

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

Parliamentary Record

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NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

First Assembly

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PART I

THE DEBATES

Tuesday 17 August 1976

Mr MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, in view of the recent changes in Executive membership, I hereby revoke my warrant of 14 August 1975 relating to the Deputy Chairmen of Committees, and lay on the table a new warrant nominating Milton James Ballantyne, Nicholas Dondas and Hyacinth Tungutalum to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees when requested to do so by the Chairman of Committees.

LAND TENURE INQUIRY REPORT

Mr TAMBLING: I move that the final report of the commission inquiring into land tenure tabled in the Assembly on 1 June 1976 be noted.

This report is of great importance and significance to the future development of the Northern Territory. There have been over a long period of time various reports and studies on land in the Northern Territory, some of them specifically related to land issues and some of them more generally related to other factors but which have had a bearing on land. We are in a unique historical position in the Northern Territory in that we have an unusual system of land tenure and administration and we have inherited many problems that have arisen because of these particular aspects of our land tenure system and our own constitutional development and administration over a period of time.

The relevance of this report is that it seeks to establish a number of objectives related to social and economic development in the Northern Territory. However, I would point out that it is not only this report that is now seeking to do this; many political parties and many governments have been turning their attention to establishing a very new and suitable form of land tenure policy for the Northern Territory. In a letter to me dated 23 July, the Minister for the Northern Territory has stated: "I believe that

examination of these findings and consideration of the recommendations in the final report of the commission should lead to a stable system of land tenure". I accept that statement and I accept the necessity for us to turn very close attention to this report to make sure that we pick out from it those recommendations which can assist us in determining new land policies. However, we ought at the same time to be very cautious and careful that we do not accept any new recommendations or principles which would impose systems of control or hindrances which could deter the development in the Northern Territory.

If we look specifically at the report and at the terms of reference, we must take into account the political climate in which this commission was engaged and probably the key to that appears in the terms of reference. The commission was asked to inquire into the most appropriate method of leasehold administration and management of land for urban policies etc. That was the initial term of reference but there were some changes to it at a later date, particularly in June of 1973 where additional matters were added: "The existing systems of land tenure and the features including the advantages and disadvantages of each system that relates to the acquisition disposal, development management and redevelopment of land for urban purposes".

We must take into account in any examination or consideration of this report the important changes that have been happening even since 1973 in urban land policies. I have become aware of many changes in urban land emphasis and policy, at international level, at considerations of various Australian states and, not least, in many professional areas of studies in groups related to urban affairs and people related to town planning and land administration. We must also take into account the realities of political priorities. Since 1973, there has been a change of government and that in itself naturally has a bearing on the tenor of any consideration that we must give to this report.

I believe this Assembly is the first legislature to offer a critical scrutiny of this report and therefore I am reluctant to take a very strong or adamant stance on a number of the recommendations at this time. I believe we have got to continue the appraisal of it and we ought to be open to consider the discussions that will take place in other state legislatures, the study that is going to go on obviously in a number of political parties throughout Australia, and a number of views that will have to flow to us from various professional organisations as well. We must also put against the study of this report the very important changes that are happening in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, not least of which are the financial implications that will flow from a number of the proposals or policies in this report if they were adopted, and the implications that they would have on the Northern Territory.

Whilst this inquiry was initially established to look primarily at the land systems of the ACT and the Northern Territory, if you consider the number of submissions and organisations that made representation to the commission that appear in the appendices to the report, you will note that, while some very valuable contributions were made in the Northern Territory by organisations and individuals, they do only comprise a very small input to the total considerations that the commission undertook. Therefore I believe that a number of recommendations that appear are coloured by the weight of other considerations, the important state issues, that have been raised by all of the other witnesses and organisations that made submissions. The Majority Party's attitude to these recommendations is therefore tempered with caution and the necessity for further appraisal. We do not accept the report as a foundation for future policy. There are aspects and parts of the report that we accept, that we believe have considerable merit, but we also accept that there are a number of parts where we will want to be critical. Probably the best assessment of the report is in the report itself on page 9 where the commissioners state:

"The suggestions made in our 2 reports are to a significant extent novel". I stress the importance of that particular word "novel". They are certainly different.

On page 8 the commissioners also state: "We believe it to be a generally desirable principle that change should be evolutionary, adapting existing institutions to desired needs". That is probably the crux of the stance we would wish to take. We would want any change to be evolutionary and to be by local initiative and not imposed from any other source. It is important to recognise that the Commonwealth has no real role or place in the administration or the regulation of land policies. This is more appropriately a function of state governments or local governments. Unfortunately, in the Northern Territory, we are linked constitutionally much closer to the Commonwealth Government and they do have constitutional rights with regard to our land. However, given the spirit of constitutional development in the Northern Territory, I believe they have to vest a great deal more responsibility in accepting the views of this Assembly and the Majority Party at any stage in this Assembly.

There are a number of areas that need further study and exploration and these must now be matched against the actual needs for land and the new policies and the applications that must flow. I believe we must subject this report to a much wider canvassing of community feeling. The recommendations have to be presented to groups such as banks and lending institutions, to real estate interests, to valuers, to industry and commercial interests and to rural and local government organisations. When those views are known that will be the appropriate time to discuss and clarify them with government agencies and with the appropriate Commonwealth Ministers. The comments that will be given this morning must be seen in the context that they are indicative statements of areas that we accept and areas that we wish to criticise, but final comment is yet to be determined. We do not feel that we are yet in a position to be bound by any recommendation of this report.

There are a number of areas in the report on which we have reservations and basically I believe these fall into 2 main areas. These areas are, using the report's own language, the reservation of new use or development rights and therefore the associated aspects of unearned value increments attributable to community growth and, secondly, in a number of areas related to commercial and industrial land and whether or not the land tenure system there ought to be leasehold or freehold title arrangements.

If I can turn more specifically to the report and to the final recommendations which appear on pages 1 to 4, we accept that there is a need in Australia to look carefully at land policies for development purposes and for the needs of the community. However, we see this being primarily the responsibility of the states and national involvement ought to be related not so much to policies but rather to principles and goals in which the national government can co-operate and assist the states through financial assistance where they wish to determine their own policies. With regard to a structure of planning institutions, we believe that there ought to be a ministers' conference certainly and, whether it is called a council or not, it ought to be an annual event similar to most other ministerial-type conferences and the Commonwealth ministers ought only to be involved in those areas where they have direct responsibility or involvement such as finance or perhaps in the Northern Territory or the ACT with regard to these areas. We do not see the necessity to have the supporting secretariats and standing committees of public servants and citizens advisory committees.

