which was mainly gravel sheeting was completed just recently, and this has brought the

road access to a better standard. However, this road is not regarded as all-weather and the severe cyclone conditions during the wet season will almost certainly seriously affect the usability.

There is only one effectual way to upgrade the road to all-weather and that is by sealing. This department has proposed a sealed road, \$1.9 million, from Angurugu to Umbakumba for this year's design listing and it is hoped therefore that it will have program status in 1975-76. I hope this information is useful to you.

T.C. Lovegrove, Director of Aboriginal Affairs.

This is a road that causes great trouble every wet season. It has a very unstable surface and every wet season it becomes quite a nightmare. There is difficulty in getting sick or injured people to the hospital or to the airstrip on the western side of Groote Eylandt, I have asked a question about this and I am anxious to see what the outcome will be.

I have also asked a question concerning the revival of the Darwin Eisteddfod. In fact, one might refer to it as the Northern Territory Eisteddfod although held in Darwin. I have often thought about the Eisteddfod, the reason for its being dropped and when, if ever, it might be revived again, because I regarded it as perhaps the greatest cultural activity and the most worthwhile cultural activity and intercultural activity the Northern Territory ever had. Looking through old boxes recently - I have moved from one house to another and I am delving into a lot of old material - I found a newspaper I had put away. It is dated Saturday 8 July 1961. It is getting yellow with age now but it says:

"Tears in my eyes," says choir judge. An adjudicator at the North Australian Eisteddfod yesterday said that an Aboriginal choir singing "Man of Sorrows" had brought tears to his eyes, "I cried," vocal and instrumental adjudicator Mr R. Hanson LRMS London and FSCM Sydney admitted. The group which moved him was the

Goulbourn Island Mission School choir which won the Aboriginal choir, minimum twelve, maximum thirty voices, section. Mr Hanson described the rendition by the Goulbourn Islanders as extraordinary. His comments on the native choirs' singing as a whole were: "One of the pleasures of the adjudication in Darwin is listening to the native vocal sections. The Aboriginal choirs have such a difference of expression from choirs in other parts of Australia. The way natives cull their sounds and lilt are fascinating. It is a shock to some of us to hear such perfect four-part singing, with a precision which would stagger a lot of white musicians. Of the Goulbourn Islanders, Mr Hanson said, "Once again I was able to hear a choir whose intonation was perfect and which would be even better without a piano."

The report then gives the names of people well known to us: "Mime, twelve year and under - Gabrielle Steele and John Bates". Further on we have: "Recital, girls nine years and under - Mignonne Steele, Antonia Reardon, Sandra Maff". We have Kay Withnall and Joanne Skewes listed and Diana Giese - quite a lot of people we know are listed there back in 1961 as winning events in the Eisteddfod.

All the people of the North regarded the Eisteddfod as a gala time. They prepared for it for months. Aboriginal dancers came from all parts of the Territory and other competitors from all parts of the Territory came to Darwin. It was a time of great excitement. I had two girls who recited and won prizes in their sections. Not only was it a time of cultural exchange for the people of the Territory - all the people of the Territory had sections that they could compete in - but also it had become famous Australia wide. People were coming to Darwin, tourists, and they were making their visits coincide with the Eisteddfod, much the same as some would make it coincide with the Darwin Show. I met quite a number of people in those years and I would ask them, "Are you leaving Darwin soon?" "Oh no, we are waiting for the Eisteddfod. We want to attend that." It had

become an Australia-wide feature, and no wonder this is so when you read what the judge had to say. That particular part of the Eisteddfod was in the Star Theatre and the judge was not the only one who cried. It was not only the emotional words but the unworldly rendering by the children. It applied to just about anything they sang; the perfection of their voices was amazing, and it was possible that there were very few dry eyes in the theatre on that occasion.

Now for some reason, it was dropped. The ex-president of the Eisteddfod Council, the member for Fannie Bay, is still with us and we still have people around who were very interested and very enthusiastic as organisers at that time. There were two reasons perhaps for the closing down: the lack of people to organise, the voluntary workers dwindled, and also I think the finances were cut off. It would seem to me to be a great shame if at the present time the only impediment to getting the Eisteddfod going again is financial because since then large sums of money have been available in certain areas for cultural activities; to my mind there would be no cultural activity to compare in any way with the North Australian Eisteddfod. I hope I may have an opportunity to speak again about this when I have more information about it, but I introduce the subject today as a matter of interest and urge the news media and anyone who can to try to revive interest in this great activity.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Once again, I am drawn to my feet in the adjournment debate in connection with the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust, and once again I am drawn to my feet by that nauseating grandstander, the member for Night-cliff, who will make me quite happy to leave public life because I won't be able to stand ...

Debate interrupted.

MEMBER NAMED AND SUSPENDED

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think perhaps the honourable member had better withdraw the word "nauseating".

Mr EVERINGHAM: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would be quite happy to be suspended on this point. In fact I will leave the Chamber now if you like.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the honourable member does that he will be automatically suspended. I ask the honourable member in the interests of the House, if not from his own point of view, to withdraw the remark.

Mr EVERINGHAM: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, because I am nauseated.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Very well, I name the honourable member for Jingili.

Dr LETTS: The honourable member for Jingili leaves me no alternative in respect of your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker. I move that the honourable member for Jingili be suspended from the service of the Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member for Jingili is suspended for 24 hours.

Debate resumed.

Miss ANDREW: I rise to fulfil an undertaking I gave this morning regarding the flooding at Rapid Creek. I would like to commend the officers of Water Resources, the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Emergency Services and the police for their very rapid rallying to the cause. I advise members that the water level is falling rapidly at the moment despite the fact that there is a high tide this afternoon. The Water Resources people are manning 4 points along Rapid Creek and there are no problems. The bridge is to be opened shortly. However, precautions are being taken because, should there be another deluge tonight followed by a tide early in the morning, problems could arise. The Army and the Department of Construction are on standby and sandbags are at the ready if the need arises. Some plans have already been made in the unlikely event of evacuation. At the moment, it seems most unlikely that such a situation will arise.

Having said that, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Disasters Ordinance has still not been assented to. These people are operating virtually without legislative backing. I consider this to be a gross insult on the part of the Government. This House showed the Government the courtesy of close consultation with members of the Department of the Northern Territory in the preparation of the bill and amendments to the bill and Treasury was consulted during the planning of the bill. Nevertheless, we are now in March, with the cyclone season presumably drawing to a close, and we have lived through another season without the security of legislation. What if there had been a disaster? No doubt General Stretton and his men would have again come to our assistance, but that was not the idea that this House had in mind when it passed the legislation.

Treasury have given some reasons why they will not assent to this bill. An officer of the Chief Secretary's Department, on questioning a certain Treasury official, was told that they were concerned about the section which gave the director the power to train necessary men and suitably equip them. There was even a suggestion by this particular official that that gave the Director of Emergency Services carte blanche to start his own army. On one hand, they transfer executive power to us and, on the other, they show concern that we are about to set up our own army. I wonder whether it wouldn't be wise if we did.

Turning to another subject, I am most concerned at the flooding that has been occurring throughout the wet in the areas of Anula and Wulagi. I understand that the contractors and the DRC have had their problems in putting down underground pipes. Where possible, they have been putting in these pipes but this is a very difficult task during the wet. I was advised by an official of the DRC that the drainage and flooding problem is basically caused through lack of soil and grass - this can be debated but it certainly explains it to some extent - which quite a lot of public servants refuse to supply as they would rather wait for the DRC to supply it. I do not doubt for one moment that,

in some cases, this is true. However, people have come to me who simply cannot afford the soil and the grass.

The suggestion from our friends across the road is that people want everything handed to them on a platter. I would be the first to criticise the people of Darwin who do want everything handed to them on a platter. However, they are a very small minority. There are some people living in Anula and Wulagi who are simply incapable, whether it be for physical or financial reasons, of getting the necessary soil, and bucket loads are required out there. Meanwhile, their children are half drowned every time it rains or they have to be locked indoors. The DRC's reaction, I am told, is: "We will supply it when we are ready".

Might I draw the attention of other members to the fact that the DRC is providing the soil out of taxpayers' money and it is about time they stopped grandstanding - to quote a favourite word used in this House this afternoon - and got on with the job. They are not little dictators; they are there to assist in the rebuilding of Darwin. People are forced to live in circumstances where they are drowned out every time it rains - not a deluge, just ordinary rain that Darwin experiences every wet - because the DRC's reaction is, "We will supply it when we are ready".

Mr STEELE: There are probably many things that should be said about one's electorate during an adjournment debate - flooding creeks and rivers, and having to swim to work and those sorts of things - but I thought I would rather touch on something of major importance. In recent times, I have had representations made to me on matters associated with the nature of land claims and the hearings by the Interim Land Commissioner and particularly the recent hearing of the Fox Inquiry in Darwin. A study of these representations leads me to believe that there could be a need for some tightening up of the procedures of notifying the public of these claims so that interested parties may have sufficient time to arrange for their representation and prepare their cases. I understand that not only is it difficult for private citizens and

organisations to get information about the nature of the claims but also some government authorities are still experiencing difficulties in obtaining such information in a reasonable time. I fail to see that the secrecy that shrouds the putting together of these claims need affect the people who would do most for those people claiming land. It seems to me that, if the actual tribes themselves or members of the Northern Land Council were aware that this sort of secrecy existed, they might then decide to make alternative management arrangements.

My personal experience in these matters involves only the Kulaluk and Lumilla claims. With the Ludmilla claim, there were difficulties associated with the notification of this hearing and also with amendments being made to claims during hearings. Major representations have been made to me by the Commercial Fishermen's Association and, because of the nature of the matters which they have raised, it is important and in the public interest that I should make the Assembly aware of the details of their submission to me.

The association state generally that 1 or 2 advertisements in newspapers are not sufficient notice, that claims are not specific in relation to what is actually being claimed, that the Northern Land Council amends the claims at will at the hearings, thus depriving everybody of fully investigating the legality and morality of the amended claim. They say that there should be a central, neutral point from which information can be obtained in relation to forthcoming claims. They state that there is great financial cost and wasting of individuals' time in meeting and attending these claims. The Government funds the Northern Land Council, its field officers and investigation officers, the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, but anybody other than Aboriginals attending these claims has to meet the cost out of his own pocket and, after all, most objectors against such claims are trying to protect rights given by the Government in the first place.

The association say that, because of the apparent "shonkyness" of some of

the claims, there is a feeling of bitterness, hopelessness and frustration in the community. "We feel", they say, "that in time this will surface and set back race relations many years; the average citizen feels that his rights to recreational areas are being threatened. Most of the community does not have feelings of hostility towards Aboriginals at this stage but towards their white advisers. Any sensible claim made by Aboriginals in relation to dreaming sites will be readily accepted but the big grab commercially for land that is taking place at the moment, with the general 'shonkyness' that is attendant on some claims, will not be tolerated and will erupt into future racial tensions".

Mr Deputy Speaker, this information has been supplied to me by the Commercial Fishermen's Association. They believe that their livelihood is being threatened. They also believe that there is dirty work at the crossroads on the part of the Northern Land Council. They in fact accuse the Northern Land Council of being bereft of ethics and morality in the handling of these matters.

In the interests of all members of the community, I believe that there should be at least several advertisements, reasonably spaced, in newspapers and on radio, giving details of the nature of the claims and with sufficient time provided before the hearings to enable interested persons and organisations to prepare their cases, together with full details of where further information concerning the claims may be provided. Claims should be detailed and quite specific in relation to what is being claimed and the grounds for making the claim should be fully stated. If, during the hearings, there is any variation in the claims, the variations should be advertised with sufficient time given before a continuation of the hearings to enable any further interested parties to present their case. A central point should be designated from which information could be obtained in relation to such claims before they are advertised, and consideration should be given in the hearings to the fact that private citizens or organisations, if they wish to

appear, are required to do so at their own cost and in their own time. Where persons may be protecting their interests in land leased to them by the Government, it would be reasonable to expect, where counsel may be employed, to obtain the assistance of the Australian Legal Aid Service.

There is a feeling among many citizens in the Northern Territory that, through their white advisers on the land councils, the Aborigines are making claims for substantial areas which it is believed may have some commercial value rather than being concerned with

the protection of sacred areas and the provision of adequate living areas. There appears to be a tendency among the white advisers to spell out only those range of options which involve complete acquisitions of very substantial areas in which there may be some traditional association and interest. This must result in feelings of concern among non-Aboriginal members of the community and particularly those who may also have some interest in the land.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Thursday 17 March 1977

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

STATEMENT - POISONS AND DRUGS BILLS

Mr TUXWORTH (by leave): The Majority Party has for some time been working as a matter of policy on bills relating to dangerous drugs and poisons and trying to overcome the drafting problems. We have been thwarted on 2 previous occasions from introducing these bills into the House. I would like to advise the House that we regard these bills as of great import and the subject matter in them will be of great civic interest. For this reason, they have not been tabled in haste this sittings but will be presented at the next sittings.

STATEMENT - ABORIGINAL LAND POLICY

Dr LETTS (by leave): As the Cabinet Member responsible for Aboriginal liaison matters, I wish to advise honourable members of certain developments which have occurred since the introduction to this Assembly of complementary legislation during the first week in March. At the outset, let me make it clear that I do not propose to discuss the content of the bills.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs issued a press release after the bills were introduced here in which he expressed certain reservations about the degree of consultation which had occurred with him prior to the introduction of our bills. He indicated that the legislation did not have his final agreement and he would subject it to close examination before making his judgment on it. At the time of the passage of the federal act, I gave assurances to the Minister for the Northern Territory that there would be consultation with the Commonwealth Government in the preparation of our complementary legislation. In later discussions with Mr Viner and Mr Adermann in Darwin, I proposed the setting up of a working party of officers to assist with the drafting. The representatives were to come from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of the Northern Territory and the Chief Secretary's Department.

For various reasons, including the fact that people were away on Christmas and New Year holidays, the working party was unable to get together until the last week in January. At a meeting in Darwin, representatives from the Northern Land Council were also present. I also sought from the Commonwealth Government a statement of their policy about off-shore waters. The answer to that request has not yet been received.

In introducing the Commonwealth act into the Senate last December, Senator Guilfoyle presented a second reading speech presumably prepared by the Department and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. She said, *inter alia*, that the Government had an expressed understanding from me that any ordinances, and I stress the word "ordinances", would be prepared in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I take this to mean that, before any ordinance in the area is finalised, full consultation with the Commonwealth Government will be necessary and will be undertaken.

The question of agreement to ordinances is self-evident. If the Commonwealth does not agree with the final form of the ordinance, it has several options open to it, including refusal of assent or return with amendments for further consideration here. The introduction of the complementary legislation two weeks ago, most of it prepared on instruction from Commonwealth departments, was a means to this end. In discussions with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in Canberra last week, I explained this position and made it clear to the Minister that this Assembly cannot abdicate its rights and responsibilities to debate and amend the legislation in this place. I pointed out to him that the Commonwealth, had it chosen to do so, could have drafted the terms of the legislation and we would have introduced it here on their behalf.

Last week, 2 members of the Federal Parliament saw fit to make comments with regard to the actions of this Assembly in relation to the Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Aboriginal Land Legislation. Specifically,

Senator Ted Robertson is reported to have said: "It would have been better if, before introducing the legislation, Dr Letts had discussed it with the committee and the Minister". Mr Les Johnson, speaking in the House of Representatives, said: "It would be most frustrating if the purposes of the Joint Select Committee were to be circumvented by the Legislative Assembly. The committee, of course, has been operating under the impression that its principal task has been to reconcile the attitude of the Legislative Assembly with the attitude of the Government". These 2 gentlemen are both members of the Federal Government's select committee. Their comments, widely reported, are not a fair representation of the position. I had 2 discussions at some length with the committee on 2 separate days, a week apart, in February. I have the minutes of those discussions - they are quite voluminous.

At the end of the second session, the chairman, Senator Bonner, asked me whether copies of the final drafts of complementary legislation would be available to the select committee. I advised him that this might be possible if they could be used confidentially within the committee until such time as the members of this Assembly had full access to them. But the final minute of that meeting, my meeting with the joint select committee, was, and I quote: "Dr Letts undertook to provide to members of the committee, through the secretary, copies of the proposed Northern Territory legislation as soon as it was presented in the Northern Territory Assembly". And that was agreed to by the committee.

I am aware, Mr Speaker, that there is a campaign being mounted at present against this Assembly in respect of our legislation. The Northern Land Council is preparing leaflets by the thousand to send to Aborigines. I doubt very much if they will consult me about the advice they are sending out although to do so would be in the best interests of co-operation and harmony. Advisers are sending, and getting Aborigines to send, no doubt at the taxpayers' expense, hundreds of protest telegrams to the Prime Minister and other Ministers. An attempt bordering on hysteria

is being made to engender a wide-spread emotional reaction amongst Aboriginal people and I can only hope that other community interests will provide some balance in the representations being made to the Government. However, I am not interested in the escalation of confrontation and conflict on this issue. I suggest that the proper course of action would be for all interested parties to examine the proposals objectively and to make their objections and comments known to us so that, in full consultation with the Commonwealth Government, a final and, as far as possible, generally acceptable form of legislation can be designed. I table a copy of the statement.

Mr WITHNALL (by leave): I move that the statement be noted.