I have already canvassed the point of the importance of co-operating fully with the Northern Territory Executive and, in that respect, we do not see any Australian Government agencies dealing directly except within the areas perhaps where they have at this stage constitutional responsibility in the Northern Territory. We see that being assumed more properly locally, given the constitutional development that is now taking place.

With regard to the regional commissions and expert organisations that are proposed as part of the institutional area, the Majority Party already has under consideration and in preliminary draft form a new planning and development ordinance for the Northern Territory which will enhance the role of what is currently known as the Town Planning Board and build that into the appropriate regional body, "regional" being in our sense the whole of the Northern Territory. We do accept an emerging role for local government in the Northern Territory in the involvement of planning guidelines in standards that are consistent with local government throughout Australia. We see this working in the Northern Territory in a very close two-tiered system between the appropriate board and local government wherever it exists.

With regard to new urban land policies, there are a number of areas that we find are compatible with sensible development in the Northern Territory and a number of areas where we would want to look again more closely and discuss them more broadly through all stages of the development cycle with regard to land development. There is an on-going responsibility for a number of community organisations and the developers to look very carefully at this.

In recommendation 3(b), the report raises the issue of private gains or losses associated with decisions to permit changes in land use. This is an area that we are very sensitive to. We see a number of situations where it has to be very carefully controlled. At the same time, we see there are competing interests in the community and we see the need that all land development and responsibility ought not necessarily to be solely vested in the Government and therefore sufficient profit initiative must flow to those private developers who take a partnership role in making available land for the community. That is very similar to the recommendation in 3(d) where again the capital increment issue is raised.

We certainly accept that there have to be policies which look very carefully at land speculation and that

ought to be able to control any immoral or bad policies that arise. One of the points that need to be very closely considered is the risks that are taken by private developers and therefore they ought to be able to participate in a meaningful share of profit and they ought to be forced to take responsibility for losses if they make bad management judgments.

The recommendations relating to statutory zoning on a system of project evaluation is very similar to the principles that we are considering in the new planning and development ordinance. Similarly, in recommendation 3(g), we believe that the board will serve a suitable purpose and we do not accept that there have to be multi-member, independent, expert tribunals.

Recommendation 3(h) is very important and accepted. This concerns the application to government projects of the same rules and considerations as to private proposals. We have seen a long period of development in the Northern Territory where the government projects have not been subjected to the same terms and conditions that have been imposed on private development and therefore we have not achieved the uniformity that is desirable or acceptable in the community. In relation to recommendations for new legislation, the area of development and new use rights has been raised and canvassed. I have already mentioned that this is the area in which we propose a much wider consideration with community interests.

The market value in 4(b) - we reinforce the current situation of what is applicable to the Lands Administration Act and believe that where this is accepted the market value ought to stand as at the date of acquisition.

Recommendation 5 deals with compensation procedures and basically most of these are similar to the current arrangements and are therefore accepted. With regard to the determination of compensation in recommendation 5(e), we believe it is of the utmost importance that the current system, whereby the Valuer-General determines the actual initial offer price, should be restated and that, if there is an

appeal, then this ought to be heard by any superior court if disputed. The amendments proposed in 5(f)(i) and (ii) are not accepted because they are so closely linked to the areas of development and new use that need further review. Certainly in recommendation 6, the simplification for valuation procedures is acceptable.

Recommendation 7 is again linked very closely to the unearned value increment issue that needs to be discussed and canvassed more broadly.

Recommendation number 8, that residential lands ought to be granted under fee simple titles subject to improvement conditions, is acceptable, but we do express a qualification with regard again to the new use or development rights.

The areas relating in recommendations 9 and 10 to commercial and industrial purposes have wide implications for a number of sectors of the community. I am aware that in the Australian Capital Territory, they have basically accepted a form of administration and leasehold and renting of properties very similar to that set out in these particular recommendations, but that is not necessarily a good thing for the Northern Territory. Our current situation is that the land is offered leasehold with an initial premium at purchase, and perhaps one of the areas that needs major review and discussion here is whether or not the Northern Territory ought to be tied to one particular system or whether we should have a more flexible policy which will accommodate a number of these policies; that is, rental to commercial or industrial developers, lease conditions or freehold. Perhaps there can be some system so that people can move through a number of stages with regard to their property if that is more appropriate.

In recommendation 10, there is a strong link to the need by regional commissions to enforce appropriate anti-pollution measures. We believe that it is not the role of any town planning authority or development authority to be so directly involved in environmental issues. This ought to be controlled certainly through legisla-

tion and through the action of the appropriate government.

Recommendation 11, which deals with land for community service organisations, is acceptable. The present system in the Northern Territory of special purpose leases made available either at development cost or at concessional price arrangements where there are specific and special examples we believe should be continued.

In recommendation 12, the title with regard to land for streets and parks is acceptable. However, the recommendation which deals with land for government purposes on a leasing-type arrangement is not really appropriate and I do not believe it will fit the measures of any emerging Northern Territory situation.

I have already spoken of the new use and development rights which are canvassed in 13. I would note in that particular recommendation that there is no need to link us so strongly and firmly to the ACT.

Recommendation 15 is certainly acceptable with the qualification with regard to the new use or development rights needing much further discussion. It would not be appropriate or practical to accept the recommendation in number 16 that existing leases should be converted from freehold back to a leasehold. We see a number of problems in this area that would be very difficult to overcome and we question the practicability of looking at it in that way.

We do not accept that the right to convert non-residential leasehold land to fee simple should be abolished. Whilst this may perhaps be read in an urban context, it poses problems if it is not meant just as an urban recommendation for the Northern Territory. There are many examples and situations that will point out that this recommendation is not appropriate at this time.

The final recommendation deals with the treatment of land revenues and how they should be assessed in the accounting system. We are at a disadvantage in that, in the Northern Territory at the

moment, there is no local Treasury but, hopefully with constitutional development, this will alter and there will be some room to negotiate on recommendations (a), (b) and (c) of 18 to ensure that, in the Northern Territory accounting, there is a system whereby land dealing can be identified. If you took the current branches within the Departments of Finance, Urban Development, Public Utilities and Housing, there ought to be a much closer identification of what the financial terms and conditions are and it should be more clearly available for public scrutiny. The recommendations (d), (e) and (f) of 18 are not acceptable and will not require close attention.

We are aware of many development proposals in the Northern Territory that have been constrained by our past policies and we are aware of a number of interests and groups that have faith in the Northern Territory and its future development but are only prepared to come and spend money on their development proposals if a new land tenure system is brought into effect at a reasonably early date. This report and the first one and the reams of evidence that were tendered, certainly give us a basis on which to start to build these new land tenure policies. We are in a very fortunate position of being able to turn our attention to determining these new policies at the same time as we move towards statehood.