I so move because I want to add my voice to the comments made by the Majority Leader, and add my criticism of the attitude of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Federal Parliament. The Minister, on a number of occasions now, has made statements which lead to the impression that the Minister had the right and the power to dictate to this Assembly exactly what laws it will make. He said that in a statement on 4 March. He said that he was anxious for Aborigines in the Northern Territory to understand that the introduction of the bill did not mean that he had accepted its terms.

There was a time when the parliament of the Northern Territory was of a partly-elected legislature, subject to control by the Governor-General and by the Parliament in so far as the laws made by it could be refused assent. I suggest that, when the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly was created as a fully-elected body, those powers should have been in accordance with parliamentary tradition and the convention observed by the Imperial Government allowed to lapse.

I have examined all the laws of South Australia made since 1842 and I think there are only 5 or 6 occasions from 1842 to about 1907 on which an ordinance of the State of South Australia, or later an act of the State of South Australia, was refused assent or was

vetoed. When an Assembly is fully-elected, its creation implies that it has full power and authority to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Territory. And those laws are to be made here; they are not to be made by Mr Viner, and Mr Viner, I suggest, has no right to dictate to this Assembly what its performance should be in point of legislation. The people of the Northern Territory consist of a large number of Aboriginal people and a large number of people of other races and, as far as I am concerned as a member of this Assembly, I represent them all; and any legislation that is to be made in this Assembly should be made having regard to the wishes of all the people, to the rights of all the people, and to the need of all the people to understand and to have their needs served by legislation.

The honourable Minister for Aboriginal Affairs should, I suggest, use more temperate language and understand that this is no longer a puppet Legislative Assembly. Today this is a fully-elected Legislative Assembly and it is fully responsible to the people of the Northern Territory. It is quite disgraceful that the Minister gives the public the impression that this Assembly will do just what he says. I can assure the Minister that, as far as I am concerned, the utmost co-operation would be afforded to him if I were in the position of the Majority Leader but I will not accept that this Assembly can be dictated to.

Mr MANUELL: I rise to support the honourable member for Port Darwin's motion. I share very strongly the sentiments expressed by the honourable member for Port Darwin. I am just wondering how long it will be before we can clearly indicate to the Federal Government that we have a degree of responsibility and that we are responsible people who are able to make responsible decisions about responsible people who live in the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, contained in the statement expressed by our Majority Leader is a certain amount of fear that we are receiving interference from residents of the Northern Territory and this fear is tending to create hysteria amongst people who are basically interested in

receiving support from the Legislative Assembly.

I sometimes come across publications such as one that is published by Mr James Brown of Bagot Reserve in Darwin. It is dated March 1977 and it is called "Bunji". It says: "Many tribes, one people. We must stop uranium. We will stop uranium". There is a lot in it which I will not bother this House about but I extract from this particular publication the type of tripe and diatribe that is spread amongst people who are basically not of this way of thinking. It says: "If we cannot stop uranium mining, then the tribes must be prepared to fight to stop the trucks, to stop the bulldozers. It is our duty. We are the keepers of this land and its dreaming and we understand". We also, as an Assembly, understand. We have indicated to the people of the Northern Territory, both white and Aboriginal, that we are clearly of an open mind and we are interested in promoting the interests of all people in the Northern Territory in Northern Territory development. If we as an Assembly are going to be content to sit back and be hit over the head by our Federal Government in matters of which we have a far better degree of knowledge, it is about time we re-thought our position as legislators in this Territory.

Mr KENTISH: I rise to support the statement and the motion. I regard the statement as a careful one of the position concerning the complementary legislation. It is disturbing to find, in some areas, that we have received premature protests before the legislation is presented. It seems a peculiar situation that people would be protesting against something which they have not seen or heard of. According to the protests we have received, it appears that quite an erroneous rumour has been circulated concerning the intention of the legislation which is to be produced here. It is a very unsatisfactory position that this sort of thing could occur.

Many telegrams of protest were on the way from some places in the Northern Territory long before copies of the bill were available to the people sending the telegrams. This seems to indi-

cate very clearly that there was considerable preparation made to launch a massive protest regardless of the content of these bills. This indicates a totally unsatisfactory position concerning all the parties that may have been involved in this protest. It is difficult not to assume that this obviously organised premature protest would only be organised by people who have the official leadership of the Aboriginal people. It seems to indicate an organised rejection of legislation which has not even been sighted. This is worse than unsatisfactory.

Some of the protests that I have seen and have received myself indicate a complete misconception of what is contained in the bills. Once again, this can only be traced back to the advisers of the people concerned. Either it indicates a high degree of mischievousness in the advisers or, on the other hand, it indicates that the advisers concerned are inexperienced in dealing with Aboriginal people, in conveying to them the correct meaning of things. It must be one of these two things but, in either case, the result is extremely unsatisfactory.

It should not have been too much for all mature and thoughtful people to hope that people would have waited with open minds, would have carefully considered and been advised on the legislation and then produced any suggestions which they had. It should not have been too much to hope for a mature and sensible approach to the situation. This has obviously not occurred and it is quite possible that a great many of the people who have signed their names or put their thumb prints on telegrams would have no idea what it is all about. This is not the first time this has happened; it is not something new. There is a place in my electorate where the leaders of the Aboriginal people once signed certain papers. A few days later they were amazed to find many of the Europeans packing up and going off the place. They said, "Why are you going?" "Oh, you signed a paper telling us that our jobs were finished; we were sacked." The Aboriginal people were amazed to find that they had signed papers sacking a large number of European staff.

The situation is not new but it indicates a high degree of either inexperience or other difficulties with the community advisers or other people concerned.

Mr RYAN: I am only going to take a few minutes to support the honourable member for Port Darwin's motion. I would just like to add my few words. I think I touched on this subject lightly the other day in the adjournment when I mentioned some people who are involved in the land councils. I believe that they are not acting in the best interest of the Northern Territory and I believe the comments made by members of the Labor Party in Federal Parliament were badly misdirected and untrue in fact.

I do not know whether the honourable member for Nightcliff is going to speak on this motion. I find it significant that when this type of discussion comes up she is generally fairly silent. I was just wondering what her views were and I was wondering whether the honourable member for Nightcliff was going to comment. I say this because last evening, when I was leaving, the person to whom I referred as reading "Rules for Radicals" on the plane the other day was just entering the honourable member's office. I was just wondering whether there is some association there, and I am assuming here that he was entering her office and not the honourable member for Port Darwin's. I do not think that would be an unwise assumption, Mr Speaker, but I would stand corrected if in fact he was going to the honourable member for Port Darwin's office. Maybe the honourable member for Nightcliff does have information which would be of interest to this Assembly.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to make some comment on the statement by the Majority Leader and the comments and motion put by the honourable member for Port Darwin.

I too, am amazed at the outcome of all the knocks and counters to anything we put up here in this Assembly. When I look at the Aboriginal Land Bill and see the powers of the Aboriginal land councils, it astounds me that they can

get away with what they do. We can just say one little thing out of line and the whole thing is amplified out of all proportion. If we do not say anything out of line, whatever we do say is taken out of context.

What amazes me is that one of the people who has been making statements is Mr Les Johnson who was the Aboriginal Affairs Minister in the Whitlam Government and a man, I believe, who has some sense with regard to Aboriginal affairs. But when he has the audacity to disbelieve what the Majority Leader says on things that come from this Assembly, it absolutely astounds me. That man has not got an honest bone in his body if he can say such things. It is a pack of lies that we are not making any moves to contact people. I think we have bent over backwards to tell the people what is going on. We have been negotiating with all the Aboriginal people in the community through our electorates, through the members of this Assembly who have worked very, very hard to bring things to the state that we have today with regard to complementary legislation.

Senator Ted Robertson has never, since he has been in the Senate, come to my electorate to contact me at all. He walks into my electorate and does not even say hello. I see him there and not once has he paid me the courtesy of discussing matters which are just as important to me as they are to him in his job as a senator. I have a right as much as anyone else to discuss matters of importance to Australia with him. He makes a speech on things that he does not even touch on with the average person or MLA here whom he does not even talk to, on matters that are very important to us all.

All I can say is that I challenge these people to show any way that we have acted dishonestly or improperly in the matter of Aboriginal affairs in the past 2 years. I will challenge them at any time they like and most of all I will challenge them in my own electorate.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to comment on the remarks of the honourable Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry. I wish

to advise you, Mr Speaker, that I consider his comments unseemly and unworthy of this House. Might I say that people visiting my office, not the common demountable shared by the honourable member for Port Darwin and myself, but my office, during the past months include members of the Majority Party, including the Majority Leader who is always welcome and often visits me, his Deputy in this place, 2 members of the Workers' Party since renamed the Progress Party, one member of the Australian Labor Party, 3 policemen, 1 civil libertarian, and many members of the public whom I never bother to cross examine as to their political leanings or any other leanings, be they political or religious. Mr Speaker, I advise you that I consider this reference to people coming and going from my office unseemly and I will draw it to the attention of the Privileges Committee.

Mr ROBERTSON: I, as is usual, will be parochial. I will confine myself to my area within the text of the debate before the House. For the purposes of introduction, I will read a small passage from page 3062 of the Federal Hansard of 1 December that relates to urban land needs claims in and around the town of Alice Springs. These are the words of Mr Viner and I would ask honourable members to bear in mind that we are talking about the spirit of consultation, not dictation:

As I indicated in my initial second-reading speech and subsequent statements, and with particular reference here to Alice Springs, the Government is committed to satisfying the requirements of Aborigines for land such as camping areas and other areas of land for residential use. That commitment will be maintained. In fact, it is being worked out right at this moment in Alice Springs.

Remember that we are talking about consultation. I quite agree, as I agreed when I gave evidence before the Interim Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Ward, with the desirability and the pressing urgency of urban lands being made available to the Aboriginal people in and around Alice Springs. I concur with Mr Justice Woodward in his conten-

tion that they should not perpetually be thrust out into the continually growing fringes. My point is just basic courtesy in consultation and this attitude is precisely what the Majority Leader's statement is all about.

The honourable member for Stuart and myself, on the second last visit to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to Alice Springs, were contacted by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and we were told, on the Minister's behalf, to present ourselves at the Central Land Council's office. The honourable member and I had no objection to that. We thought that it was in the interests of all the people of Alice Springs that we accept that invitation and have discussions with the Minister in relation to these matters. Wenton Rabunja, the Chairman of the Central Land Council, met us at the door and treated us with the greatest courtesy and civility. In fact, he invited us to attend the meeting. However, we were of the opinion that it was the Minister's meeting and therefore we were dependent on an invitation from the back doorway of the Central Land Council to the gathering some 20 feet away. I clearly recall that the Minister and his secretary looked at us, noted our presence, turned their backs on us, walked away and refused to speak to us at all in relation to these important matters in our town.

This is precisely the thrust of what the Majority Leader is getting at and also the honourable member for Port Darwin. We are answerable to the people in our areas. We are their elected representatives, Mr Viner is not. The sooner it gets through to the people in Federal Parliament, the sooner it gets through to the Minister, that this Legislature's elected members are the ones responsible to the people for what happens in this Territory - the sooner that happens the better; and if it does not happen then there is very little point in us being here.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Dr LETTS (by leave): I move that in relation to notices 1 and 5 on the

notice paper so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent them being dealt with during the time allotted for government business.

The need to move this motion arises because both of these notices, 1 and 5, were moved by private members of the Majority Party in their capacity as non-members of the Executive and, according to standing orders, they probably should be listed under general business. However, they are listed under government business. We do wish to proceed with them and in order to do so I move the motion so that the correct position may be adopted.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION - NT PASTORAL INDUSTRY

Mr VALE: I move that this Assembly expresses its concern about the continuing depressed condition of the Northern Territory pastoral industry and asks the Cabinet Member for Resources to take the following action:

- (a) make representation to the Commonwealth Government and the relevant companies to -
 - (i) see that all possible steps are taken to open the Katherine and Alice Springs abattoirs as soon as possible;
 - (ii) ensure the abattoirs operate throughout the forthcoming season; and
 - (iii) see that the prices offered to the producer are maximised and equitable;
- (b) ensure that adequate carry-on finance is provided before the start of the season so that optimum turn off will be achieved;
- (c) stimulate the Government, the Australian Meat Board and other interested parties to achieve more efficient market promotion in Southeast Asia and Middle East countries; and

- (d) ensure recommendations which come from the Industry Conference to be held in Alice Springs on 23 April, 1977 are transmitted rapidly and supported forcefully to the Commonwealth Government.

In speaking to this motion, it is hard to know where to begin or where to finish. The continuing low prices to cattle producers have had the effect of not only depressing the pastoral industry itself but has had a flow-on and depressing effect on many other sectors of the community and industries. Unless positive action is taken quickly to rectify the price paid to cattle producers, then many cattle properties in the Northern Territory are doomed and face closure. For what is the pioneer industry of the Northern Territory, this will be a national tragedy and a disaster.

The flow-on effect to other sectors of the community in the Northern Territory who depend on the pastoral industry for their income and survival will be equally disastrous. The potential collapse of the Northern Territory pastoral industry will have such a widespread effect on all areas of the Northern Territory that all pressure possible must be placed on the Federal Government, the Australian Meat Board and other organisations to avert this collapse. In essence, the Northern Territory with its many involved and interested organisations must pull together. The industry can and must be saved.

A close look at the industry in the Northern Territory will indicate that a number of factors have created the present plight. The most significant of these was the drastic drop in the price to the producers and the reduction or loss of overseas and traditional markets. Couple this with the abolition of the petroleum freight subsidy, the reduction in air services to remote areas, the increase in labour and freight costs, and it is not very difficult to understand the plight of today's Northern Territory cattlemen. Add to this the price which producers are paid compared to the price paid by consumers, and the whole picture of the

production costs and net returns starts to clarify. Livestock owners are bewildered by the price the buyer and the consumers have to pay for their meat when compared to the price the producers receive. This is obviously insufficient to meet the production costs. A major concern also is that animals of high quality are frequently sold at comparatively very low prices while the consumer is often sold inferior quality meat at top grade prices.

In 1973, under the Labor Government, we saw the gradual removal of the petroleum freight equalisation scheme. Today, this equalisation scheme no longer exists. The Labor Government's action of gradual and eventual removal could be reversed by the gradual re-introduction of this freight scheme. It should be noted that this would benefit all inland fuel consumers and not only pastoralists. The temporary removal of excise duties on all fuel products used within the pastoral industry would also have a beneficial effect.

The establishing of a single meat authority in the Northern Territory, similar to those authorities in the other states, would be of tremendous advantage to the industry. This authority would have a co ordinating role in the purchasing, processing, storage and marketing of Northern Territory beef. Active market promotion in the South-east Asia and Middle East areas would, I believe, be the first major task for this authority.

Provision of adequate carry-on finance for this season would be essential to allow pastoralists to muster and market as many cattle as possible. Consideration should also be given to allowing people receiving unemployment benefits to take up jobs on pastoral properties whilst still receiving these unemployment benefits. This benefit could possibly be topped up by payments from the pastoralists. Review of the slaughtering standards in the Territory may assist pastoralists close to large Aboriginal settlements. These properties could then supply those settlements with their comparatively large beef requirements. In a number of cases, these areas are presently being supplied from Adelaide. Singularly,

these suggestions would be of little use; collectively, they will be of assistance to the pastoralists provided of course overseas markets again open and both the Katherine and Alice Springs abattoirs are opened quickly and the prices they pay to producers are fair and equitable.

Mr MANUELL: I rise to support the motion. It is quite obvious that the beef producing industry in the Northern Territory is in need of overhaul. It is even more obvious to me that unless something concrete is done about the matter immediately the consequences we may contemplate are more than fearful. Beef production in the Northern Territory is basically a monoculture as opposed to its counterpart industry in some of the states where alternative land utilisation may generate substitute incomes. It occurs to me that if the present plight of the industry is left to national bodies or authorities, the timing and the remedy will be inadequate. I refer to the select committee report presented to the Legislative Council in 1974 by the Majority Leader. This committee was appointed to inquire into the development of rural land. That report said:

A reappraisal needs to be made of the forms and priorities for assistance which must be provided by Government. Many operations in the Northern Territory are of a borderline nature. Without some special consideration, investment will not and cannot prudently take place. But given some differential treatment, calculated to place the investor in an equitable position in comparison with investors in the more populated centres of the continent, then development will follow and wealth will be produced from the lands now idle and neglected. Parity of this nature with the rest of Australia is the outstanding requirement of the Territory today and this can only be given by the elimination of various governmental charges which are fairly applicable to favoured areas but not to regions where natural difficulties are more severe and prospects of profits more doubtful.

The points made in that report are still relevant today. Without govern-

ment assistance, there will be no national development. Government assistance need not be in the form of gratis handouts unless extenuating circumstances exist and they do exist today in the Northern Territory beef industry. Assistance plans in the past have included fuel price equalisation schemes and freight rebates etc. Some still exist, such as the zone allowance for personal income tax but this is enjoyed by all taxpaying Northern Territory citizens, not just those in the beef industry.