Mr PERRON: As the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development has indicated in some detail to the House the party's attitude to this report, I would like to indicate some personal comments. In light of the terms of reference, it is not surprising that this report has come up with some rather radical departures from the system of land administration as we know it today. The terms of reference guided the commission very clearly. The first one directed the inquiry to report on the most appropriate methods of leasehold administration and management of land for urban purposes and the second term of reference referred to leased land in every one of its 17 subsections. I believe that the Labor Government that established these terms of reference

had a very clear goal in mind. That goal was their dream of large-scale government ownership of land, both commercial and residential; the commission was appointed to lay down guidelines on how this goal could be achieved, and they have done so very well. With the exception of recommending that residential land be under freehold title, the committee proposes a system of land management which would over a period of time result in the federal or state governments owning all the commercial and industrial land in Australia. I reject that concept as an ideal. However, I must point out that I believe there is considerable merit in some of the other recommendations in the report.

The 3 major innovations which appear in the report are, firstly, the elimination of private gains or losses which accrue as a result of changes in the permitted use of land; secondly, that residential land should be under freehold title and that commercial or industrial land should be leasehold; and thirdly, that a system of administering land management and development be implemented, involving the Federal Government at ministerial level, the state or territory at agency level, at regional level, at local government level, and with public involvement at the last levels mentioned.

Other sections of the report revolve around these 3 areas. Land management policy, planning procedure, compensation and valuation and financial administration are all subordinate to the main thrust of the report. While some aspects are objectionable, I do agree with much of what is proposed. I am sure that none of the members of the Majority Party would object to phrases which are used such as, and I quote: "The developer will stand or fall on his ability to satisfy the market efficiently". This is the essence of free enterprise. Another one: "The private sector is likely to remain more responsible and more responsive to market demands than public officials". And thirdly: "Within acceptable planning parameters it is desirable that maximum flexibility be left to the private sector".

Praise for the private sector in the report is, however, overwhelmed by statements which would make a good capitalist shudder. Statements like: "The choice of profit objective in relation to land development activity will depend on a government policy goal in relation to such matters as income distribution". I take particular exception to talk of government policy in relation to income distribution. Some governments have weird ideas about income distributions.

Response to proposals that land owners should not be entitled to the unearned increments resulting from changes in land use will be controversial to say the least. I suspect that those who own land will strongly oppose the concept claiming that they are entitled to the full value under any new use because of their own wise decisions or just good luck. Many people who do not own land would strongly support the concept that, on the surface at least it appears that by eliminating land speculation the price of land would come down dramatically. Supporters of the Workers Party and students of Ayn Rand would be horrified at any suggestion that the owner of land could not dispose of his property at the highest price he could squeeze from the market. Personally, I believe that the report has attempted to conceal the real meaning behind reserving the unearned increments for the benefit of the community. Cunningly, the impression is given that the proposal would stop the rip-off by land speculators making big profits and the purchaser would get the benefit. But the truth is that the purchaser pays the same price and the Government takes a large slice of the profits. The concept is nothing more and nothing less than a selective land tax a tax which was hoped to be raised by pulling the wool over our eyes.

To illustrate my point on page 17 we see written: "The removal of speculation is likely to reduce land costs and prices because the financial tribute imposed by speculators on the end user would not longer need to be paid". That wording is completely misleading. What should be said is that the un-

earned increment will no longer be paid to the developer, but it will be paid to the Government. Honourable members will see that my point is proven on page 59 where it describes how a developer must pay direct to a regional commission the value of new use rights.

All the hogwash about obtaining for the community the capital increment resulting from changes in land use which is mentioned throughout the report could have been avoided if they came out in the open and stated what they really recommend is tax on land equal to the new development increment. An honest government would not go about raising revenue by deliberately clouding the issue involved by discrediting the investors and developers. I do not completely reject what is proposed but I object to the way it is packaged and the way it is presented. The proposals to freehold residential land in the Northern Territory would be welcomed by everyone; it should have been done years ago. I see no reason why, as a general rule, freehold titles should not be issued when covenants are complied with in accordance with development orders for the area concerned.

The proposal to have all commercial and industrial land owned by commissions and leased out is unacceptable. This would mean that the Government remains virtually the sole subdivider and developer of industrial land in the Northern Territory and this has been a situation that has been complained about for years and years. We should stop tying up taxpayers' money on works that can be done more effectively by private developers. I believe that the Government's refusal to release land for private urban development in the past has restricted our growth significantly. When the concession was granted to the Brinkin project, it ended up in a terrible mess.

Else-Mitchell concedes that, where land is not government owned, the private sector is in a position to respond to market demand. I quote a small passage from page 30: "Within acceptable planning parameters, it is therefore desirable that maximum flexibility be left to the private sector.

For example, the decision may be taken that a substantial area of land is to be developed for residential purposes. Under such circumstances, it may only be necessary for a planning authority to specify such matters as maximum building dimensions, maximum total population, minimum open-space provision and vehicular access arrangements. The developer can be left with the task of selecting the building mix and detailed layout in accordance with his assessment of market demands. The enterprise of the private sector will then be directed to its most useful function "the satisfaction of the market". Thus, we read that the private sector does the best job but, in the Territory, we are supposed to accept the Government as our developer and landlord. The concept that all non-residential land should be owned and leased by the Government, I just cannot accept. Whilst government-owned and leased industrial land has a place in our society, I believe the majority of land should be held under private ownership.

Recommendation number 10 of the report states that leased land would enable the enforcement of anti-pollution measures. This is a poor argument in support of a leasehold system. It appears to be tacked on as an afterthought. Obviously, pollution controls can be made to cover freehold land in the same way that health regulations and other laws do.

The final major proposal is that of a national, state, regional and local land management structure. It is easy to understand why this pyramid of authority is recommended. It would effectively allow a centralist government to become involved in land policy in the states. By this method a Federal Government would have influence on all the facets of our society that relate to land. I do support regular state ministers' conferences to provide for consultations on matters of common interests and they can scrap the citizens advisory committee at that level as recommended in item 2(a).

As far as state planning is concerned, I see the regional commission as outlined in recommendation 2(d) as unnecessary in the Territory. We do not

have the conglomeration of local shires and councils which necessitate regionalising. Under a comprehensive new ordinance, a state planning authority handling major land use matters working in conjunction with local authorities or boards would effectively manage planning and land development in the Northern Territory. The last thing we want is a top-heavy structure like the one that is proposed.