What should apply is the acceptance by the Federal Government that the plight of the beef industry is no different to the plight of Darwin residents after Cyclone Tracy, or the flooding of Ingham and Brisbane by torrential rains. They are disasters of national proportions. Yet what do we see? Post-cyclone government grants have to date reached a figure, as the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government indicated this morning in reply to a question, well in excess of \$200m. In 1976 the beef industry in the Northern Territory received \$600,000 as carry-on finance to that industry. In 1977, \$600,000 was allocated, making a total of \$1.2m to the beef industry for relief and carry-on finance. However, in the fiscal year 1975 76, the Primary Producers Board loans of approximately \$100,000 could not be expended because of late applications. The system consequently withdrew that \$100,000 and insisted that commitments this year must be funded out of the 1976-77 budget, which in effect has reduced the Territory allocation from \$1.2m to \$1.1m. This year the \$600,000 has already been expended by the board and, unless further funds are made available to it until the next appropriation, no further applicants will receive carry-on finance this financial year.

In the Northern Territory, there is possibly a cattle population of 1.7m head. In South Australia there are approximately 1.6m head. As I have said before, the total grants to the Northern Territory in 1976 were \$0.6m. The Commonwealth Government grants to South Australia were \$1.5m matched by an equal contribution from the State Government of a further \$1.5m, totalling \$3m. The situation of the beef produc-

ing industry in South Australia is far better in terms of relief than that enjoyed by those members of the industry residing in the Northern Territory,

I do not know who it is who draws the fine distinction between citizens of the Northern Territory and the benefits that they receive but an interesting side issue is the contrast that exists between an employee of, say, the Darwin Community College or other semi-government bodies who receive a housing rent subsidy while any request by pastoralists to have crown land lease rentals deferred or waived receives the big "No, no!" Once again I refer to the select committee's report on development of rural land. I quote: "Many of the development proposals for the north could and would require very large sums of public as well as private capital. Often they appear to require extensive government assistance. The principles with respect to tariff compensating assistance apply to the north as elsewhere in the economy. There will also be particular forms of assistance which will be warranted on the grounds of the imperfections of the market, such as temporary subsidy on the input to encourage the rapid expansion of its use".

What we as an Assembly must do is to ask ourselves what our true function is. Are we legislators for the people of the Northern Territory or not? Are we going to secure the interests of one type of investor as opposed to another? Are we going to abandon what forms part of a national investment, the Northern Territory beef industry? Are we going to let the beef industry and its people, the pioneers of this country, wither and die like an unwatered vine? I hope not. Or are we going to play our role as legislators and take the initiative? I suggest the latter should apply.

Again I refer to the select committee's report: "Prospects for success would only be good if the region is recognised as having separate problems and special needs by comparison with primary production areas in the rest of Australia; that is, throughout a development pioneering region. (b) Special forms of assistance should be made

available over a period of time to enable the objective of long term viability and self sufficiency to be realised".

It is part (b) of that quotation that concerns me because current assistance plans act in direct contrast to long term viability and self-sufficiency. The carry-on finance scheme to producers is entirely inadequate. It only puts off the evil day for the producer. It is quite clear that before any real stability can be offered the Northern Territory beef industry there will have to be appointed a single and autonomous Northern Territory meat marketing authority.

Further on in the select committee's report, mention is made of responsibility:

It is time the Australian Government recognised that full and final control over rural land administration by any federal minister based in Canberra results in control of administration of the land by the public service and inevitable confusion and delays brought about by the structure and nature of the system.

The same situation may well apply to marketing and it does. It is high time that we as a legislature did something positive about it. It is apparent that present marketing methods within the industry are entirely inadequate but, at present, producers are forced to accept those methods. It would appear that an anomaly that creates concern amongst producers is that high-grade beef on the hoof attracts a low price to the consumer. There is a serious need for producers to establish a producer controlled marketing system in the Northern Territory and to press for a single beef industry authority that would be sufficiently broad to include all the facets and service requirements of the industry.

There is obviously an urgent need to develop a weight and classification scheme on a national basis and suiting national requirements. This would produce a significant rise in income to those producers who produce higher quality meat. Currently, of all prices

offered, younger and better quality light-weight steers attract a lower price at the abattoirs. Producers also complain of irregular weights for apparently similar types of carcasses. Greater content would exist amongst those producers if weight and classification documenting became a reality.

What appears to be a fundamental error in the Northern Territory meat killing services through existing abattoirs seems to be the lack of a service killing facility. If this was included in their services, it would provide producers with an opportunity to choose their markets and it would perhaps enable producers to participate in smaller markets that exist in many near Asiatic communities. These markets, many of them hot-meat markets, could very attractively be serviced by the Northern Territory. The establishment of a Northern Territory meat marketing authority could negotiate with the Department of Primary Industries and nearby markets on standards and export procedures and undertake a promotion of the industry in its own right. Costly US export meat standards are not necessary in all cases to satisfy these Asian markets.

Without an autonomous meat marketing authority incorporated as a statutory body, interested in and chartered and financed to promote meat sales in its own right for Territory producers, the Territory producer will be at the mercy of the competitive states and their respective marketing organisations and exporters. I suggest that such a body would aim to achieve economies of scale in the handling and distribution of meat and the assembly of livestock for meat production. It would also ensure the use of efficient and modern technology in meatworks' storage and distribution of the product. It would develop a weight and classification scheme for all meat carcasses. It would aim to maximise returns to livestock producers whilst minimising short-term fluctuations. It would also provide a regular consensus of market reports and forecasts to the producers. It would formulate and sponsor an improved system of providing information to each producer. It would develop a scheme of identifying classes of meat to the con-

sumer and examine and develop systems by which Northern Territory beef can enter the many small markets open to us in nearby islands and countries.

Finally, unless there is a quick and positive action taken, the current decline in skilled and educated animal husbandmen will be beyond recovery. The loss of this resource or the cost of its replacement must be avoided. In conclusion, permit me to say that, if any authority was created within the Northern Territory, I would advocate close liaison with the Primary Producers' Board. The establishment of such a body would equate ourselves with organisations of a similar nature that exist in our neighbouring states. The significance of a viable beef cattle industry in the Northern Territory must not be under-estimated. Its value as an export income earner, as a general economic cash flow generator, is badly needed to contribute towards the restoration of what I believe is an ailing Territory economy. I support the motion.

Mrs LAWRIE: I support the motion. The honourable member for Alice Springs, while giving some relevance to the motion, did range far and wide. It is probably thought that only members from rural electorates or Alice Springs will speak on this, but I think it is of importance that Darwin representatives indicate their interest and concern for what is indeed a depressed industry. I will, however, reject any suggestion that the rebuilding of Darwin should be accepted as an excuse by any Government not to provide adequate finance to the rural industry. If that was the implication of the previous speaker's statement, I reject it. I have listened for 4 years now to pleas from the cattle industry to, and I quote paragraph (b) of the motion, "ensure that adequate carry-on finance is provided before the start of the season so that the optimum turnoff will be achieved". Having heard that for 4 or 5 years in the old Council and now in this Assembly, it is obvious to me that money put into the rehabilitation of Darwin because of a natural disaster cannot have any parallel with the need for money for an industry which has existed for years.

The first part of the motion deals with making representation to the Commonwealth Government and relevant companies to see that the Katherine and Alice Springs export abattoirs are kept open, that they operate through the forthcoming season and that prices offered to the producer are maximised and equitable. Honourable members would be well aware - that the Katherine abattoir at least is heavily in debt to the Commonwealth Government - that is, to the taxpaying community of Australia. It is quite reasonable, therefore, to suggest that that same Government, owning 75% of the operations, is in a perfect position to decide early, to notify the producer of the operation of the abattoir, the extent of the operation and, one would have hoped, the price offered for beef on the hoof.

The second point to the motion is that adequate finance be provided. I can only repeat that the Majority Leader will have something to say on this subject because surely his party, being of the same colour as the majority party in Canberra, should be in a position in this House to state whether funds will be forthcoming for carry-on finance and at what level. Having achieved some degree of autonomy for this Assembly, I hope that the Majority Leader will be able to give a more precise and definitive statement about carry-on finance.

Paragraph (c) of the motion asks that we "stimulate the Government, the Australian Meat Board and other interested parties to achieve more effective market promotion in Southeast Asia and Middle East countries". Here, I support the remarks of the member for Alice Springs. I do not believe that, without an independent Northern Territory authority acting on behalf of producers, such stimulation will take effect in the Northern Territory pastoral industry. It is logical to assume that the Australian Meat Marketing Board and other agencies which draw their membership from the states would look after their own interests first and we will come last or nowhere. I would think the answer is for the producers in the Northern Territory to form themselves into a recognised authority and to seek their own mar-

kets. They should properly be assisted in that search by funding from the Australian Government. Without taking that initiative, without forming such a body, I do not think local producers have much hope.

I remember the statements made by the Government when devaluation was first announced, how it was to assist rural industry. I would like to quote from the Financial Review of Wednesday 9 March concerning devaluation and the price of meat:

Official statistics released recently have clearly established that the benefits of devaluation have not been passed on to meat producers by meat exporters, the executive officer of the Australian Wool growers and Graziers Council, Mr D.B. Trebeck, said yesterday. Mr Trebeck was commenting on figures for the December 1976 export price index which showed a 16% rise for meat compared with November. He said that, although export meat prices had increased by 16% after devaluation, sale yard prices to the producer had virtually remained unchanged.

In discussions I have had within the Northern Territory, I find no reason to doubt the validity of that statement. As far as the Northern Territory producer is concerned, it is horrendous. The 16% increase because of devaluation has been caught by someone - quite clearly the exporters are doing well - but the producer has received little or nothing. It is a pity that the attention of the Australian Government could not be brought to this apparent discrepancy within the terms of the motion as framed. One can only hope that, when this motion is passed and is sent to the Australian Government, copies of the speeches of members will accompany it. I am aware that others are to speak after me and I would be very interested to hear their comments on the incredible position Territory producers find themselves in, when none of the benefits of devaluation have apparently been passed on to them.

The final recommendation is to "ensure recommendations coming from the industry conference to be held in Alice

Springs on 23 April are transmitted rapidly and supported forcefully to the Commonwealth Government". We are really speaking in advance of something which has not yet happened and I do not believe I should take any more time of the House in speaking to this recommendation.

To conclude, I do support the motion, most particularly paragraph (c), but I do not think it is definitive enough; it does not show clearly that local producers have to get together and find their own markets or they will be ignored.

Mr RYAN: I support the motion. I did listen with interest to the little comment the honourable member for Nightcliff made about the honourable member for Alice Springs ranging far and wide. I would like to point out that in the previous debate on the motion by the member for Port Darwin the honourable member for Nightcliff rose to speak and did not even mention the motion. It is interesting how she can change from one foot to the other, always finishing up on the left one though.

This particular motion I find very important. The part of my portfolio which covers transport and industry, whilst certainly not encompassing primary industry, certainly has some relation to primary industry. When the rural industry is depressed, it generally follows that those industries which support rural industry become depressed, I feel sure that in the towns - and I am absolutely sure in the smaller centres of the Northern Territory - the supporting industries have suffered badly over the past few years because of the depressed state of primary industry in the Northern Territory. Anything that this Assembly can do to bring to the notice of the Federal Government the plight of people in the Northern Territory in the area of primary industry must be supported, and supported by everybody concerned.

I will not go into detail on each particular recommendation, I think they have been covered adequately. It is agreed that the financial area should be looked at so that money made avail-

able to primary industry can be used with the most benefit at the time when it would be most appreciated. I intend to attend the meeting that will be held next month in Alice Springs because I feel that it is closely associated with my portfolio. Roads are a very important part of primary industry development in the Territory. If the cattle industry in the Northern Territory starts to regain its strength, we will find ourselves in a rather embarrassing situation with roads. There has been very little done on development roads over the past few years because of the depressed situation. When things go quiet, the tendency is to stop development work. When things come good, they invariably come good at a greater rate than they did before and it leaves you right behind the 8 ball. I am sure the cattle industry can recover but, when it does recover, we will want to have planning under way to ensure that the recovery is not inhibited because transport needs have not been taken care of.

I hope that the motion is successful in bringing to the attention of the Federal Government the plight of rural industries, and the cattle industry in particular, in the Northern Territory.

Mr ROBERTSON: Bearing in mind that I will be basically confining myself to paragraph (a) of the motion, the first point I would like to make is that I think the community as a whole - and in the community as a whole I include many members of parliaments throughout Australia and the Federal Parliament in particular - has very little sympathy for the plight of the cattle industry and the pastoral industry throughout the country. People seem to have developed over the years, and in particular in the 1960s, the mental attitude that the pastoral sector has in the past been a very wealthy sector, that cattle producers have "ridden on the cow's back" and done it very well and lived very prosperously for many years. Now that times have become hard, they find that they have absolutely no sympathy for the pastoral industry. So you have the difficulty of lack of public sympathy for the industry.

What people do not realise is that

the cattle industry is not isolated from the economy of the country, This is true throughout the country, more than true in the Northern Territory and even more significantly true in the centres of Katherine and Alice Springs. The wellbeing of the pastoral industry is integrally tied up with the wellbeing of the economy as a whole. The fact that the pastoral industry is no longer able to spend as it used to in an economy that was geared to that sort of spending, creates repercussions right throughout the economic structure. The fact that pastoralists can no longer purchase motor vehicles depresses the viability of the business of local retailers of those vehicles. The fact that they no longer employ people who can buy goods and services again reflects itself right throughout the business community. That is the point I wanted to make particularly to those members who live in urban electorates: when primary industry goes down, so does your business viability in your city electorates.

One point I wanted to take up was raised by the honourable member for Nightcliff. She mentioned that the benefits that should have resulted from devaluation have not flowed on to the primary sector. It is worth examining some possible reasons for that. I refer, Mr Speaker, to what you have raised in this House, the problem of the cartel. This is the system which seems to be operated by the meat exporter himself. The allegation was confirmed by the honourable Mr Katter, that meat exporters seem to be buying up property while the market is at a low level and storing cattle on those properties - contingency cattle. The contingency against which they are working is an improvement in the price being paid to the producer and it seems to me that the moment the price increases, the exporter, through his holdings, will flood the market.

If this industry remains in its depressed state for the next half a dozen years and this practice of holding contingency stock continues, there is absolutely no prospect in the world of a recovery of the price to the producer. Certainly, the consumer will see an increase in prices and export prices

may increase, but it seems apparent that there is never going to be an increase in prices to the producer. And costs will go up at the same time. He will become less and less viable. The answer could well be a single marketing authority for the Northern Territory as mentioned by the honourable member for Alice Springs.

My concern at this particular practice goes even further than the question raised by the Queensland Cattle Union and it actually is being used in respect of the local market of Alice Springs. The new export abattoir is applying for quotas on the American and other export markets. I have been led to believe - and it is an allegation only - that the marketing interests in South Australia - probably including SAMCOR, but that is a wild guess - are lobbying the Meat Board to prevent export quotas being allocated to the new Alice Springs abattoir. Why would anyone want to do that? The reason is quite simple, the cattle which are trucked and railed from the Central Australian region to the South Australian market for the export section of that market are currently keeping the price of cattle in that market down in the State of South Australia. If we got an individual quota and we no longer trucked and railed those cattle to the South Australian market, the net result would have to be an improvement in the price to the South Australian producer at the Gepps Cross abattoir.

There again, we have a lobby, in my view, of a major exporting organisation working against the interests of the Northern Territory and particularly against the interests of the cattle producer in the Northern Territory. I hope that does not come to pass and in fact I understand there is a fair prospect now, due to the wisdom, I hope, of the board, that it will not come to pass.

I point out again that the formation - and effective formation, that is the operative word - of a marketing authority for the Northern Territory which could deal direct with the Meat Board, and which would have equal if not greater statutory clout than those interests in the State of South Aust-

ralia, would perhaps be the answer to this problem. While the question of a marketing authority is not greatly emphasised in the motion of the honourable member for Stuart, I think it is probably the most important measure that honourable members should press for.

Mr TUXWORTH: Because my electorate involves some 60,000 square miles, most of which is under cattle production, I do believe I should give the motion my wholehearted support. I do this, not from the point of view of parish pumping, but from the point of view of the contribution that the industry has made to the Northern Territory and Australia.

The honourable member for Gillen referred to the old Australian belief that the country has ridden on the sheep's back for many years. I believe that this country has ridden on the back of anybody who has produced anything at any time, whether it be mineral, animal or whatever. The day our productivity in any of these areas diminishes, so too will our standard of living diminish. The cattle industry has been through consecutive booms and busts for various reasons and the development of the industry in the Northern Territory goes back now nearly 100 years. It is surprising to me that it has been able to survive all the problems that have confronted it in the last 100 years. Here we are in 1977, with every modern technique man can think of to do anything we want to do, and we are finding it hard to keep our cattle industry alive. Our cattle industry is no different to our mining industry, our manufacturing industry, our ship-building industry and any other industry that is having difficulty. It needs time to readjust. It is trying to buy time so that it can get back on its feet.

I have in my electorate some 30 or 40 stations, many of them owned by the cartels - for want of a better expression - but many of them are owned by battlers, very hard-working people. These people have absolutely no ambition to collect social security payment or a handout of any sort. All they want is to be able to produce and sell their

product and to do this with a little dignity. They find themselves in a situation not of their own making, and a situation that they cannot cure themselves. It is a national and an international problem. What they are saying to the Government is not, "Give me a handout, give me poker money, give me any other sort of money"; they are saying, "Give me the wherewithal to survive the crisis that this industry is in". They believe that if they get the cash they can survive and, in future years, contribute to the wealth of this Territory. I believe that the motion is most timely. It has my wholehearted support and I hope that some good results come from it and from the meeting to be held in Alice Springs later in the month.