Lastly, I would like honourable members to picture in their minds the final result if this report was ever fully implemented word for word. Every commercial block in Australia, including all the offices, hotels, car yards, shops, in every city and town in Australia would be government-owned and leased back at an economic rent. Every industrial block in Australia, every warehouse, steel mill and trucking yard - the land would be owned by the Government and leased for a premium representing market value. For every change in a planning scheme or land development order anywhere in Australia, the Government would receive the so-called unearned increment. Billions of dollars would flow to the Government annually and, to justify it all, the report states "thereby providing funds to offset the immense demands on public revenue which are imposed by community growth".

Much of this report cannot be implemented. However, it does raise a number of important issues which should be carefully evaluated. The report has only recently been made available and there has not been time to obtain comments from industry and other people on the proposals. We need to have wide-ranging discussions before finally accepting or rejecting some of these new concepts in land management.

Mr DONDAS: The subject of land inquiries is not new to the Northern Territory. In fact, I have in my possession a report dated 10 October 1937 which was the subject of an inquiry into the land and land industries of the Northern Territory of Australia instituted by Gowrie, the Governor-General. The report, I believe is known as the Payne-Fletcher Report and was commissioned on 23 March 1937.

The report is comprehensive and makes very good reading and I think it relevant to make mention of clause 111 which states:

In our opinion the shortcomings of the Northern Territory land legislation and administration are many, and generally of a fundamental nature. Neither the legislation or the one hand, nor the administration on the other hand sufficiently has regard for the following ---

There were following 16 subsections to that clause - too many to mention singly. The point I am trying to make is that there is very little new today in 1976.

Mr Speaker, the Else-Mitchell Report before us today is a comprehensive document, enough to make one's mind boggle. However, I shall attempt to give you and other honourable members a satisfactory account of my thoughts although I would add that I wished a few copies of the first report of which I believe there were 7,000 printed had finished up in our Assembly library.

In speaking to the summary of final recommendations, I find that paragraph 1 relates to the terms of reference, item 3 of which states:

The most appropriate methods of leasehold administration and management of land for urban purposes consistent with private rights of lessees and the public interest in the land, being land in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory and land acquired by or for the purpose of a land commission which may be set up in any Australian state to which the Parliament may grant financial assistance on terms and conditions relating to the acquisition, development and use of the land for urban purposes.

Item 2 states:

Without in any way derogating from the generality of the last preceding paragraph, the following particular matters: (a) the principles and practices currently being applied in the leasing of land by public author-

ities for urban purposes, including the operation of the leasehold land system in the Australian Capital Territory and, to the extent necessary, the administration of leasehold lands in other parts of Australia and in other countries.

Generally, and in my experience and under the present circumstances, the system of land tenure in the Northern Territory is operating satisfactorily. However, there are problems and room for improvement, consistent with and for public interest. A possible example is the need for more residential and industrial land to be made available.

Paragraph 1 of the final recommendations is unrealistic and should be confined to the principle of the policy and to the various states of Australia; all states are not equal. The prospect of reasonable return from capital invested varies with the locality, therefore each state should be in a position to determine its own land tenure policies with the exception of land that is to be (a) acquired for national need and (b) acquired for defence purposes. If an elected body has the responsibility of making decisions, then it should be appropriate for them to decide their own planning guidelines for the future development of their area, not some national body as the report suggests.

Term of reference 2(b) states: "What are the essential characteristics of leasehold tenure as it could be used in an urban land system". This term of reference relates to urban land policies in paragraph 3 of the recommendations. Whilst I agree with some of the recommendations, I feel it prudent to offer my personal explanations of those I find disagreeable.

Recommendation 3(a) says: "government agencies assuming responsibility for land use planning and controlling through all stages of the development cycle". This recommendation intends to relieve local authorities from any responsibility towards land development. The essential characteristic for urban leasehold should be examined in the light of the whole community participating in their own planning and

not by disinterested parties who have to justify their existence.

Recommendation 3(b) says: "using the construction skills efficiency and market knowledge of private enterprise as much as possible but eliminating private gains and losses associated with decisions to permit changes in land use". My personal comment regarding paragraph 3(b) is that the various skills of private enterprise must be used and used advantageously. But why penalise private enterprise? There is no hard and fast rule applicable to private gains in the field of land speculation. Land speculation can only flourish if covenants are not rigidly enforced.

Recommendation 3(e) says: "preventing premature development and wasteful or uneconomic forms of land use". My personal comments again are that nobody wishes to be wasteful, extravagant or uneconomic. However, any person interested should be able to participate in the prospect of a social or economic change, and good luck to them if their gamble is successful.

Recommendation 3(g) relates to objections to be heard by a series of experts. I see no reason why a special tribunal should be used, so long as the requirements imposed on a developer are reasonable and equitable and common to other developers. Local planning authorities would be capable of making an assessment.

Recommendation 4 relates to legislation. In my opinion the committee have introduced a new concept. Subparagraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) restrict any possible hope of a farming-type fringe dweller from being able to take full advantage from the sale of his land. The person concerned may have been working his land for a great many years and development has reached out into a once remote area. Why shouldn't he be able to capitalise on this situation? He will not be able to now; new use rights could be the order of the day. This is disgusting, especially when he knows that the Government has capitalised. For example, the Australian Parliament is now located in a thriving metropolitan complex; as well as the

urban land it already occupies in Canberra, the Commonwealth has some thousands of acres of urban land available for its own use. The Commonwealth is also the freeholder of large tracts of leased land, the rating value of which exceed some \$266m. Recommendation 4(f) relates to covenants. I have no objections to this section.

Paragraph 5 - I agree with most of the recommendations of this section with the exception of 5(e). The Valuer-General would be the most appropriate person to determine the amount of compensation. I also cannot accept the proposals of 5(f)(i) and (ii) as they are too restrictive to allow proper compensation.

Paragraph 6 relates to valuation procedures. Valuation procedures should be kept simple. However, I would disregard the concept of new use rights in accordance with my earlier remarks.

Paragraph 7 - I shall refrain from making comments on this as I do not accept the principle.

With reference to paragraphs 8, 9 and 10, I refer to the term of reference item 2(c). "The most appropriate terms of years for land lease for residential, commercial, industrial, public and community purposes and the advantages, if any, of a reduction in the commonly used 99-year lease period". I have bundled these 3 paragraphs together because they are related to the terms of reference as stated. However, I do not agree with the report recommendations because lease terms, regardless of the terms chosen, seldom coincide with the ideal urban renewal cycles. They do, however, enable the lessor to periodically influence the updating of land uses, particularly in cases of failure to comply with urban revitalisation programs which could occur in the future.