Mr WITHNALL: I will not delay honourable members long on this motion but I think I should make some remarks about the strangulation which the Department of Primary Industry is applying in the Northern Territory. I refer to the limitation of the export of meat from the Northern Territory to such abattoirs as are licensed to export to the United States. Some time ago, the Department of Primary Industry respected the difference between the excessively high standards which the United States required and the somewhat lower standards which were required by other countries to which meat could be exported. During those days the Department of Primary Industry had an abattoir licence which they called a Form 8. That licence authorised persons to take buffalo and cattle in the field, to produce meat in accordance with hygienic conditions and to export that meat to parts of the world excluding the United States. We all know that the very high standards which are required for export to the United States have been put on as a result of the lobby for the meat industry in the United States. The people in the United States have said: "Well, if we cannot limit the importation of meat, at least we will put on conditions which will make it very difficult for people to export meat to the United States unless it is of the highest standard". I am informed, as a matter of fact, that most of the abattoirs in the United States could not stand up to the con-

ditions which are required in Australia by DPI as a result of pressure from the United States for the killing of meat which is to be exported to the United States.

In any event, we did have this sort of a middle licence. A licence in accordance with Form 8 permitted the export to other parts of the world, other than the United States, of meat which was killed in the Northern Territory and in parts of Australia not in accordance with the strict standards. For some reason or other, and I have not so far been able to find out why, that licence is not now available. It has been taken away from the meat export regulations and now, if you want to export, even to Timor or Singapore, you must have a fully licensed abattoir which means that you must comply with the standard applicable to the export of meat to the United States. Since that standard was artificially made, and made I suggest entirely to limit the amount of imports into the United States, I think that the abandonment of the Form 8 abattoir was completely wrong.

I can speak from personal experience because I am concerned with an abattoir which kills buffaloes and provides buffalo meat for consumption in Australia. It is killed in an abattoir and processed in an abattoir which the Chief Inspector of Abattoirs in Victoria has stated is better than any abattoir in Victoria apart from the central municipal abattoir in Melbourne. If that is the case and if people in Australia can be permitted to eat meat which is produced in that abattoir, why is it necessary that one should erect an abattoir to the standards of US export abattoirs in order to send meat to Singapore or to Indonesia or to any other of the Southeast Asian countries?

It seems to me that what the Department of Primary Industry is saying is that the meat may be good enough for Australians to eat but it is not good enough for anybody else in the world to eat. Either that is true or untrue, either the standard of production of the meat ought not to be accepted in Australia or the same standard ought to

be accepted overseas apart from the very special conditions which apply to the United States market.

My remarks are directed entirely to paragraph (c) of the motion which suggests that the Commonwealth Government should stimulate the Meat Board to achieve more effective market promotion in Southeast Asia and Middle East countries. The abattoir at Meneling is very well run, it is completely hygienic and the meat it produces is sold in Australia and accepted in Australia as being a first-class product of an abattoir. Why cannot it be accepted in Southeast Asia? Why cannot it be accepted in Indonesia, in Timor, in Hong Kong, in Singapore? The answer lies in the fact that the Department of Primary Industry - and I am not criticising the Minister here - as a department is entirely concerned to protect the department itself and the officers of that department. They are endeavouring to keep their job going and they see that the Form 8 abattoir did not give them enough say or the opportunity to create more and more jobs so that the department could be more and more powerful.

I do support the motion, particularly paragraph (c), and I hope that the Majority Leader, who is well aware of the problem and has done quite a bit to try to achieve results, will not discontinue his efforts and will endeavour very strongly to have the old style Form 8 abattoir reinstated.

Mr POLLOCK: I rise to support the motion even though it demands of me quite a task. Nothing would give me greater joy or sense of achievement in the position that I have at the moment than to be able to do something constructive towards accomplishing everything that the motion set out, to revive the industry from the situation it is in at the moment.

I would like to advise members of a couple of matters which have arisen in the last 24 hours or so as the result of a visit to Katherine yesterday afternoon in relation to the Katherine abattoir. There was a meeting there yesterday of the North Australia Cattlemen's Association executive and

the management of the Katherine abattoir and it has been advised that it is the full intention of the company, providing there are favourable weather conditions, availability of cattle and the availability of a part for the chain, that the abattoir will be in operation on Wednesday 6 April, with prices which are, I believe, an improvement on last year, not to the complete joy of the Cattlemen's Association or the producer but at least they do show some indication of improvement.

Whilst the management is not prepared to say that the price for heavy bullocks or for over 450 will be 18c or 20c, it is hopeful that it will be in that range and possibly higher depending on what is presented for killing. The Alice Springs situation as far as the abattoir is concerned is that the principals there advise me that they are hopeful of having that abattoir in operation after 31 May. This of course depends on the progress being made in relation to the installation of a new chain, blast freezer and chiller room there. This depends on the weather conditions for the materials and that they can get to Alice Springs without interference or delay. If that is the case then, hopefully, the abattoir will be killing early in June. That abattoir will be killing for the local trade and for an export market. However, they are having difficulties in obtaining an American quota. The principals at the Katherine abattoir told cattlemen yesterday that they want the opportunity to buy as many cattle as the company can purchase. They did not say at what price they want the opportunity to buy but they are prepared to buy whatever is brought forward during the coming season and figures of upward of 30,000 head were mentioned if those cattle can be presented to the abattoir.

I have mentioned the prices and we do not have a lot of joy there. We must also consider transport costs. Last year, we did have some \$400,000 provided from the Commonwealth Government for freight subsidies for the transport to slaughter yards. This operated from 1 June last year and ceased on 31 December. The 25% freight concession that was available for transporting cattle

more than 50 miles to abattoirs has been removed and it will be one of my moves to see if something can be done to reinstate that subsidy through the coming season. Costs are going up, The basic wage increase which is considered imminent, the applications to the Prices Justification Tribunal by the petrol companies for increases in fuel prices - costs such as those will add to the transport costs. A truck which 10 years ago cost \$30,000 now costs \$70,000. The operator has to borrow so much more money at a much higher interest rate and his overheads are going up and the cost of transporting cattle to market is increasing.

Mention has been made of the carry-on finance and this is a problem area. Some \$600,000 was provided during the 1976-77 financial year and I am advised that money has either been spent or committed and there are no further funds available at the moment. There will be a new rural adjustment scheme operating from 1 July which incorporates all the present areas of rural assistance. By the time that is funded and the details sorted out at meetings which are being held between state and Commonwealth officers in the next fortnight or so, it may be some time before funds become available again. That is just not good enough. I will be doing what I can to see if the Government can provide some added assistance that is needed to allow the producer to get his stock mustered and get them to market.

In relation to markets, there has been some brightening on the horizon and people say that things look good with market prospects in the USSR, and other eastern European countries, Egypt, coming into the market - a couple of other countries have been mentioned. But it has been pointed out to me that whilst an amount has been named so little beef has been actually sold to those markets at a price acceptable to everybody. Whilst there are many market opportunities and figures being quoted, none of those have by any means been fulfilled, except perhaps for the USSR market which has been by a special arrangement. There is a quota of 296,000 tonnes to the United States and, of course, they are waiting at the moment; they are not offering

the price to the exporters at the moment on forward selling beyond May because they are waiting to see what the price will be after the end of April when new shipments to the United States will commence. The best opportunity would be for the exporters to sell and get rid of beef to these other markets I mentioned, to Eastern Europe, Egypt and others, so that the amount that can go to the United States will in some way be difficult to fill and may force the price up. If there is an abundance of meat available, the importers in the United States are not going to put the price up, in fact, it may tend to go down, which will be detrimental to our producers.

I believe that there are, in areas close to Australia, in the Middle East and in the Asian area, opportunities for further markets. I am becoming more convinced of that each week. If you go into an airport lounge and meet somebody who shows an interest, there must be something beyond an interest. If there is smoke, there is fire and there is an opportunity I believe in many parts for export markets. These must be developed. We seem to have some difficulty here of getting the message across to the big wheels in southern areas who have certain thoughts on the subject, I am not quite sure what we can do at the moment, but it is a matter which must be examined and followed up.

The live cattle export market does look a little brighter. There was a question asked as to how many cattle would be exported from Darwin this year. Unfortunately, I have been unable to get that information but I am told that there may be a feeling that the flurry of exports could be short term stimulation because of the depressed condition of the chilled or frozen supplies. If chilled or frozen beef prices went up, then the viability of the live export market may not be the same as it is today. Therefore, there may be some curtailment of the better conditions which are being experienced at least in the live export area. At the same time, every encouragement should be given to anybody who wants to export live cattle. The management of the Katherine and Wyndham works yester-

day said their company has no opposition at all to the export of live cattle. If they cannot buy the cattle at the price that the live cattle exporter is offering, that is their bad luck. I am not quite sure what the unions are going to say to that but it is a change of heart from what I have been being told in recent times about the attitude of the companies.

We will be hearing a lot about the conference in Alice Springs. It is a matter of what comes from that talk. Action speaks louder than words. One would hope that some positive and firm action is taken to alleviate the grave situation in our community. It affects not only the cattleman himself but also the whole community of the Territory and the nation. Mention was made of the Government owning three quarters of the Katherine abattoir. Members should be acquainted with the fact that the abattoir is owned by a company although it does have a total of \$1.4m on loan from the Government which is repayable over 16 years and on an interest rate as from last December of 9.5%. This is a rise from 4% to 9.5% for some \$900,000 of that loan which in itself is a considerably heavier overhead cost to the abattoir, and overhead costs must be recovered through trade and therefore passed on in lower prices to the producer. I do not know if there is any avenue that can be followed up to endeavour to gain a reduction of any sort in that interest rate which might provide increased returns to the producer, but that is yet another matter which I will be following up.

With those remarks, I will let the matter stand and assure the House that I will do everything possible to implement the terms of the motion.

Mr MacFARLANE: I was at the meeting at Katherine and I was quite impressed with the manager and what he said. I have been very impressed with the way they have taken over the meatworks and trimmed the overhead and made it much more efficient. But I am not at all convinced that the gains will be passed on to the producer until the producer demands them.

We come right back to the matter of

markets. The producer cannot demand anything now because there is a glut of beef. Until we reduce that glut of beef, we will be in the same old position, not only here in the Top End, but also in the Centre. The Centre has been saved by very good rains and it could not happen to nicer people. But, had those rains not come, the Centre people would have been in a powerless position too. It is not so long ago that the member for Stuart was talking about shooting cattle down there. I did not agree with the principle. Why should we shoot cattle when there are starving millions within a small radius to the north of us.

Marketing is the main thing. Cattle-men do not want carry-on finance. They do not want all these concessions; they have done without them through the worst economic structure in their history. The Whitlam Government stripped all these concessions and equalisers from them and they have not been replaced by the farmers' friends. We have got to do without them. If we do without them, we must have markets and to find markets and to develop markets, we must have money.

Only this morning, I spoke to a chap whom I have mentioned in adjournment debates, an Egyptian agronomist in Katherine. He had inquiries for 200,000 head of weaners to go to the Middle East. If we had this single meat industry authority, we could do something about it. How can he or the cattlemen or the Department of Primary Industry or the Majority Party or anyone do anything about it when we are just not set up for it? This is the same man who gave us the tip about the Egyptian market in 1975. I think the target there was 30,000 tonnes. It was obvious that the Northern Territory could not produce it. But we were desparate; there was a market and we could not even investigate it because we had no expertise. Expertise can be bought. Actually, under the charter of the Northern Territory, it should be available.

I suggest that our problem is not carry-on finance but markets, and we have got to find them soon. It is not much good finding them if we cannot exploit them, and this is what the hon-

ourable member for Port Darwin was talking about today. There is only one export licence in the Northern Territory now and that is Katherine. I have no doubt that Alice Springs when it is brought up to US requirements will get an export licence. That is not up to the DPI, that is not up to Australians, that is up to Americans. The standard there will be unnecessarily high for anywhere else but the United States.

Some years ago, the Australian Meat Board introduced a diversification program, and we protested strongly here; in fact we had a select committee to inquire into the effects of diversification on the cattle industry of the Northern Territory. This is what we really want, yet we focus our whole attention on the United States. If we could chop the United States back, if we could find other markets and instead of trying to supply nearly 300,000 tonnes to them, say we just cannot make it, that there is going to be a shortfall of 50,000 tonnes, that is when the price will rise.

Locating and developing markets is going to be the big thing and this was brought out yesterday by the manager of the Katherine meatworks. I think we are being pretty shortsighted about all these things. The bulk of the cattle in the Northern Territory are on the Barkly Tablelands. Where can they go? You have a bitumen road to Darwin and Katherine, you have a bitumen road to Wyndham, you could take them to Alice Springs when the meatworks opens or you could take them 2,000 miles to the eastern seaboard of Queensland. Why not have a service meatworks somewhere down towards Borroloola? You could shift it up to the member for Barkly's electorate; it might be better up there around Mullapunya. Whatever you do, put the meatworks where the cattle population is. Then, you have your outlet through the McArthur River. I do not think the McArthur River has been chartered so that it could be used by big vessels or cattle ships.

We have not done much about these things. We get back to the same old thing - have we got any authority, have we got any money, have we got any say? If you listen to the debate on land

rights, we have no say and we are not going to get it. This could be a different thing where you could appeal to someone's common sense and get something going. If you could appeal to someone's common sense and get something going. If you had a committee of producers locating markets, exploring them and exploiting them, you could get somewhere. Producers just do not have the expertise but you can buy that. It must be a producer body. Unless you can get an intermediate export licence or unless you can kill through a service abattoir which would also process the beef, you are really stumped and you might as well forget all about it and leave it to the people who are doing it now, and doing it not very successfully as far as the producer is concerned.

There is a great need to be able to produce beef which is acceptable to markets close to Australia. One hundred and fifty tons of beef generally is the produce of 15,000 head of cattle. A prawn trawler could handle this quantity of beef if you find the market. These are avenues we should be exploring because no one else will do it. The Australian Meat Board did not even know that we were alive until they started talking about export licences for Alice Springs. I do not think they care and I think that the Minister for Primary Industry will bring back the same kind of Meat Board when he reorganises it. He has indicated very clearly that it will not be revolutionary; it will not be the way the only progressive cattlemen's association in Australia, the Cattlemen's Union, wants it.

The thing that could be looked after by this single meat industry authority are, firstly, an indicative price to cattlemen. You can get the expertise. If you talk to Tom Scanlan of Katherine, he could tell you what meat is going to bring in 2 months time in the United States but a cattleman does not know. He is out there chasing bulls or mustering bullocks. He has plenty of time to think but he does not have the information. This is where this expertise must be brought in to put the producer on an equal footing with other people.

The matter of devaluation was raised. I do not think that this really applies

to us at this stage. I am talking about people in the cattle industry. Devaluation was brought in in November and there has not been any killing done since then or any export sales. Thus, you could not say that we have been "rooked" today but, if meatworks run true to form, and they have no reason to change, we will be in the future.

Somebody mentioned modern technology. If we could supply beef capable of being stored without refrigeration, at a competitive price, we could help people who are primitive but who would eat beef. I do not think that we are doing very much about that.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, with the slump in the beef industry, the people most affected after the actual owners are the Aboriginal employees. On Hodgson Downs, which is not very far from me, there are 260 Aborigines and they are being well looked after by social benefits but this is killing them. They have plenty of money, plenty of food but they have no motivation. I say once again that people do not want carry-on finance or the dole, they want work or a market, that is what it is about. The Majority Leader said yesterday that I was the greatest socialist ever seen. I have not examined his statement in depth but I suppose that if you say that some people do require assistance at various times, they are the people I am talking about. If that is socialism, I accept it, but I am not likely to join the ALP.

At the meeting in Alice Springs on 23 April, the agenda was quite comprehensive. It read: "The livestock population situation" - this is overstocking I presume - "questions on carrying capacity and means of disposal". You see it is a very real problem, the problem of finding markets. You have people who must find markets; not people who must sell cattle because they have to earn a quid but people who must sell cattle because they are overstocked. "Markets available for meat and live cattle." "Meat works capacity and needs" - I think that would be a fairly lively one. "It is hoped that a representative of the BAE working group on this subject will be present." What he would add to it, I would not know

but there does appear to be at least 100,000 head of cattle which would be available from the Tablelands and that area if the price was attractive, if a meatworks was established somewhere down there. "Live cattle exports" - I have touched on that a bit. I think the McArthur River could provide an immediate turn-off. The Barkly Tablelands cattle might be a bit too fat for them, a bit too good for them; they might not have enough money to pay for them. If the market is there, the Government should assist this instead of worrying about this paltry carry-on finance which no one really wants. "Marketing reform" - that is a beauty for the Cattle Producers Council to examine because we have been chasing them up for 10 or 12 years on this one. "Australian Meat Board reorganisation" - I think it will be all over by then and, as I said, I think the same situation will prevail. "Carcase classification" - you must have carcase classification before you can introduce the stabilisation scheme. "Cattle freight subsidy and transport needs including roads" - I understand the Cabinet Member for Transport will be there but what he can do about the roads, except to note the troubles, I do not know. "Source of finance" - this is very interesting. I do not know what the source of finance is likely to be. Producers own pockets, I think, and we get back once again to markets at a liveable price. "Rural reconstruction, financial assistance and other assistance required" - if we had reasonable markets, we would not want these things. We might want them in the short term and I am not just talking about up here in the Top End, I am talking about the Centre too. "Disease control and problems including movement restrictions; education." I flew over the Kormilda Aboriginal College today. I wish we had something like that for other outback children, for other deprived children, particularly around Katherine. I realise that a quarter of the Northern Territory population is Aboriginal but there are a lot of deprived outback children lacking the same quality of education as these people. "Northern Territory Cattle Industry Award and employment." These are important ones. "Aboriginal land rights." "Coastal and telecommunications service including radio and television."

I am about out of time but I would like to stress that what we want is a fair market, a fair price for our product. If you are a union man, if you are a worker, you are looked after; if you are a primary producer, a free enterprise man, you are on your own. This is fair enough because this is the way it was in the first place, this is why you started out, this is why you broke away from traditional styles. But, in times like those we have now and we have had for the last few years, it is up to the Government to seriously consider this motion and, having considered it, do something about it.

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I had not been listed to speak on this motion but probably I should say a few words which reflect my lifetime of association with this industry - in a professional capacity as a government and private veterinarian and in this Assembly as a member with some responsibilities for the industry. The problem of the beef industry in the Northern Territory and throughout Australia has been with us for over 2 years. The boom year for the beef industry was 1974; 1975 and 1976 were disastrous years. The indications are that there will not be any dramatic change in 1977. Thus, we are going into disaster for a third year and it is more serious because it has gone on for that period of time. This is probably the greatest disaster that the beef industry in Australia has seen this century. It is the one primary industry which has been relatively stable and which has been able to stand on its own feet even though the Territory has probably been the most impoverished area within the industry. It has not gone around seeking government handouts and assistance, but has finally gone the way of the other industries, which have been subjected to more violent fluctuations and have come to some sort of enforced assistance long before this.

The difficulties are very deep, very real and very complex. If there were any easy solutions, they would have been found and I presume implemented long ago. Every beef producer in Australia, every branch of the cattlemen's organisation, every state council of that organisation, the Australian Meat Board, state governments, Commonwealth

governments throughout this land have been trying to seek solutions and they have been able to provide some partial relief and amelioration and probably some groundwork which will lead to a better situation within the next year or two. It is a complex industry, the problem is complex and the solutions are not easy. Anybody who thinks it is simply a matter of coming up with some new bright idea which nobody has seen before, I wish him well, but I do not think that is the way it will be done.

A great deal of reference has been made to marketing. It is true that this industry is dependent very heavily on export marketing. More than 50% of all the beef produced in Australia is marketed overseas. It has to be because the home consumption level is less than 50%. This has not always been the case but it has been increasingly the case in recent years. Australia has struggled and succeeded very well to make itself the largest beef exporting nation in the world. When export markets are in some difficulty, our nation suffers to a greater degree than anybody else. The pattern of markets in beef is constantly changing. We are not looking at a situation where the American market is and always has been a dominant market for Australia. Up until some 12 years ago, the dominant market was the United Kingdom market and in 1963, 14 years ago, the American market only absorbed about 3,000 tonnes of Australian beef as against over 200,000 tonnes today. That is a dramatic change which occurred in the intervening period. Until fairly recent times, there was no Japanese market; now it is our second biggest market. Now there are talks of the European Economic Community coming back into the Australian market for beef, and the Eastern European zone is starting to make inquiries and buying beef.

It is a constantly changing situation and markets overseas in particular are at the mercy of politics which we in Australia, and certainly the Australian producers, have no control over. They are very sensitive markets and there is a very big political influence on every one of them - America, Japan, Russia, the European Economic Community - everyone without exception is subject

to political influences. This is true of international trade in general but it is nowhere more true than in the beef industry. When one looks at other alternative markets which have been talked about, the smaller Southeast Asian countries and the Middle East, they are not only more subject to the politics of the day than the principal stable markets which I have referred to, but they are subject to much more violent excesses and changes in politics which makes the seller less confident of his market and creates greater difficulties. Some of these things I know about because I have been personally engaged in this exercise and I just mention them because it is not an easy matter which people simply through sloth or neglect have failed to come to grips with.

The short-term problem which we are seeking to do something about in this motion is simply a matter of the supply-demand curve. That the supply-demand curve would get out of kilter was forecast, to my knowledge, at least 9 years ago by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. I attended sessions which that bureau held, including one here publicly in Darwin, at which facts and figures were produced which showed that the production curve in Australia was rising considerably faster than the known markets available to Australia internally and overseas and the likely rate of expansion of those markets. The information provided was perfectly correct as has been shown tragically in the final essence, but the only thing that was not able to be predicted with any certainty was when the crash would come. In fact, it came several years later than the BAE and various publications had suggested that it might. When it came, it was dramatic and it is still with us.

It was compounded by the fact that depressions in other primary industries in Australia, particularly the wheat industry and the wool industry, increased the production curve by turning producers throughout Australia into beef. Everybody down to the apple orchard grower who was pulling his trees out, started getting a few cows and accentuated the difficulties. The inevitable happened. These things have a

way of taking care of themselves to some extent, and this will happen although the intervention of man can influence the rate at which the corrections take place. It is correcting itself in Australia to some extent because, with the return to profitability of other primary industries, people who diversified into beef are now going out of beef. A certain amount of climatic influence in localised regional droughts and floods has brought the growth of the production curve down. Market development overseas is continuing and markets are expanding and so the curves are coming back into a reasonable relationship and, in the long term, I believe there will be a very sound future for beef. What we are talking about are strategies to get us through the next year or so by which time there will be a much more stable situation.

The honourable member for Port Darwin talked about meat inspection and export certification standards. Once again, the picture is not simple. In Australia, we have at least 4 different standards of quality at the production level, 3 of which are governed by statute and regulation. We have the export standard, which is certainly tied to the American market, and the metropolitan or regional abattoir standard which does not have to come up to the full export standard; it can be somewhat below. Then you have, as in the Northern Territory in some cases, a town abattoir which in situations like Tennant Creek can be there as a licensed abattoir, a small unit built to a certain specification, even without the services of meat inspection being a requirement to make it operate. The people in America have one standard, the people who live in Melbourne or Sydney or Darwin have another standard, the people in Tennant Creek have another standard - those all laid down by law - and if you live on your own property you have another standard again because nobody cares what you do; you can kill it in any way you like; you can eat it yourself and you can serve it to your friends if they come and visit you. In Australia, we have at least 4 different standards of meat hygiene right now.

There is a target and an objective of course in the long term to bring us all up to a standard which one eminent bacteriologist and virologist has suggested might be so high that we will all lose our resistance to every disease around the place. There is an objective in the community to get the meat to the same high standard but you cannot do it overnight because of difficulties of circumstances and places and we therefore tolerate these 4 levels at least within Australia and the Northern Territory...

Mr Withnall: Why can't we export to Singapore?

Dr LETTS: ... with the intention that we will eventually - if the honourable member wants to learn something from somebody who knows more about it than he does, then I suggest he might pay more attention. We have these 4 standards with an ultimate objective that they all get to the higher standard. Whether that will ever be practical or not, I do not know.

The fact that we ever had a Form 8 certificate was in no small measure due to my own personal efforts and the fact that the Chief Veterinary Inspector in the Department of Primary Industry of those days was a personal friend of mine who was interested in the buffalo experiment and was prepared to make certain concessions and give things a try on the basis that we agreed. Unfortunately, he has now retired and other people have taken his place.

Mr Withnall: What was wrong with it?

Dr LETTS: I referred earlier, when the honourable member was not in the room, to the politics of the meat trade and I wish he would listen to the whole speech if he wants to come in and make these repeated interjections. If he is going to persist, I will have to sit down as I shall run out of time in a moment.

It is true that meat which has been sent to America from Australia in recent years has given fuel for the fires of the political lobbyists in America. Kangaroo has reached America, buffalo meat has reached America,

salmonellosis has been found in those products and the American producer meat lobby was seized on these opportunities to try to kill the whole of the Australian meat trade, over 200,000 tonnes that goes to America. We think we are badly off now. Stop that trade and see how you go; see if the honourable member for Port Darwin can sell any of his second grade buffalo meat then.

Mr Withnall: Talk about Singapore.

Dr LETTS: I will talk about the European Economic Community where we have had the same problem again in particular with buffalo meat going into the EEC in recent years, originally killed for pet food, consigned to Adelaide then redirected towards Hong Kong, the labels changed on the passage, finishing up in the EEC and an international political incident occurring because of the fact that low quality meat, highly contaminated bacteriologically finished up on a human consumption market 4 destinations from where it originally started,

I am in support of this motion but the provocation provided to me by the honourable member for Port Darwin leads me to bring out the unsavoury matters in which the trade with which he has been associated has been deeply involved. The buffalo meat trade has not got clean hands in this matter.

Mr Withnall: Do you suggest that I do not have clean hands?

Dr LETTS: I am talking about the trade with which you have been associated.

Mr Withnall: It is as close to the wind, isn't it?

Dr LETTS: Buffalo meat, if it has been kept too long, gets very close to the wind, Mr Speaker.

Mr Withnall: So does bull meat and so does your intelligence.

Dr LETTS: Meat which has been prepared for one market in this world does find its way into other markets sometimes through at least 3 or 4 stages. This has been a matter for concern for

the Australian Government. If any sort of meat that does not meet the full American standards finds its way into that market and something that has salmonellosis turns up with an Australian stamp or brand on it, that can result in the complete suspension of imports over the whole market. I say all these things to illustrate how complicated it is and that there are no easy solutions.

In spite of that, I believe that, with proper controls, we should be able to establish on a country to country basis - countries like Sabah, parts of the Middle East and other countries in South East Asia - on a government to government basis, an acceptable standard which perhaps falls a little below the American standard and will enable trade to continue from our area to their area. I have made representations to government, and I suggest many more representations than the honourable member for Port Darwin in this field, and I would like to see any that he has personally made on the subject. I can produce my file on it and I will continue to make representations because I think there is some scope for reasonableness in this area even though it has to be done with a great deal of caution so we do not prejudice the whole of our industry.

I do support this motion in all its terms but I would like to sound a note of warning that the motion only deals with the short-term problems of the industry and that the great long-term problem over the next 2 or 3 years will be the escalating costs due to the high labour inputs which go into meat processing. Unless the beef industry in Australia can find some way to automate, to take the labour components out of it to a greater degree, then any alleviation we get of the problem in the next 2 years will only be a short-term one and the industry will find itself with grave long-term problems. We need to approach the problem in the same way as the wheat industry did some 30 years ago. We should look towards streamlining processing techniques to remove the middle man as far as possible, to deal directly from the producer to the marketing situation and get the maximum benefit for the producers.

Mr STEELE: Following the Majority Leader is like riding a donkey in the Melbourne Cup behind Roy Higgins, but I thought he covered the subject very well. One matter I wish to talk about is the short-term live export of cattle or buffalo from the Northern Territory. We are in a glut situation which demands that we should have a reasonable number of live cattle flowing out of the Northern Territory. I understand that there are people doing this, that live cattle are going out by ship and by air through the port of Darwin. I wanted to ensure that this is mentioned to the people to whom the motion is directed. With regard to part (c) of the motion, I am concerned that, to the detriment of the Northern Territory, cartels and people like the Australian Meat Board treat us as being of very little significance.

When it comes to marketing, I think the Northern Territory should be treated on an exclusive basis. It has been mentioned at different meetings that you are aware of, Mr Speaker, that perhaps the Northern Territory should take the initiative and pursue markets on its own behalf. This is one of the ways in which we might be able to do some good for ourselves. When we talk about things like moratoriums from interest charges and these sorts of things, we are bashing our heads against a brick wall because we are immediately considered along with the rest of primary industry. We have to go it alone in these areas. We have to ensure that all the little people in the industry are taken into account. It would seem that, as a small man falls by the wayside, he is immediately swallowed up by a corporation or a large company. This is not good. It is exactly the reverse of what should have been intended by government and by the industry over a long period of time in that the industry should have been broken up into smaller pieces so that more people could have participated. Then it would have been a better scheme all around. If it gets to the stage where it is just a monopoly situation, nobody is going to benefit, least of all the small producer or the worker; it will just be a monolithic meat monopoly and that is just not on.

In asking that all possible steps are taken to open the Katherine and Alice Springs export abattoirs as soon as possible, it worries me a little to think that we should be going to the Government in some of these situations. There does not seem to be enough local content in the management of these things, I think it does get back to marketing. I support the motion.

Mr VALE: I take this opportunity to thank all honourable members for their contributions. Because of the wide area of topics raised, I will not attempt to reply to any of those, but I assure all members that I will take the opportunity, when it is available, of forwarding the Hansard report of this debate to the Federal Cabinet Ministers responsible and certain industry leaders so that the concern and attitude of the Legislative Assembly for this depressed cattle industry is made known.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Speaker, I remind you of the debate which took place this morning when the honourable member for Millner made certain comments about my operation as a member, and my speech in which I may not have made it clear that I was asking you to direct that his comments be brought before the Privileges Committee. I reiterate that request and ask if you will act upon it.

Mr SPEAKER: Following the honourable member's announcement this morning that she was considering complaining of a breach of privilege, I have studied the statement she has complained of and have taken notice of certain related precedents. The honourable member has now formally complained of a breach of privilege and, since the Assembly will not be sitting tomorrow, I advise the honourable member that I will refer the complaint to the Committee of Privileges.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS BILL

(Serial 196)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The Legal Practitioners Ordinance at present provides for the setting up of a system of deposits of a portion of the trust moneys held by legal practitioners with the Master of the Supreme Court. The ordinance provides for the creation of a legal practitioners' fidelity fund. In dealing with the investment of deposited trust money, the ordinance makes reference to the Audit Act and doubt has arisen as to whether interest on moneys dealt with in accordance with that act becomes part of consolidated revenue.

The ordinance requires the Attorney-General to fix a date for commencement of the trust deposit scheme and of the fidelity fund. As interest on deposited trust moneys is anticipated to be the largest source of money for the fidelity fund, it was decided not to fix those dates until the problems of status of interest moneys was resolved and the provisions governing the administration of the trust deposit scheme and fidelity fund were reassessed.

The bill before members is a result of consultation between the Law Society of the Northern Territory and the Attorney-General's Department with the object of bringing into operation an effective system of administration for both the trust deposit scheme and the fidelity fund as soon as possible. These meetings commenced in November 1975 and have continued until now.

The bill proposes to create a Legal Practitioners Trust Committee to administer the trust deposit rather than leaving the administration to the Master alone. The committee and the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund Committee will each become a statutory body corporate and both committees will have the power to invest in authorised trustee investments. There will be an annual audit of the records of each committee by a registered company auditor and each committee will be required to send a copy of the auditor's report to the Crown Law Office.

The bill proposes to require the trust committee to pay all interest received into the fidelity fund whenever that fund has less than \$125,000. Only after the fund reaches that figure will the trust committee be able to pay up to one half of the interest received for the purpose of legal aid and legal education. It is usual practice for these two committees to be simply committees of the Law Society and not independent corporate bodies. The Law Society of the Northern Territory has decided that, because of its limited size and the limited facilities available, the burden of administering the trust deposit scheme and fidelity fund would be beyond its resources. Indeed, the Law Society of the Northern Territory is at the moment in a fairly embryonic form compared to the states. The Master of the Supreme Court, as chairman of both committees, will be in a position to use the facilities available to him for more effective administration.

As an ancillary matter, the regulation-making power in section 141 is to be revised to provide in particular for the making of regulations as to legal practitioners' trust accounts and their audit. Following the consultations between the Law Society and the Attorney-General's Department, several other amendments to the Legal Practitioners Ordinance were proposed. These are not contained in the present bill. Members will no doubt agree that it is in the interest of the public and of the legal profession for the trust deposit scheme and fidelity fund to come into operation as soon as possible. It is anticipated that they will commence on 1 July this year. Because of the limited time that was available to draft this bill, it was not possible for the other proposed amendments to be covered fully.

I intend to introduce a bill at the next sittings which will incorporate these amendments. It is proposed that that bill will cover the following matters amongst others that have been suggested: to provide for an increase in the membership of the Legal Practitioners Admission Board; to enable the retrospective operation of the

approval of articles applied to it by the board; to provide for the Law Society to be consulted before the Master fixes the fee on practising certificates; to provide that part of the period of service as a judge's associate will be counted towards the period of articles to be served; and to clarify the procedure for investigating a complaint against legal practitioners;

I intend in committee to move amendments to correct minor deficiencies in this bill. These will include an amendment to the proposed section 84A contained in clause 11 to remove the requirement that the trust committee hold all interest received in a separate bank account. I also intend to move an amendment to give the Secretary of the Law Society the power to nominate members of the Law Society on the 2 committees rather than requiring their appointment by the Law Society as a body.

Debate adjourned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Dr LETTS: I move that leave be granted for today's sitting for the honourable member for Tiwi who has advised that he has had to seek medical attention.

Motion agreed to.

SOIL CONSERVATION AND LAND UTILISATION BILL

(Serial 187)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

This bill was originally introduced by the honourable member for Barkly on 19 August 1976. Since its introduction, there has been time for discussion, particularly with pastoral and agricultural organisations, and the bill I now present includes 2 important amendments resulting from these discussions and a number of tidying up amendments. I do not intend to speak at length on this bill since members can read the

original introductory speech in Hansard. The amendments are being introduced both as a result of changes in soil conservation philosophy throughout Australia and because it is necessary to have legislation in the Northern Territory which is suited to the particular circumstances prevailing in this region. Legislation must emphasise the need for prevention of soil erosion and the need for proper land use planning.