Paragraph 10.11 relates to the terms of reference concerning sites for non-profit use. This particular paragraph relates to non-profit organisations such as churches, sporting clubs and should be restricted to special purposes leases. If any recommendation is accepted in future to charge these

organisations or institutions the most economical formula should be adopted to assist them. I agree that land required for streets and parks should be dedicated in fee simple; I do not agree, however, with land being acquired for government purposes other than for hospitals or schools etc.

I might make mention of paragraphs 13, 14, 15 and 16 together with the viewpoint on paragraph 15 being partly acceptable to read as "Residential land in the Northern Territory should be granted under fee simple title subject to improvement conditions". Paragraph 14 is not applicable, Paragraphs 13 and 16 can best be summed up as being inappropriate.

Paragraph 17 wishes to abolish the right to convert non-residential leasehold land to fee simple. It is apparent, after reading this section of the report, the committee must have done a little soul searching in reference to paragraph 17. However, I must disagree with their conclusion because, as I previously stated in my remarks a person should be able to retain the incentive of profit that it be rural or non-residential.

Paragraph 18 relates to the terms of reference item 2(m): "The manner in which any revenue raised by any lease allocation system should be reflected in any land development account for example, where these should be regarded as a disposal of a capital asset and or profit by the land authority". I agree to subparagraphs 18(a), 18(b) and 18(c) because a community must have a continuing, active and frank account of the financial aspects of all land transition. This should include an itemised accounting of all costs and revenue. Audited accounts can put the issue of any misstatements and any misconceptions that may arise. Revenues of this nature should be paid directly to the Commonwealth Treasury, that is, consolidated revenue.

Subparagraphs 18(d), 18(e) and 18(f) should not be considered, as moneys received in excess of full recoupment of costs might be regarded as a profit created by the land development authority and available for reinvestment in

further land developments. Such an approach would reduce the compound interest charges which result from the funding of total development from loans in different types of areas.

My closing comments concern term of reference 2(n) which relates to an appeals system. The committee omitted to make any recommendations in this regard, perhaps they did not think it important. Nevertheless, in the concluding stage, a general comment in this direction may be feasible. Appeals on land issues might be best handled by a single appeal board, possibly headed by a judge and assisted by an experienced valuer and an appropriately qualified town planner. Anyone should be able to seek a review of our administrative decisions by applying to the authorities which made them - for example, the renter, planner or the valuer. This would allow mistakes to be rectified quickly with virtually no cost to the applicant. Mr Speaker, the development of land policy in the Northern Territory is the whole crux of the matter.

Mr BALLANTYNE: This report will give rise to some very serious debate in this Assembly and in other Houses of Parliament in Australia. When one looks at the future system of land tenures to cater for people of any nation, the first question to be asked will be what sort of a tenure, principle or system should be adopted for the land available. The second question is who is going to administer it and what will be the result of that administration, principle and legislation. As a free-enterprise person, I would agree it would be very difficult to come up with a perfect system of land tenure.

This report has brought in a new philosophy on administration and control of land for the people of Australia generally and I respectfully say that second and final report from the commission of inquiry, consisting of Mr Justice Else-Mitchell as chairman and Professor Russell Mathews and Mr Gerardus Dusseldorp, is not the ultimate in a perfect system.

The main contents of the report consist of: National and Urban Land Pol-

icies, National Land Management Land Use Planning, Development Procedures, Compensation, Valuation and Rating, Land Disposal Arrangements in the Territories and Growth Centres and Land Development Accounting and the Treatment of Land Revenues. Another section of the report gives a summary of the recommendations relative to the particular terms of reference.

The main feature of the report is contained in pages 1 to 4, that is the summary of the final recommendations. What are some of these recommendations, Mr Speaker, and what will be the outcome of those recommendations? I do not agree entirely with all of those recommendations and I would hazard a guess that neither would a lot of other people. But getting back to the question, what are some of the recommendations? We have heard the honourable Executive Member for Finance and Community Development and the honourable Executive Member for Municipal and Consumer Affairs speak in detail of all those recommendations and I do not think that it would be wise for me to go into the same sort of detail. Clause 2(d) deals with a regional commission being responsible for development on the basis of state guidelines. I cannot imagine that any reasonable commission within a state which has had a major responsibility and authority for planning and development could ever be guided by state guidelines if that commission had full autonomy. I prefer to see a basic principle and guideline system stemming from the state authority and the major planning and development guidelines formulated by a town planning and development board within the state or states. It should be flexible to the extent that the town planning will evolve from major growth centres where the major development will take place particularly in industry and mining. Nobody can predict the future of the development and growth of some of these centres. It is mostly a matter of problematical judgments.

A planned system was implemented to develop Canberra in the Capital Territory. What was the result? There was projection of a population that nobody dreamed of. They are 3 times bigger now

than when it was first planned. The town planning system is one thing but the projection of population is another. I would say that it would be hard to predict the future population of Canberra and it is very hard to predict the population of any other area. You have only to look at the Darwin situation after the cyclone. There were 10,000 people left here and someone said, "Oh, you will never find any of those people back here" but now we have more people back here than we had before the cyclone. Where are these people who can predict development?

Even back as far as 1937, the Payne-Fletcher Report, on page 21 under clause 111, gave quite a number of recommendations in those days. This shows really that these reports that we accept today in this Assembly are only a rehashing of some of the reports that were made in the early days. I would like to quote a few subclauses from that main clause 111, particularly subclause (6) where it says "Crown rights of resumption should not attach to comparatively small holdings in the Territory provided that the holdings are reasonably improved. Such holdings cannot be adequately developed unless security of tenure is granted". Also we go down to subclause (13): "Every effort should be made by the administration to render lessees' operations profitable. Unless lessees make reasonable profits the condition of stagnation or even worse a decline in production will eventuate. Prosperity for the lessees means prosperity for the Territory". That was a statement made back in 1937 and nobody has to go too far into details to see the problems that we have here in our system.

Another section is under clause 14: "Lessees should be allowed to surrender for new settlement or to subdivide and sell those portions of their holding which they cannot adequately improve and to concentrate on developing the remainder. The more development that proceeds in the district, the better for everyone".

I agree that all reports are not adopted and acted upon, but usually when reports are acted upon someone else re-writes the whole thing and gets

away from the main philosophy. You do not end up acting on the report at all - you are acting on someone else's report.