In most areas of the Northern Territory, the value of the land at the present time is inadequate to justify the very high cost of surgical soil conservation works. Legislation must also recognise that soil erosion and land degradation can be caused by many other forms of land use than agricultural and pastoral practices. Anyone who is familiar with the massive denudation of land that precedes the development of new suburbs in Northern Territory towns would have seen the accumulation of silt on roadways following sharp storms. Such accumulations, which may represent a loss of more than 100 tons of topsoil from each acre, cause storm water drains to block and the new pavement and drain inlets to be undermined. The silt has to be scraped up and carted away and loads of topsoil have to be brought in from elsewhere at some not inconsiderable cost either to the hapless householder or more frequently the taxpayer. There is a growing awareness elsewhere in Australia that topsoil is worth saving and can be saved at very little extra cost by dint of forethought and planning. Remedial costs can be largely overcome and a better environment can be created at the same time. Legislation must go some way to protect the land of the Northern Territory from thoughtless exploitation by outside interests. The giant agricultural developments which have hit the Northern Territory in recent years have achieved little but have ravaged vast areas of productive land. Much of this could have been avoided with proper planning and the projects would have succeeded to the benefit of the Northern Territory.

The arid grazing lands of the Northern Territory pose a special problem.

These are a valuable but fragile resource, easily damaged but very difficult and very slow to recover. The run of good seasons in recent years, coupled with the beef market recession, have allowed the buildup of cattle numbers throughout our arid zone. This bill seeks to increase the power of the Commissioner for Soil Conservation to deal with this overstocking situation, should it become necessary to, by ordering a landholder to reduce stock numbers. Such an order must first be approved by the Administrator in Council. The bill clarifies the power of soil conservation officers to enter land. It stresses the need for an officer to obtain the permission of a landholder before going upon his land. This is in line with the general thrust of this bill that soil conservation can only succeed where there is cooperation. Nevertheless, an officer still retains the right to enter property but only after notice has been served in the approved fashion, 28 days beforehand.

The increasing popularity of offroad vehicles and trail bikes is creating problems here, as in the rest of Australia. By recognising the legitimate needs and desires of the urban population to get away from it all out in the bush, this bill seeks to ban or control the use of vehicles in areas which are particularly subject to soil erosion.

Finally, the bill seeks to widen the scope for provision of loans for soil conservation. It seeks to recognise that economic considerations are not necessarily the only or the most important criteria for a soil conservation loan. Instead it recognises that maintenance or improvement of land stability is the criterion of prime importance.

I commend this bill to honourable members as a piece of environmental legislation, progressive in outlook yet realistically tailored to the needs and aspirations of Territorians and to the state of development of the Northern Territory.

Mr STEELE: I support this proposition. We had the same sort of proposition introduced last year, and I did

tell my constituents at the time that this bill would have the effect of looking after a certain area of land behind my electorate. Of course, it never materialised. The bill will have the effect, I think, that if land is being knocked around and being damaged the Land Commissioner will be able to declare it a restricted area for vehicles and those sorts of things. I just thought I would get in early and commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL

(Serial 193)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Dr LETTS: I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the passage of this bill during the current sitting.

By way of explanation, Mr Speaker, I had seriously thought of approaching you for urgency on this bill, and I think that had I done so there would have been a very good chance that you would have granted it. But perhaps it is a little bit different from the ordinary urgency request based on hardship. Two of the things contained in this bill deal with holidays for public servants and are related to a holiday which is coming up next Monday. If it is not properly legalised, then some hardship might be caused for public servants in the Northern Territory Public Service. The other is another provision which relates to hardship which may be caused to people under the superannuation provisions. I have not sought to proceed through the standing orders urgency provisions. However, that is why I am moving for a suspension of standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

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

At the opening of this session of the Assembly, His Honour the Administrator informed us that the question of the Public Service Ordinance was being reviewed and that problems associated

with its implementation would be corrected as they came to light. This particular bill results from such a review and will correct some of the present problems and ensure the rights of the Northern Territory public servants.

The first amendment, to be made by clause 4 of the bill, empowers the Administrator in Council to make a temporary appointment to a position of Chief Executive Officer when a vacancy in that office is expected to arise when the incumbent will be temporarily absent from duty. The present provision in section 19(4) empowers the Administrator in Council to act only when there is a vacancy. We recognise that the offices of Chief Executive Officer are key positions in the administration of the Northern Territory Public Service and it is desirable to have an anticipatory power in the Administrator's Council to ensure continuity of the office rather than wait until it becomes vacant and then start moves to fill it.

The next amendment, inserted by clause 5, relates to the general principle of permanent employment of all Northern Territory public servants. The principal ordinance provides that all employees except for those specifically employed for a set period shall be permanent employees. With this, goes the requirement to enter into the superannuation scheme. Among some of the people already transferred in some industrial classes are persons who only wish to have temporary employment or who are not many years off retirement and who would gain no advantage - in some cases, they would suffer a disadvantage and loss financially - by joining the superannuation scheme. It is not desired to impose harsh conditions on such people nor to go through the administrative problems of admitting persons with no wish for permanent employment to such a scheme. The amendment provides therefore that specified classes of employees will be employed in the first instance for a particular term. It will be necessary for the commissioner to make a declaration in respect to each of those employees as to whether his employment is on a permanent basis and so admitting him to superannuation benefits or on a speci-

fied term of appointment. This will cater for those who only seek temporary employment in such fields as parks and gardens, municipal gangs etc or those whose remaining years of service are so few that they would suffer financial loss by joining the superannuation scheme, while those who wish for permanent employment or are in an age group that can benefit from it would be made permanent. Unless a provision such as this is inserted, there is no option other than to commence superannuation deductions from all industrial employees, whether that is to their advantage or disadvantage and whether they wish it or not.

Clause 6 as drafted empowers the Public Service Commissioner to direct that certain appointments, promotions or transfers need not be advertised. The intention is to remove the need for advertising in respect of short-term temporary promotions during absences on leave etc. While I strongly support the principle of advertising vacancies, advertising of all such short-term appointments would create a tremendous problem with no real benefit. As clause 6 is expressed at the moment in the bill before the Assembly, it seems to place an arbitrary power in the commissioner to direct in respect of any such position; this could be construed as a means of protection of favoured officers. I foreshadow that I will move amendment to this clause to make the requirement to be for advertising of all positions except for those specified in determinations; this removes any possibility of undesirable practice.

The next provision as shown in clause 7 provides appointments of chief executive officer be not subject to appeal. The position of chief executive officer includes a departmental head. Appointments to those positions are made by the Administrator in Council not merely by normal public service promotion. The Administrator in Council selects and appoints a particular person to administer one of the units of administration which comprise the Northern Territory Public Service. It is proposed that the council's selection be final and not subject to appeal. This is consistent I understand with the procedures

which are carried out in the Australian Public Service.

The amendment proposed by clause 8 is formal. It ensures the validity of by-laws and provides the requirements for evidentiary purposes, but removes the need for them to be numbered in the general regulations of the Territory.

Finally, the amendment proposed by clause 9 empowers the declaration of holidays for Northern Territory public servants, a power which is missing from the principal ordinance. I am sure that most of our public servants will welcome the inclusion of such a power. The declared holidays follow the usual pattern, but there is a provision for the declaration of holidays to a total of 4 in addition to the listed holidays. This covers the declaration of a special holiday, for a particular reason such as the oncoming Queen's visit and for a section of the public service to be required to work on a public holiday where necessary. Employees so required to work would be covered as to conditions relating to that employment in their general conditions of service.

In commending the bill to the Assembly, I point out that it makes necessary amendments to conditions of service, both as to rights of employees and to the effective operation of the public service and covers matters which have come to light since we first put the bill through this Assembly. It is necessary to make these changes as soon as possible and that is the reason why I sought a suspension of standing orders. I commend the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.

Clause 6:

Dr LETTS: I move an amendment to clause 6 as circulated in schedule 4.1.

The reason for this small amendment is to remove any arbitrary power from the Public Service Commissioner to make

a personal direction which may be influenced by a personal opinion. It provides for it to be done by a determination, in which case it has to pass through the procedures of being examined by other responsible people before the appointment can be made or before the determination as to advertise or not is made.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

UNITING CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA BILL

(Serial 194)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

Before speaking to the heart of the bill, I would like to say briefly that the United Church of Northern Australia is the only one of its kind in Australia. It was after the second world war that the decision was made to bring together the work of these 3 major denominational churches, namely the Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and, in association with the Church of Christ, to form the United Church of Australia in 1955-56.

If you read some of the early history of the settlers in the Territory, it was during the movement of people to Pine Creek in 1871 that the Congregational Union of South Australia, in assembly, expressed concern that there should be some provision made for the spiritual needs of the people in the north. The first Christian service was conducted by Mr Alexander Gore at the residency of Captain W. Bloomfield-Douglas, the Administrator at Palmerston, in 1872, which was the first settlement on Australia's north coast established on the shores of Port Darwin. From that day on, over a century ago, the 3 major denominations have established themselves in every

major city of the Northern Territory. The spiritual work and guidance from the early missionaries and the various ministers of the United Church in north Australia has been a commitment by very dedicated people for which we must be truly thankful. That church is in fact a voluntary union which has proved to be a most successful venture in church cooperation and has enabled the church to act in a more effective manner than would have been the case had it been split into 3 distinct smaller congregations.

The United Church is, so to speak, a de facto union. It is an amalgamation of convenience of the 3 constituent churches and is controlled by the United Church Board in Sydney, the board comprising representatives of the 3 churches. The United Church is not a separate legal identity in its own right and, as such, it has no power to acquire and hold property. This fact alone would support the need for legislation in the Northern Territory. However, more importantly, moves have been afoot for some years to form a single national church in place of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches. Various meetings and assemblies have already been held and a basis of union has been agreed upon. It is proposed to formally establish the new national church at an assembly held in June of this year after which time the 3 constituent churches will cease to exist. In some states, small groups may wish to continue their separate existence and this has been agreed to but, in the main, most members and clergy of the 3 churches will join the new national church. It is to be called the Uniting Church in Australia.

To facilitate the formation of this new church and to enable the participants to unite and adopt a constitution in accordance with the basis of union already agreed upon, it is proposed to pass legislation in each of the states and mainland territories. The bill now before members is designed to this end. The bill has the added purpose of establishing a separate Northern Territory property trust in which all church property will be vested and which will be controlled by the local synod. In this regard, the bill is similar to 2

similar or earlier items of legislation recently passed by the Assembly. The bill has been prepared in close consultation with the United Church in Northern Australia and its solicitors. It follows substantially a draft bill prepared by the state of New South Wales but with necessary adaptations for the Northern Territory situation. This bill will not only enable the Northern Territory congregation to join in with the new national church but will also place the United Church on a much firmer legal footing. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

FISHERIES BILL

(Serial 170)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Dr LETTS: I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the passage of this bill during the course of this sitting.

I have not examined the bill but the honourable member for Port Darwin has discussed it with me and, from the information he has given me, I believe there could be the possibility of injustice to people engaged in the fishing industry should correction to the existing legislation not be made.

Motion agreed to.

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

In so moving, I desire to bring to the attention of the Assembly the difficulties which are presently to be found in the existing Fisheries Ordinance. This provides for licences to be granted to quite a number of people for quite a number of diversified activities within the fishing industry and one of the licences is that of an employee in the fishing industry. While I very willingly went along with this bill when it was introduced some years ago, it seems in practice that the result of the application of those provisions of the Fisheries Ordinance which relate to the forfeiture of licences has had a very unfortunate

effect. Somebody who goes fishing without a licence can have his right to obtain the licence denied for 3 years. He will not be able to obtain another licence under the Fisheries Ordinance. But the provisions of section 17 of the ordinance which relate to a licence to be engaged as an employee in the fishing industry seem to have been perhaps inadvertently caught up within the net.

I agree that persons who fish without a licence, or persons who do not observe the provisions of the Fisheries Ordinance, ought to be very heavily dealt with and their licences ought to be taken from them. I do not disagree with the provisions of the Fisheries Ordinance relating to the taking away of a licence from some person who has not behaved in accordance with the ordinance. But it seems very difficult and very hard and, I think, socially undesirable that a person who has been working in the fishing industry all his life should, because he has not perhaps been able to obtain a licence - and I have one instance in which that was the fact - and has fished without a licence for a week, should be completely prohibited from working in the fishing industry for 3 years. That is the result of the present ordinance. If you commit an offence against the Fisheries Ordinance, then you cannot obtain any sort of licence for 3 years.

There is, generally speaking, a shortage of people who are skilled in the fishing industry in the Northern Territory and it seems to me that to say that somebody who loses a licence cannot be employed in the fishing industry for a following 3 years is not only a provision which works against the productivity of the fishing industry in the Northern Territory but is a provision which works very hard against a man whose life is bound up with fishing. The bill that I have introduced, therefore, seeks to obtain the effect that, notwithstanding the provisions of the ordinance relating to the inability of a person to obtain a licence, a person should still be able to be employed in the industry if certain conditions are satisfied. I direct honourable members' attention to the proposed subsection (3) of section 17 that is contained in the bill. The

proposal is that a person who has lost a licence for some reason may be employed in the industry but only subject to certain conditions. In effect, the new subsection (3) puts the onus on the Chief Inspector to decide whether or not the person concerned ought to have an employee's licence. I have drafted the section in this way because, if somebody is deprived of a licence, he can easily go to his next door neighbour and say, "You can take over the whole of my equipment and I will sign a document to that effect and I will be employed as your employee"; and thereafter a person who has flagrantly abused the Fisheries Ordinance may obtain an employee's licence which is entirely fictitious.

I direct honourable members' attention to the terms of the proposed subsection (3) which will avert that possibility. The granting of an employee's licence, notwithstanding that the person concerned has had another licence forfeited, is entirely dependent upon the opinion of the Chief Inspector and paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) set out the nature of the opinions which the Chief Inspector may form. He must be satisfied that a hardship would be occasioned to the employee, that the person has been regularly employed in the fishing industry and that, for the period during which the person would have been debarred from applying for a licence by virtue of section 15A(7), the person will be a bona fide employee. This prevents the sort of abuse that could be available if the section merely had said that the Chief Inspector may issue an employee's licence to a person who had another licence which had been cancelled.

There are at least 5 or 6 persons, and I personally know of 2, who have worked in the fishing industry all their lives and who have inadvertently been deprived of a licence as a fisherman and who cannot obtain employment anywhere else except in the fishing industry and who do not want to obtain employment except in that industry. I suggest that the terms of the amendment are such that any evils which may be thought to follow from letting an employee whose licence has been cancelled come back into the industry are completely foiled.

Dr LETTS: I rise not to question the drafting of the bill nor the intention of the bill but I wish to make a point with regard to the procedure which we are adopting in bringing this bill in today and treating it under suspension of standing orders as a matter of urgency. Although I have moved and the Majority Party has supported this course of action, neither the Cabinet Member for Resources nor the Fisheries Branch has actually seen the terms of the honourable member's bill. We know that he is highly qualified in legal matters and no doubt he has had expert drafting assistance but a question of policy is involved here. I believe it would only have been fair and reasonable that both the Cabinet Member and the department concerned should have had the opportunity to see the words used and examine their effect. I would suggest to the honourable member that, if he wishes to get urgency in future, that would be a reasonable course to follow. I do not propose to attempt to oppose the further passage of the bill on the basis of what I know of it but I suggest to him that the question of assent will be one which will be properly referred to the department and the time which may have been saved by the course of action which we are taking today could well be taken up and extended by the proper examination and consultation which the Administrator will feel obliged to make on the matter and in fact no time probably will have been saved at all. I commend that idea to him for his future consideration.

Mr POLLOCK: I feel compelled to speak. I do not argue with the principle of the bill, but I do express my disappointment that I have not been consulted on the matter when it is expected to be passed this afternoon.

Mr WITHNALL: I do not expect anything in this Chamber.

Mr POLLOCK: Notice was given of this bill more than a fortnight ago and I think that reasonable time has been afforded the honourable member to discuss the matters contained in the bill with me. I believe he has contacted the department verbally and they do not have a great deal of opposition...

Mr Withnall: No, orally,

Mr POLLOCK: Orally then, same difference. Although they have not seen it, they agree perhaps with the principle and I am not disagreeing with that either. The honourable member would be very quick on his feet if the situation arose on the other side of the House.

Mr WITHNALL: I accept the admonishment administered to me by the Majority Leader. If the honourable member thinks that further consideration of the bill ought to be necessary, then I am quite happy to have it adjourned. The remarks of the honourable Cabinet Member for Resources are not quite due because quite frequently I have been faced with a bill in this Chamber which was to pass in one sitting. If the honourable member had found it important or necessary to examine the terms of the bill, as one other Cabinet Member did, I would have been quite happy to provide it to him. He has not sought a copy of the bill and, if he had, it would have been readily available.

Mr Pollock: I asked a fortnight ago.

Mr WITHNALL: The honourable member asked me a fortnight ago, Mr Speaker, what was contained in the bill and I told him that, if he had asked for a copy of it, he would have been supplied with it. At least, I am not guilty of what I would call legislation by ambush and if honourable members opposite find that they need time to look at this bill, I will be quite happy to have it adjourned in spite of the motion moved by the honourable Majority Leader. I would not like to have it said that I tried to steer a bill through this Assembly without sufficient notice. If the honourable member wants to have a further look at it, I am quite happy to accept a motion for adjournment.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL COUNCILS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Continued from 16 March.

Mr TAMBLING: I would like to add a few brief comments on the report. In general, I accept the recommendations that the committee has put forward and I look forward to considering them in the coming months, particularly with regard to the budgetary implications which obviously will now have to be carefully weighed, as it will create a new policy in the Northern Territory if adopted by the Cabinet. Some time ago, the Government decided that, in future, if the regional councils system was to operate from 1 July this year, it would have to do so under the auspices of state governments. I would therefore assume that, in the Northern Territory, it will be necessary for the Cabinet to pick up the funding of these organisations if it is required.

The one concern that I do have with regard to the committee's deliberations is the lack of what I would term really positive evidence in Darwin and Alice Springs. In appendix A, we see that only 9 people came forward in both Darwin and Alice Springs and I believe that at least 5 of those 9 in each of those centres were directly involved with the promotion of the regional council concept and the Australian Assistance Plan. What does concern me is that I thought the vast number of other community organisations who are affected by the activities of regional councils would have taken that opportunity to present to the committee views as to the effectiveness of either the Australian Assistance Plan or the regional council policies as they have been adopted. Looking at the people who gave evidence in Darwin, I see that a further 2 represented local government and I could anticipate what their contribution would have been. Another one represented the Education Department which leaves only one person who represented the general community viewpoint from many other organisations that carry out similar types of activity.

This concerns me because I do think that those other organisations should have made a contribution to such a select committee, to have acquainted us either with their support or their criticism of the regional council concept. I do not believe that we ought to

accept that, because the only groups giving major evidence were naturally in support, this therefore ought to be adopted as necessarily reflecting the total community output. My personal observation I outlined at the time the select committee was first mooted, and that was that I fully accepted Katherine as a very necessary, a viable and worthwhile council in what it was achieving in that community. I did have reservations, and I still hold them, about the activities of the regional councils in both Darwin and Alice Springs, and I believe other members have alluded to areas where I hold these reservations. We do have 2 very good communities in Darwin and Alice Springs that have fantastic community organisations that work effectively and which I do not believe are looking for much support from the regional council.

Mr POLLOCK: I rise as a member of the committee. Unfortunately yesterday I was not able to hear all the remarks of other speakers in relation to the matter. The regional councils for social development have been organised on a Territory-wide basis and, whilst there may be some failings in some areas, overall the committee considered that they were of value to the community.

As the Cabinet Member for Finance has said, with the transfer of functions, the funding for this operation, if it is to continue, will need to come from the Northern Territory government funds. Therefore, we might say that we are going into a new stage and perhaps it might not be a bad idea to start afresh in some respects and to change the title of these organisations. I like the terminology used by the Tennant Creek Community Development Council and perhaps, if the organisations were to change their title to "Community Development Councils", they might be able to get a fresh start and wipe the slate a little of some of the errors that they may have made to date. One would hope that those errors would not continue.

The aspect that has concerned me has been the amount which has been expended purely on administration and somebody did allude to the fact that, if that

amount had been provided in administrative assistance to members of this House, the whole community might have been better off. I would tend to agree that we could do with a bit more assistance here. However, the amount of funds that are allocated to each of the bodies is needed for them to operate effectively and one would hope that the funds would allow the continued funding at the current level.

I am disappointed that the Government has decided that the funds will have to come from state or territory coffers. This has caused some problems, particularly in the states which will receive no additional allowance in their grants to cover these costs. We hope that, in our vote, we won't be put to any disadvantage for other areas which we may want to contribute to in the development of the Territory. I support the report.

Mr BALLANTYNE: As a member of the committee, I would like to speak briefly on the report. First, I would like to thank the chairman of the committee, the honourable member for Port Darwin, and also the other member of the committee, the Cabinet Member for Resources. We approached the task with an open mind. There had been a lot of talk about regional councils and the Labor Government started this regional development. This dates back to the Ben Chifley days of getting more power for local government, taking away state powers and forming a centralist type of government. As the honourable member for Gillen said yesterday, there was certainly some trend towards that.

When we looked into the councils and their operation, there were some misgivings. There were some people to whom we could give praise because they had done a lot of hard work. Particular praise has been given to Katherine where 19 people gave submissions. This shows the enthusiasm which has come out of their work. One thing that I did notice was that there were many women. It gave much pleasure to women to set up these councils, particularly the formation of creches. At first, some of these women didn't know how to go about starting a creche, how to finance it, how to run it or how to get a building.

It was very satisfying to see that they did get some real satisfaction out of their work and that their work will continue on a voluntary basis.

It is one of the aims that people have to approach the councils to tell the council what they want. The councils were not to go to the people and say, "This is what you want and this is what you are going to do". The main philosophy is that the people had to go to the councils. However, much of it wasn't done that way because there was some motivation towards other groups with similar ideas and similar aims.

The main problem was that, when they first started out, they didn't know what they had to do. There are so many fields that could be covered in social development and people didn't know where to start. That was why there was some confusion right from the start. In Darwin, they had a perfect situation to set up a very good organisation. However, I was totally disappointed in the number of people who came forward from Darwin and Alice Springs. There were 9 people from each place. Tennant Creek, which had only been going 3 months, supplied 11 representations from very enthusiastic people and Katherine had 19. I would like to thank the chairman for the way in which he handled the select committee. I had a lot of pleasure in taking part in that committee.

Mr WITHNALL: Given the task set for this committee, it was inevitable that we would find some things that we did not approve of, but I am glad to report that we found very many things that we did approve of. In the task given to these regional councils, it is inevitable that, without firm guidelines, they would tend to develop in their own way. It is one of the values of the regional councils that they tended to find their own level within the community. They tended to find the impetus which the community has towards its own social development and assisted in every way they could towards that development.

Some honourable members have spoken about political alliances, about political tendencies, and indeed they were there. But when I think of this

fairly new idea, I think that it is early days. Where political influences have intruded into these organisations, the tendency to dampen down those political efforts will undoubtedly be shown in following years. The concept is a good one. The concept really is that every community should be responsible for finding out what is wrong with the social organisation of the community, what should be done about it and how it should be done. I regard that as a proposal which is wholly acceptable. I regard the idea that each community should work out its own salvation in this area to be probably the best idea that anybody could formulate. That is what I accept.

In spite of the minor faults which have been found as a result of the select committee's investigation, the job that has been done is a first class one and ought to be continued. The job has been acceptable to each community and has undoubtedly assisted each community. I say to honourable members who have criticised, particularly, the Darwin Regional Council, that their criticism ought to be tempered by regarding what that council has been able to achieve, and it has achieved quite a bit. The members who criticised the Alice Springs Regional Council ought to look at the other side of the coin too and think of what has been achieved, and I think a good deal has,

Mr Robertson: I never denied that.

Mr WITHNALL: I agree with the honourable member for Gillen that most members have supported them and this Legislative Assembly ought to accept that the concept of the Regional Councils for Social Development is a concept which has been successful to a large degree, which in the future will be successful to a greater degree, and that it is a concept that ought very well to be continued and ought to be taken under the wing of the administration which the honourable Majority Leader leads.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Mr TAMBLING: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

In yesterday's adjournment debate, the honourable member for Nightcliff raised the topic of the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund. She raised a number of questions for which she sought answers. I took note of the comments of the honourable member and contacted the office of the Minister for the Northern Territory. I have been provided with information which I will read in full:

The reports for July, August and September 1976 were presented by the Minister to Parliament on 22 February 1977. It is regretted that copies were not simultaneously provided to the Legislative Assembly or the Corporation of the City of Darwin.

The funds referred to in the ministerial statement have been repaid by the Mayor's Trust Fund and the Darwin and District Spastic Paralysis Association and are lodged in the account maintained by the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. These moneys were repaid on 18 February 1977. A cheque was received from the Queensland Premier's Department payable to the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund for \$752.05. The cheque was returned, advising that the Trust Fund had been closed and, consistent with the decisions taken at the meeting held on 30 September 1976, the Premier's Department was informed that it was the trustees' wishes that any additional funds received should be directed to the Mayor's Trust Fund. The chairman was not advised.

Eight claims have been received since the trust last met on 30 September 1976. These claims were received on 14 December, 15 December, 30 December, 8 February, 2 on 28 February, 4 March and 7 March, and will be considered by the trustees at the next meeting. Certainly a further report will need to be made to cover the fact that a further meeting will be held, probably in April. The question of subsequent reports will depend on decisions at the next meeting.

Mr STEELE: We have all seen reports that departmental executives in the public service are saying that they cannot do their work because of staff ceilings. Probably in much of the work that is being done in the public service today, there is no proper distribution of priorities between one department or another in terms of overall efficiency and maximum benefit that flows from some of these departments. It has been highlighted also that, in our own local police force, for reasons of staff shortage and lack of money, certain jobs cannot be fulfilled. I have been a great advocate for the provision of 2 policemen at isolated bush stations and I wonder if perhaps a time and motion study could not be done on aspects of police administration. I am not talking about a full inquiry or report; I think the police do a fine job. However, I am concerned that, in some cases, it may need a murder or extreme violence to produce a result that might have been accommodated by a more thorough investigation of procedures and management.

Mr RYAN: Before I get onto my main subject, I would just like to make one comment. In the paper this afternoon, it is reported that 2 members of the police force were wounded today in apprehending a person who was giving forth with a few shots around the place. I think it is at times like these that we should bring to the attention of the citizens that this is what it is all about. We often see the police criticised for being too zealous in their approach to the enforcement of law but, when a situation arises where 2 people placed their lives in jeopardy to arrest somebody and they were both wounded, I think people tend to accept this. Maybe in a few month's time there might be some recommendations made for bravery, but it is all too often that the public just sit back. I think that a lot of people appreciate in private the action of the members of the police force but I do not think that it is really brought into the open. I am quite sure that I would not be at all happy about trying to apprehend somebody who was firing bullets in my direction but these 2 men today had to do this and they were both wounded. I think that people in the Northern

Territory should have a little think about it and next time somebody suggests that the law enforcement officers in the Territory might be a little bit rough with some demonstrator etc, that when the chips are down, these people are prepared to put their lives on the line.

In yesterday's adjournment debate, we heard another attack on the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund trustees by the member for Nightcliff. That member, in her attack on the trustees, concentrated on 2 areas. The first related to the non-presentation to this Assembly of the monthly reports of the trust for the months of July, August and September by the Assembly delegate on the trust, the member for Jingili, who is not with us today. The member for Nightcliff pursued this matter as though it were a deliberate thing and cast it in a most sinister light. I draw your attention, Mr Speaker, to the fact that, over the preceding 18 months of the trust's operation, all monthly reports had been tabled. Many of them were tabled late but, at the time, the member for Nightcliff seemed to have no quarrel with this. Perhaps she then realised the difficulties under which the trust operated. The Executive Member, Mr John McDonald, who was responsible for the preparation of the monthly reports, was often months behind in doing so but the trustees and, one would have thought, members of this Assembly - seemed to appreciate the practical position. I understand that, before being tabled, the reports were sent to the Clerk of the Assembly by Mr McDonald and given by the Clerk to the member for Jingili to be tabled. They were never given directly to the member for Nightcliff. I bitterly resent the innuendo contained in yesterday's comment by the member for Nightcliff where it seemed to be implied that the member for Jingili withheld monthly reports of the trust from this Assembly. I consider that both his honour and his honesty were questioned by the member for Nightcliff.

There are further grounds for complaint in the other angles on which the member for Nightcliff based her criticisms. She said that the delegate of the Assembly should have regard to

resolutions of the Assembly in relation to his conduct as a trustee. There are no resolutions of the Assembly governing his conduct other than the resolution approving the trust and appointing the delegate. The only complainant of the trustees' conduct in this Assembly to date has been the member for Nightcliff. Whilst the member for Jingili now believes that there may be other reports of the trust that have not been tabled, they have never, to the best of his knowledge, he assures me, been brought to his notice. The Executive Member, and I assume that he is referring to Mr McDonald, has never given them to him, and he therefore refutes the implications of withholding information from this Assembly.

I wonder what the honourable member for Nightcliff is about in her apparent campaign against the trustees. Is she attempting to drive people from accepting positions such as these or is she attempting to discourage people from donating money to worthwhile causes? I did ask the honourable member for Jingili whether the honourable member for Nightcliff had approached him on any occasions asking whether he had any reports that needed to be tabled, and he assures me that she has never asked him about the 3 monthly reports which she says are missing. Once again, we have seen the honourable member for Nightcliff looking for a certain amount of limelight in placing before this Assembly and the press what she considers misdeeds of people who are working in the best interests of the majority of people living in Darwin.

This attitude that she displays quite frequently could be distasteful to some people; it is to me. It annoys me that, in her attempts to gain publicity, she has in fact completely destroyed 2 projects which I believe would have been of great benefit to the people of Darwin. The first was the project to have a community centre built. The money that was put aside for that particular project would have only been a start because a lot more money would have been required to complete the project. But this community centre would have contained meeting rooms for clubs and organisations, a library, a creche and facilities for the performing arts. How

often have we seen the honourable member for Nightcliff stand up in this House to support any efforts that are being made in the Territory for performing arts? The other area in which this money had been distributed was to a handicapped childrens' association. They had received a large grant which would have attracted a further subsidy, possibly even as great as 4 to 1. The honourable member for Nightcliff pointed out that the way this money was given was so terrible that it should be given back. It is my opinion that the honourable member for Nightcliff is sadly misdirected in her approach. I don't believe that she has gained anything out of her activities and it would have been a lot better if she had sat down and quietly seen these benefits given to the people of Darwin.

I just wonder if the honourable member for Nightcliff is as interested in a project in her own electorate? The Nightcliff Youth Club has been given a large amount of money which has not yet been used. Perhaps the honourable member for Nightcliff could have used her activities and energies, instead of trying to destroy what I believe were good and proper projects, into looking after her own electorate, which she often tries to indicate to us is her main objective, and getting the Nightcliff Youth Club off the ground. She may have some contacts on that particular committee looking after the youth club and she may be able to ensure that the money is spent and that her particular electorate receives some benefit from the money which she has sought to deny from other areas.

Mrs LAWRIE: It is fortunate that this is an adjournment debate and I can rise to reply to the total misrepresentation which has just occurred. It is a pity that I do not have the transcript of the incredible speech of the honourable member for Millner but I shall try to recall it.

First, if, as I believe, the honourable member for Millner was reading from a prepared statement by the honourable member for Jingili, it is a pity that the statement was prepared before the member for Jingili had time to read what I said the following day.

Had the honourable members had that opportunity before that incredible speech was made, they would have realised that at no time did I imply, let alone say, that any member of this House had wilfully, maliciously or negligently withheld reports. Indeed, I was most careful to quote from the articles of the trust deed, articles 14 and 16, which show, if you care to look at page 34 of last night's Hansard, that the presentation of the monthly reports has to come from the chairman of the trust. It has to come through him to this Assembly. I was very careful to point out the reasons for my concern about their non-presentation and I will repeat it. I am concerned because they have been presented in another place. There was no suggestion of malice or ill-will but a very strong suggestion that this Assembly appears to be being ignored when the trust deed states clearly that the reports have to be presented in 3 places: the Federal House, which has been done; the Assembly, where it has not been done; and the Corporation of the City of Darwin, where apparently it has not been done. I thank the honourable Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government for his attention in securing those replies.

The honourable member for Millner suggested that I had shown discourtesy by not approaching the member for Jingili privately and asking him about the reports. They have obviously forgotten that at the last sittings of this Assembly another member - and I recall that it was the member for Casuarina - asked where the reports of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund were. He received a reply from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government that they were not available. The reply intimated that they were in the course of preparation and that he expected them to be presented in this House early this year. I recall that answer clearly. Because of that undertaking, given in good faith by the Cabinet Member responsible, I made no further inquiries of that Cabinet Member or of any other member.

We had a sittings 2 weeks ago and there were no reports. We will rise until May - a fact of which I was well

aware - and I therefore asked the Cabinet Member why we hadn't received the reports and why the chairman of the trust hadn't shown this Assembly the courtesy due to it, and had not operated in terms of the trust deed. The honourable member in his answer this afternoon has shown that, although the reports were presented in the Federal House, it is regretted that they were not presented here. That is a regret that I share. I would suggest to the honourable chairman of the trust - and I shall do so in writing that, until this Assembly has a chance to see the reports, the trust must not be wound up.

The honourable member for Millner suggested that I saw something sinister in the late presentation of reports last year by the honourable member for Jingili. I don't know where he got that idea because neither here, nor to the press, nor in any other form have I ever suggested such a thing. I am well aware that, as soon as the reports came to hand last year, they were presented in this House. My entire bone of contention is that, while the reports are now available, they haven't been tabled here - through an oversight, a lack of courtesy, who knows what - by the chairman of the trust because the trust deed is set up in such a way that reports come through him.

While listening to the emotional outpourings of the member for Millner on behalf of the member for Jingili, I have re-read my speech. I can see no part of my speech which suggests malice, ill-will, lack of concern or lack of propriety by the trustees. In my announcements to the press, I have stressed every time that not for one minute do I entertain the suggestion that the trustees are dishonest. I repeat that now. It should not need repetition. My speech last night gave no indication that I entertained such thoughts. I re-read my speech because I thought such an opinion might have been assumed from something I had said, even though I have been at pains constantly to deny it. On re-reading my speech, I find there are no grounds for that suspicion. I hope I have laid that little bogey to rest once and for all.