In the recommendations in the Else-Mitchell Report, number 8 on page 3, I would agree with most of the recommendations that residential land should be freehold under fee simple titles, subject to improvement conditions. Finally, there is a clause 3(b) which was spoken about earlier but I had already written down here. I cannot agree with it, particularly the last part of it. I will quote the full clause and then state the last bit: "Using the construction skills efficiency and market knowledge of private enterprise as much as possible" - and this is the part I do not agree with - "but eliminating private gains and losses associated with decisions to permit changes in land use". It is very hard indeed to rationalise a system of land tenure to the extent that one could eliminate private gains and losses. People who have the energy and the pioneering spirit, if you like, should be given the opportunity to develop land whether urban or rural and they are entitled to some profit for their labour, skills and initiative.

I believe that some of the recommendations in that report have a lot of merit but, at the same time, those ideas are not new and, as the honourable Executive Member for Municipal and Consumer Affairs said, if this report were to be fully implemented we would end up in a socialistic system and a system which would destroy free enterprise as I understand it.

The terms of leases can cause a lot of problems in any area. You have only got to look at your own area in the Territory. In the area where I live, in Nhulunbuy, we have a special mining lease on a reserve and you should realise the hassles and the problems that we have had because of that particular leasing system. It only goes for 42 years; it is a special agreement under the mining lease. A complete town has been built there but nobody can buy a block of land. If you want to build something there, it can only be on a very short agreement. No one can give

you a full lease title to that sublease if you want to build some sort of a building. They are the sort of things that should have been overcome years ago. Here, in the 20th century, we have a thriving industry in this particular area but people cannot buy land there because of the whole conglomerate system of land leasing. You have got mining leases, agricultural leases and all those sorts of leases that I do not particularly say anything about. However, I believe in the basic principle of those things. Somewhere along the line, our forefathers made a lot of mistakes when they worked out the system of land tenure and I only hope that, if this report is acted upon, they will not make the same mistakes again. This report is something that was concocted originally by the Labor Government. There are very respected people on that commission but I doubt that they have enough influence for the people in Australia to get the benefit of their recommendations.

Mr KENTISH: I rise to support the motion to note the Else-Mitchell final report. I agree broadly with the principles enunciated by the Executive Member for Finance and Community Affairs; I support most, if not all, of the things that he has said this morning. I do not intend to go into detail, but I would remark that in any state or territory the land use should be something approximating what the people of that state or territory want. This is not always possible in every degree because chaos could ensue. We may have a person wanting to set up a blacksmith's shop in the main street or something like that, and so land use has to be curtailed to some extent by covenants and by town planning to keep a town at least in some sort of order. Outside town areas, in urban and rural areas, land use should be less restricted by covenants to allow the people to use land more freely as they desire or as economics indicate. Just at the present time in the Territory, we have hundreds of rural people who are stuck with the one-line economy which is selling cattle and nothing else and their covenant in many cases does not legally allow them to do anything else except sell cattle. In times of stringent economic difficulties, it can be a

very bad thing that these people are legally prevented from doing other things with their land.

The report at the beginning stresses the idea that it would be a good thing to have a uniform policy all over Australia. Up to a point I would agree with that but only up to a point. On certain matters, a uniform policy throughout the Commonwealth may be a good thing. On the other hand, I am quite satisfied of the desirability for some flexibility interstate in land laws; that every state should be exactly the same in the implementation of its laws would be an onerous business. You have people in the states of the Commonwealth and if they desire to move for any reason - they have been blown out by a cyclone or molested by earthquakes or plagues, dislodged by droughts or economics - they look round and say, "We will go to a certain state; we think that they have land laws that will suit our requirements". It is notable that a great many people have gone out of the Northern Territory to Queensland and South Australia to settle; they have gone to all other states as well, but there seems to be quite a preference - maybe a climatical preference or a land preference - for Queensland by people fleeing from the Northern Territory. Therefore, it is desirable that there should be these differences throughout the country. I do not regard it as a bad thing at all.

We have worries about land speculation in the report. I will not go through the exact passages that deal with that but they are worried that someone will make money out of land. Extreme land speculation is not a desirable thing and it should be curbed in certain directions. Already we have a law in the Northern Territory governing certain lands. If you have not held land for more than 3 years you are heavily taxed on the increment from a resale if the resale is before 3 years from purchase. There could be other curbs. As for the idea that nobody should make anything out of the land sale, that belongs to a political era which is fortunately behind us now; it is only just behind us. It belongs to a different political philosophy that you should not make any profit. In fact,

this political policy perhaps has the idea that you should not make profit out of anything. It becomes a dull world under those circumstances and completely dampens individual initiative and initiative is one of the driving forces of any civilisation. Anything that kills initiative, kills the country.

Regarding land speculation in town areas, I think there is often a good deal of woolly thinking about this. It is often assumed that, if newly presented blocks of land are reaching the public with reserve prices of \$5,000 and \$6,000, the poor old farmer who used to own that land is getting something like \$4,000 or \$5,000 for each block of land or \$12,000 to \$16,000 per acre. Nothing could be more stupid because, at the present time, most of the costs of building blocks in town areas are taken up with development costs. A few years ago, the development cost in Darwin on a block of land was something over \$5,000 but it could be up around \$7,000 now. The development cost is the big cost in presenting a block of land for auction and it really does not reflect what the owner got. Even if the person in a rural or urban area receives for his land a fairly substantial price of, say, \$2,000 an acre when he may have bought it many years before for \$20 or \$50 an acre, it represents a very small fraction of the price by the time the builder or the home owner comes to bid for it so it is not really significant at all. If there are big profits to be made, by the time you have taken out the purchase price and the development price, and some profit on the development costs, it is really hard to see where the profit is. If after a great deal of struggle it is found that a block of land can be presented to a home owner at \$1,000 or \$2,000 behind what is the market value, you can rest assured that it is only a matter of time before that landholder cashes in on the profit that is to be made. You would find that up to half of them will be selling and taking a profit. Where you deny the profit to A and to B and to C, finally Mr D at the end of the line will take it up. All land goes to market value sooner or later; there may be a covenant which makes it happen a

bit later. I will just pass those remarks about land speculation, it is only a matter of deciding at which stage the profit is made.

We have seen various styles of acquisition of land and there is one style which we should make sure never happens again in the Northern Territory. If it is supported in this book, of which I am not quite positive, it wants throwing out utterly and completely. We had these magnificent dreams of an acquisition area in the 32-mile subdivision east and south of Darwin and we all know the disruption it caused in the community, the disruption which it still causes in the community, where we have a no-man's land extending for 16 miles out of Darwin. This magnificent dream which someone had back in 1973-74 has turned into a nightmare; it just did not work. We have had experience of these things now, and we are fortunate to have the experience, and we are fortunate that, at the beginning of a new era in our development in the Northern Territory, we have this opportunity to review our land policy. I support the motion.