The reason I had to speak in such terms last night to try to elicit information as to the operation of the trust was because we have not had any reports since June of last year. That is incredible. At the very least, it is poor management and I would have expected every member of this House to back me, if on nothing else, on one point and that point is how improper it is for 3 subsequent reports to have been tabled in the Federal House last month and not tabled here and in the Corporation of the City of Darwin as required. How is it that members of this House, who are so jealous of their responsibilities to the people who elected them, have not seen fit to support me in this? How can they remain so silent while this Assembly is bypassed? It may be a simple forgetfulness on the part of the chairman, a lack of courtesy, but bypassed we have been. It would be more proper and more fitting for every member to support me in my concern over this point.

The honourable member for Millner went on to say that, through some mysterious and malign influence, I had killed 2 projects. He mentioned the Mayor's community centre and the handicapped persons association. I repeat what I have said all along: until such time as the trustees have assured themselves that there are no people in special need, and I am not talking of across the board a dollar a head, I don't believe the money should be given to funding any such centre. When it can be shown that reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that there is no continuing need, that will be a different matter. As for the handicapped persons centre, I had nothing to do with that. That decision was taken by the Minister following advice that he received. The first I knew about it was when I read it in the press. It is a little unfair to start bringing home on my head actions taken by the Minister for the Northern Territory. I reject and refute that particular little claim utterly and completely.

The honourable member for Millner, in the third part of his incredible speech, then went on to mention a project within my electorate - the Nightcliff Youth Centre. I am aware that

that organisation has received funds. As I said in a press release, which the papers saw fit to edit heavily, I am also aware that many other organisations were funded and I supported those fundings at the time. I have no quarrel with any of them, not simply the Nightcliff Youth Centre that everybody seems to seize upon. When I gave this press release to the paper, they did not bother to print that part of it. The public perhaps are unaware of my feelings. The honourable member for Millner is perhaps unaware of my feelings. However, he never bothered to ask either. He is very quick to claim that he was not consulted, the member for Jingili was not consulted and, according to him, no one was consulted about the funds, although the honourable member for Casuarina had asked questions in this House and the answers were a matter of public knowledge. The honourable member for Millner has never asked me what I thought of the funding of the various organisations. I have said publicly that there are a couple of others I feel should have been funded and were not - for example, the Council for the Aging. I hope we have put that little bit of nastiness in its proper perspective.

To continue with the Nightcliff Youth Centre, he asked if the money was to be used. I am not a member of the committee of that centre. Had he asked yesterday, I could have approached them and tabled a reply. I undertake to do that at the next sittings of the Assembly, I have no time to do it now.

To conclude, I will just repeat that, at no time here, to the press, or anywhere else, have I alleged impropriety on the part of the trustees. For the honourable member for Millner to suggest that I am alleging that is improper in itself and does him no credit.

Mr VALE: I will be very brief. I can be very brief because the staff are starting to look tired and wanting to go and some people would like to find out what is happening on the MCG. I asked some questions of the Cabinet Member for Transport concerning the inspection of scaffolding in Central Australia, and I just want to air my

concern at the answer supplied by the department. I do not think it is satisfactory in any way that they are going to review the scale of fees. The actual fee for the inspection of scaffolding is not that great. The scaffolding inspectors show up in Central Australia, visit building companies, inform them that they are going to take so much off them for the inspection fee, take that amount and then head back to Darwin.

I quote from a copy of a letter which is addressed to Geoff Loveday, the regional co-ordinator in Central Australia, from Sicoma Constructions. A copy was sent to me after discussions with the proprietor of that firm, Gino Marinucci. I quote from the letter: "The inspector called on us armed with the information that we were to erect a building on lot 4462 Elder Street, Alice Springs, for Rumball and Jury Pty Ltd which was quite correct. Then, on the basis of the value of the building a request for a fee of \$16 was made which we paid. A receipt was issued to us which clearly read that the amount paid was for a scaffolding inspection fee". The letter goes on in part to point out the fact that the fees were paid and yet no scaffolding inspection took place. That is the basis of my argument. Until such time that a permanent appointment is made in Central Australia, or until such time as an inspector is down there to actually carry out the inspection, I think the fees should be waived and any fees which have been paid should be refunded. At this stage, I think these fees have been collected under false pretences. Until we have inspectors down there and until inspections are carried out, the department has no right to collect any fees whatsoever,

Mr WITHNALL: I rise to make some remarks about a statement made by the honourable member for Barkly - I forget his Cabinet hat at the moment. I found his remarks in answering a question of mine yesterday somewhat offensive. The honourable member implied that my question was not well founded when I asked about the failure of all departments in the Northern Territory to do something about the very offensive situation that exists in the flats next door to the

Young Women's Christian Association building. The honourable member suggested that the departments had done nothing about it but were doing something. The only information that he was able to give us was that it was with the Crown Law Office to decide what they were going to do. I take exception to what the honourable member said. I accept that he was reporting only what was reported to him, but I take exception to the fact that the situation has existed for so long and that nothing has been done and that the honourable member can say that, over all the period of time when this situation has been permitted to go on, the departments have been concerned in doing something about it. If they had been concerned and if they had done something about it, it would have been obvious by now.

I rise on this occasion to say to the honourable member that I trust that, day by day, week by week, he will inquire, as other people have been inquiring, what exactly has been done. The honourable member cannot say that my statements were wrong that no attention was being paid to it, when nothing has been done and nothing has been attempted to be done at all, and when the police have refused to intervene except when there is a breach of the peace on the premises. The honourable member had better give this matter his closest attention during the next few weeks.

In concluding, Mr Deputy Speaker, may I say that I hope the unknown disability from which the honourable member for Tiwi suffers will be cured very soon because it seems to me that the honourable member's absences from this Chamber have reached the stage when perhaps successive claims of ill health are not perhaps to be really accepted on their face value.

Dr LETTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order under standing order 55. The concluding remarks of the honourable member for Port Darwin constitute a personal reflection on the honourable member for Tiwi in his absence. They should therefore be considered disorderly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call upon the honourable member for Port Darwin to reply if he so wishes.

Mr WITHNALL: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is very difficult in the circumstances to answer any such question because I do not want to disclose the information that I have.

Dr LETTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I put a point of order under standing order 55. I believe that you should rule as to whether the point of order is in order or not and that it is not a matter that is to be interpreted in terms of a personal explanation. I would like to get a ruling on whether my point of order is correct or not.

Mr WITHNALL: Every member of the Chamber can speak to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the Majority Leader for his advice. I do find that the honourable member for Port Darwin has reflected upon the honourable member for Tiwi and ask him to withdraw the remarks.

Mr WITHNALL: Mr Deputy Speaker, could I know exactly what remarks I am expected to withdraw?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: My understanding of the matter is that it was an imputation and that it is clearly covered by standing order 55. It is an imputation that the honourable member for Tiwi has misled the House and, for that reason, I rule in favour of the Majority Leader's point of order.

Mr WITHNALL: I had no such imputation in mind, Mr Deputy Speaker. If that was the imputation, I withdraw it.

Dr LETTS: I rise tonight to speak briefly on a very important matter for the whole of the Northern Territory and that is the subject of the coverage through the Australian Broadcasting Commission of current affairs compared with what they had before. There is a position in Darwin of talks officer attached to the ABC and it has been capably filled by a number of people in recent years. With the limited coverage we now have, most of our programs come from Brisbane. We get a half hour cur-

rent affairs session every night following the news and we have a very short local current affairs program through the ABC Darwin. A combination of circumstances has now come about which will serve the people of the Top End and the whole Territory very disadvantageously. The position of talks officer in the ABC, Darwin is now vacant and, because of the establishment restrictions, it has not been possible to recruit and fill this position. Other officers of the ABC have very competently provided some current affairs coverage on a part-time basis and these have been mostly officers drawn from the rural program section. However, these people have to go on leave and, during their leave, there will be nobody to undertake this work. I also understand that the current half hour segment we get from Brisbane is to be cut out and some sort of local program from Townsville is to be substituted in its place.

This is quite intolerable. The position that we find ourselves in in the Territory is that there are matters of major importance in the history of the Territory, developing from day to day, of which people need to be fully informed. We have the transfer of powers, we have major matters of public interest such as the uranium debate, we have matters of extreme local interest to the people of Darwin such as the electricity supply and the disputes associated therewith. I could go on and on. There has never been a time in history when the people of this Territory and of this city have had so much to interest them. Just at this time, one of the main channels of communication decides to shut up shop in Darwin. It is just not good enough.

I have written in fairly strong terms to the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Mr Duckmanton, and I have asked him for a review of these decisions as a matter of urgency. I hope that Mr Duckmanton will see the point and be able to reply to me soon. We must get this program restored. If not, I am prepared to go to the highest levels possible in order to see that people get the communications which they pay for and are entitled to in this Territory.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I know it is getting late in the day but I would like to say a few words in the adjournment debate. I asked a question about the rebuilding of the Museum and Art Gallery. The Cabinet Member said that he had discussions with the DRC and he was advised that the matter had been looked at for the past 2 years. I do not know whether we know what the Museum and Art Gallery really means to this Territory. The Museum and Art Gallery is a statutory body and it has a very fine director, Dr Colin Jack-Hinton who is probably one of the most expert in his field in Australia.

I have some information on the amount of money which has been spent on collections over the past years. They have spent \$150,000 in the last 7 years. Of traditional Aboriginal art and material culture, we have 1,713 items; modern Aboriginal art, 258 items; Indonesian collections, 171 items; Pacific Island and New Guinea culture material, 214 items; Asian ceramics, 34 items; art collection, 150 items. Then we have natural science collections. We have the reptiles and amphibians - 4,000 specimens; we have arachnids and insects, 3,000 specimens; mammals, 100 specimens; birds, 100 specimens; shells, 2,000 specimens; invertebrates, 2,000 specimens; geological, 500 specimens - which gives a total of 16,000 specimens in all. That is quite a remarkable collection of items which the board has here in Darwin stored away in boxes or stored away in places where nobody can see them.

Mr Dondas: Shameful!

Mr BALLANTYNE: I do not know what the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is doing, but I have been told that it is going to wind up by the end of this year. So far they have spent \$284m on the rehabilitation of Darwin and yet they have not even given one cent to rebuilding or relocating a museum and art gallery building on a site which they are going to determine. I believe the present site of the museum is not quite big enough for future development. There is a plan for 4 or 5 years to spend about \$4m. I am sure that if the DRC spent one per cent of that amount of money, that would only

constitute about \$850,000 in the first year and ...

Mr Dondas: What about a cultural centre?

Mr BALLANTYNE: The honourable member for Casuarina asked, "What about a cultural centre?" That is another thing. We are building all these houses but we are not building any places of interest for people to go and see. We talk about the social problems in the town. One of the biggest things we are lacking here is in the arts and the crafts and the culture in this town. I am appalled that the DRC have not seen fit to look at finding a site. You cannot tell me that it takes 2 years to find a site for a building. I could go out around this town and find 2 or 3 places in half a day. There are plenty of real estate people around here who could point out a lot of places for you. I ask in all sincerity that the honourable Cabinet Member take up this cause to see if we can get some definite answer for the future of the Museums and Art Galleries. They have a very contented staff and how they work in such conditions, I do not know.

It is somewhat of an embarrassment because they have visitors who come to look at some of the arts that we have. There is an interchange of ideas and also there are collections taken elsewhere to be shown. This is recognised by museums all over Australasia and it is considered that Darwin is a major source of reference. This collection of Aboriginal arts is one of the finest you could get anywhere in the world. I do not see why we cannot get these things out of mothballs. Some people have recently built a little, private gallery in Darwin at their own expense, and in very quick time. Why can't the DRC build a museum and gallery?

I would ask the honourable Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Government, in his capacity as a member of the DRC, to speak on behalf of the Museums and Art Galleries Board and put a case to the DRC for consideration to get on to the job now. I only hope that, when the DRC winds up, we don't have to get up here and canvass for funds because I will be really upset.

Mr TUXWORTH: I was asked by the member for Nightcliff yesterday when the Health Department recruitment program for the Casuarina Hospital would start. The reply that I have received from the department is as follows: "The commissioning team is already being assembled from among the ranks of current departmental staff. Other staff will be transferred or new staff recruited as necessary to commission units such as the powerhouse, laundry, accommodation etc. Professional staff will be recruited much closer to the time of commissioning the main ward block in late 1979 or early 1980."

The member for Elsey asked yesterday when the 32-bed ward at Katherine Hospital which was completed ahead of schedule would be opened and why it wasn't being used. The answer I have from the Department is as follows: "The commissioning of the 32-bed ward at the Katherine Hospital was completed ahead of schedule and was temporarily held up due to the requirement of an additional electrical transformer. This has now been provided and the suppliers of the machinery will test their equipment next week prior to putting the ward and other facilities into use".

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy raised a question yesterday in relation to the Ross River virus. The reply that I have for the series of questions is as follows: "The presence of the Ross River virus in the Northern Territory is well known and authenticated. Virus studies have been done in particular by Professor J.A.R. Miles and Dr Ralph Dogherty. The effects of the virus are noted from time to time but do not present a serious problem."

I would just like to reply briefly to the remarks made by the honourable member for Port Darwin a few moments ago relating to replies I have tendered in this House to questions asked by him. I am conscious that often replies supplied by departments are not as thorough, detailed and well informed as one would like them to be. However, until the Executive of this House receives authority in the areas for which it has nominal responsibility, there is very little that can be done to challenge the replies or to improve them, other than to send them back ...

Mr Dondas: Why not give them the sack?

Mr TUXWORTH: ... which becomes a rather onerous paper-shuffling exercise. In reply to the comment just made by the honourable member for Casuarina, that is the whole essence of the matter: we have no relationship with any department such that we can give them the sack; we are not responsible for their actions and they are not responsible to us.

Mr Dondas: But we are responsible to the public.

Mr TUXWORTH: I would like to enlarge on the remarks made by the Majority Leader concerning the standard of ABC radio programs, and television in particular. I have been concerned in the past few weeks at the deteriorating standard of television broadcasting, not the material but the actual broadcasting itself. We seem to have many program delays, program interruptions, program breakdowns. I made an inquiry to Telecom - and it was not an official inquiry; it was purely an inquiry for my own information - and it indicated that the problems come about because, straight after 6 o'clock at night, there is a heavy demand on all the telephone lines and the bearer that carries our television program is often overloaded and is required for the telephonic system. If we are finding that our system is so overloaded with telephone calls after 6 pm that it is interfering with the normal relay of television channels, it is time that Telecom and the ABC came to some arrangement to have a more reliable transmission of the system throughout the Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you come from an area where the television is canned and you do not appreciate the value of television to the community until you have had it and lost it, particularly current television. Television has made an extraordinary difference to the lifestyle of people in Tennant Creek and in Katherine, and it would be a terrible pity for the system of transmission to fall into such a state of disrepair that television was not worth watching. I feel that it is very quickly getting to that stage and I would

support the Majority Leader's comments. The concept of having our current affairs programs transmitted from Townsville instead of Brisbane is to me abhorrent. Every citizen in Tennant Creek would watch the news from Brisbane and the TDT program from Brisbane and I believe they have followed them with great interest. There would be a very great disappointment in the community if those programs were to cease.

Mr KENTISH: Whilst wandering abroad today at midday, I availed myself of the opportunity of buying one of these papers, the Darwin Star. I notice there that one of the first electoral spears has been thrown by an anonymous spear thrower. It says: "Vocal politics. Things must be pretty quiet in the electorate of Arnhem represented in the Legislative Assembly by Mr Rupert Kentish. Just in case any of his constituents are wondering what their member is about, we are able to inform them that he had plenty to say in the adjournment debate this week - 3 pages in Hansard - composed largely of criticism of the people fighting for their independence in East Timor."

That sounds wonderful. Yes, the day before yesterday I did perhaps criticise the Fretilin movement and their radio which is broadcasting. We have more of this rubbish today. It is shocking stuff but we have got more of it on our desks. Fretilin tell us that they are fighting for independence for the country. Actually, what they are fighting for is to impose their communist dictatorship on the country; and the Indonesians are fighting apparently to impose their dictatorship or government on the country - whichever way you like to look at it. But it is overlook-

ing the fact that the people of East Timor are a third party in this battle. Fretilin are now pretending to be the champions of the people they were massacring 2 years ago in Dili. Before the Indonesians arrived, there was great massacre and slaughter in Dili and throughout East Timor. Now Fretilin tell us that, having turned from massacring these people, they are now striving for their independence. That is one for the left. It is all very back to front and I thought I would just remark a little further on that today. It amazes me that anyone in his right senses would want to live in a communist dictatorship. In fact it is very obvious that people do not want to live in such a place. But it surprises me also that the Darwin Star appears to be supporting this Fretilin communistic dictatorship in East Timor.

It is very easy to tell the difference between a communistic dictatorship and a democracy. I don't know any communist country that could really claim to be independent - Tibetans aren't and I don't think Czechoslovakians claim to be independent. The big difference is that in a democracy the problem of a government is how to keep people out of the country. We had free and easy visas a few years ago and they are still trying to round up many thousand people who flooded into the country under that system. The problem is to keep people out of a true democracy or even a partial democracy; the problem in the communist country is how to keep them in and that is the big difference.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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