Mr TUXWORTH: I would like to refer to this report in a broad context rather than pick on various details. In doing this, I would like to deal with it in 3 phases. It seems to me that this report was written on the premiss that the community owns all land and that perhaps the individual should not, at any stage, have individual titles to land and that the decision for the planning for land use land release, land development should be done by a central controlling authority or agency. The second premiss would appear to be that there should be no profit-taking or making in the distribution of land by landowners or developers and that people should not reap the benefits of what, in some cases, is no more than good luck. The third premiss would seem to be that the Government would be the most suitable organisation to acquire, release, plan and develop land for the use of the community.

In the Northern Territory, we would have more living examples of how such a train of thought and policy could be a disaster than anywhere in the Common-

wealth. Land release in the Northern Territory has never been a satisfactory arrangement by any standard. An example that has come to hand in the last 48 hours is that people in Tennant Creek are currently fighting for the release of a block for a school whilst the Education Department is well advanced in its planning. This is government land release and government planning. We have seen the development of subdivisions carried out by the Government in the Northern Territory over many years and, to my knowledge, not at any stage has the development been abreast or in front of the need for land by the consumer.

As for profit-taking or profit-making in land, we have seen a situation where acquisition to the tune of \$20m in the 32-square mile acquisition area was nothing short of a debacle because it was being carried out by clerks instead of professionals. We have also seen that, when the government did develop land at cheap prices, the land was not passed on at cheap prices; it was auctioned off at whatever the market would stand.

The third thing I would like to say is that the record of government operation in land planning, use, development and release has already been plain for the people of the Northern Territory to see. I have yet to find anybody within the community who would wish this Assembly or any legislature in Australia to inflict upon this community a land plan such as has been outlined in the report. While I think the people who conducted the report did it with every good will, they did it with little knowledge of the damage that government can do in this area.

Mr EVERINGHAM: In noting what is commonly called the Else-Mitchell Report on Land Tenure, I believe that the Assembly should have regard to a number of ideas. Just before enunciating my own thoughts on the report, it is not unfair to point out to honourable members that this is a report that, according to land administration personnel and the bureaucracy generally, we have been waiting on for a long time because development of land administration procedures and administration policies has suffered a great

deal of undue procrastination because the bureaucracy has said, "Well we cannot do anything at this stage because we are waiting for the Else-Mitchell Report". Now we have it and I suppose it will take another 2 years to evaluate it properly and for firm policies to be worked out by the powers-that-be. I certainly hope, when these policies are worked out, that they have regard for the traditional values that people attach to land. After all we arose and grew up from a feudal society which had its roots in the soil and freehold tenure was and has been traditionally, the highest form of tenure and everyone has sought to achieve a freehold type of tenure. I hope that the bureaucrats bear this in mind.

I agree with previous speakers, and in particular the honourable Executive Member for Municipal and Consumer Affairs, that the commission were tied to some extent by their terms of reference which at first related purely to leasehold and everything was supposed to come in under the head of leasehold. Then the commission discovered that they would not be able to hear evidence which they considered relevant so the terms of reference were amended to bring in, virtually as an afterthought, other forms of tenure. It is obvious that, at the outset, it was intended that the inquiry be channelled in a certain way so that a certain result would arise and I think that the report must be considered bearing in mind that the terms of reference were restrictive to a degree.

My own attitude has always been that the Government, at state or local level, should involve itself in long-range planning so as to avoid any contretemps and to give guidelines to persons owning land or wishing to acquire land so that they would know what purpose they could use it for. Government should plan in detail at a local level to ensure that towns, centres or urban development can develop in a rational fashion and this is certainly something that has been gravely lacking up until now in the Northern Territory. We have had little or no planning and what planning there has been has been on a fairly scratchy basis. We have had attempts at

legislation to make up the leeway in sound planning - and by planning I certainly do not refer to restrictive planning. We had in 1974 the then Minister, Dr Patterson, introducing his land price stabilisation which was really only necessitated because no government in the past had given any thought to long-range planning. If you planned at a 15 to 20-year level, which you need to do with land, then you will not find, providing you are planning soundly, that you need land price stabilisation legislation. If you have got 2,000 acres of land, you do not make a plan tomorrow and expect it to take effect the day after. When you are developing large areas of land, you have to think in terms of 5, 10 or 15 years, and the planning must be long-range; not for today, not for tomorrow, but for the next generation. We have never seen that here and I must confess that we have rarely seen it elsewhere in Australia.

Getting back to the actual specific development of areas of land, I believe that stringent conditions should be imposed on persons developing land for urban, commercial and industrial use. They must bear the cost of roads, kerbing, channelling, drainage and supply of services generally. Their subdivisions must live up to standards in relation to block size and, generally, they must not be permitted to get away with marketing areas which will only become slums in 10 or 15 years' time. It is quite common today, with developments in the southern cities, for developers - and almost invariably in the south they are private developers - to give or be required to give areas free of charge for school sites, church sites and all the normal amenities of the community life. Naturally, they do not give away supermarket sites or commercial sites but, to compensate for giving away school sites, they make more money by selling sites for retail, commercial and industrial uses. I do not believe myself that, except in exceptional circumstances, there should be government involvement directly in subdivisional work, whether it be commercial or industrial or residential.

It is my own belief that government money should not be tied up in the

hundreds of millions that are required for the development of subdivisions. Government money should be used for what taxpayers expect it to be used for, namely, the provision of schools, hospitals, roads and all the paraphernalia that is required by the community. Private developers are only too willing to take the risks and raise the money necessary to carry out development providing they are given the guidelines and the go-ahead by the Government. I cannot emphasise the point too strongly; I just do not like to see government funds tied up in the subdivision of land. The developers, if they are prepared to tie up their funds under the stringent conditions that are imposed - and they are imposed in the south and overseas - they are prepared to take the profit and they must be prepared to take the loss if there is one.

Land development with public funds presumes that we are prepared to lose public funds because developers not infrequently lose money on projects and occasionally developers go broke. We have seen only recently Alfred Grant in Queensland going into receivership; Cambridge Credit was a finance company which engaged in land development a bit unwisely and it also went broke. There are risks associated with land development, and whilst the Government will not go broke, it will nevertheless waste public money because it must also take the same sort of losses that private developers take.

I will not go into the recommendations in great detail because the honourable Executive Member in front of me canvassed them at length this morning and I agree largely with the comments he made. The recommendations generally give me some concern because, as well as presaging hundreds of millions being tied up in development, they presage the proliferation of bureaucratic bodies and consequently the proliferation of the bureaucracy. My own philosophic attitude, which will come as no surprise to honourable members, can largely be accommodated by the activation of existing governmental bodies, the revamping of local government - and I am speaking particularly of the Northern Territory at the moment - so that it is given an active role in

this area, and then putting private enterprise to work for the public. Do not use taxpayers' money where you do not have to. If we do not do this, we will have a lot more money for schools, a lot more money for hospitals, a lot more money for roadworks than if we continue to develop Wulagi, Anula, Lee Point, Leanyer, Darwin East and all the rest of them with taxpayers' money. How many hundreds of millions must be tied up in that?

The report recommends obtaining for the community, capital increments in certain areas. I ask honourable members and you, Mr Speaker, what that word "community" means? Unfortunately, I suspect the word "community" will come to mean more bureaucratic salaries so that the money will go, instead of into the developer's pocket, into a larger bureaucracy. There are big developers and little 20-acre developers but they all have to have incentive and this is why the profit motive is needed. I do not say that they should be allowed to make an undue amount of money and they would not be allowed to make an undue amount of money if the Government at local levels engages in some long-range planning. We are blaming people at the moment for making money when they cannot help it because the Government has been so stupid and inactive as to engage in no planning whatsoever.

Aside from the proliferation of the bureaucracy, the report makes certain recommendations which will kill incentive. In this regard, I would refer honourable members to recommendations 3(d), 4(a), 7 and 13. I have some sympathy with some of these and they can be modified but you cannot kill the profit motive entirely.

You will by now have guessed that I am in favour of freehold titles, particularly for urban lands. However, there are areas where it may be to the advantage of development - and I am thinking of industrial estates, particularly the Queensland model - where we could engage in an industrial subdivision by the Government with a view to attracting development industry to the area. There leasehold may be the best way to start it off. I am in favour of freehold titles, to a limited extent, for rural and pastoral land.

Broadly speaking, what I would like to see is the adoption of those recommendations of this report which would lead to good long-range planning for up to 20 years ahead, more detailed planning for up to 5 to 10 years ahead, stringent development works by certain time limits and developments programmed to ensure an adequate supply of land coming onto the market for all sectors at reasonable prices. It may be argued that perhaps this cannot be done in the system that I have envisaged. I say that this is not so because, if you have long-range planning, the rates and taxes will keep up with the planning and persons holding broad acres in areas that are required for development, unless they want to suffer from a killing rates and tax bill, will be forced to develop the land and bring it onto the market so that there will not be a trickle of blocks onto the market as there is at present under the Government method. There will be a steady, solid flow that will satisfy the requirements of the land-hungry people of the Northern Territory. I may say that this Territory is strangled at the moment because it does not have a decent land policy or administration, we will see no great development going ahead in the Northern Territory until it has such a setup.

Dr LETTS: The motion to note this report gives an opportunity to canvass the subject fairly broadly and perhaps in some detail. I must confess that I have not completed my consideration and analysis of the report. However, I feel that it is desirable to give the Federal Government some indication of my first feelings because, before long, somebody in that Government or in the department may be inspired to commence drafting and converting this report into legislation.

Generally, I find some of the approaches in the report academic and without sufficient regard to the practical difficulties and needs of land administration in the Northern Territory. Fundamentally, we are still, 152 years after first settlement, in a development phase. Above all, throughout the Territory, we need incentives and security, not experimentation in land policy. I believe that certain recommendations in this report might

turn out to be restraints and disincentives. The recommendation for capital increment from changes in land use to return to the community needs very careful consideration and certainly not impetuous adoption. The problems here in the Territory are well known and we as elected people live with them, not just in the city of Darwin but throughout the Territory. There are the problems of the 2 men in Adelaide River, one of them a third-generation Territorian, who have been trying for 3 years to get 2 commercial blocks to start a business in Adelaide River without success and, as far as I can see, without any discernible progress. There are the problems of the township of Batchelor which I have brought to this Assembly before, trying to get it gazetted as a township so that people may be able to develop some of the necessary services in that area; and that has been going on for 3 years with hardly discernible progress. The problems of land administration that are bogging down the Territory are of that nature and those examples could be multiplied a hundred-fold; they have been with us as long as there has been a history of the Northern Territory. I do not find that I can be confident that the recommendations in this report will overcome these sorts of problems.

I would like to refer to recommendation 17, "The right to convert non-residential leasehold land in the Northern Territory to fee simple tenure should be abolished". I have discussed this with senior officers of the department and they tell me the whole report, by and large, is intended to refer to urban land and so that is the way it will be interpreted. That might be fine for the thinking that Else-Mitchell had and for the present administrators in land here but what of 5, 10 or 15 years' time? I am not satisfied that that recommendation should stand as printed and I think it should be made quite clear in the Crown Lands Ordinance for people in other than urban areas, provided they comply with the law, to proceed to freehold in certain circumstances. I would like to see that passage restated by the Government in clearer terms.

The report may be also notable for what it does not say. In the sections dealing with acquisitions and compensation, it makes no mention of that iniquitous provision in the present Federal Land Acquisition Act by which the 32-square-mile acquisition was carried out. That acquisition was carried out by a notice in the Gazette, without any of the normal procedures in law or in administration which apply to everybody else in Australia, of notices to treat, certain rights of appeal - there were none of those. The only form of appeal, using that provision of the Land Acquisition Act is the hope that one or other House of Federal Parliament may disallow the Gazette notice. This is one of the most discriminatory pieces of legislation against the people of both Territories that exists anywhere in Australian legislation because it cannot apply in the states. It can only apply here because the Commonwealth Government can legislate in relation to any subject at all in the Territory and this is what they did. I would add to any recommendations in this field that I might adopt from Else-Mitchell the necessary change in the Land Acquisition Act to no longer put the people of the Territory at that serious disadvantage.

Turning from those specific questions, I would like to make a couple of comments on broad philosophy relating to land. The lust for land has been the basis of more crimes against humanity collectively and individually than probably any other motivating force in history.

Mrs Lawrie: Other than religion.

Dr LETTS: Wars have been fought for religion; they have been fought for politics, but I think that they pale into insignificance compared to some of the events in history that have been related to land lust and land greed. I suppose one of the classic events in history relating to land was the movement of the Mongols across Asia, across the Steppes, over the rich lands of the Ukraine. In more recent history, talking about crimes against humanity, the whole of the sorry slavery business in North America was related to the

plantation system, land development and the need to develop and the greed to make money there. One could go on and on.

In Australia, we have had evidence of some of the evils of uncontrolled land speculation and this book from our library which I was just reading, "The Land Boomers", traces the course of the history of the state of Victoria, in particular the city of Melbourne, in the late 19th century when some incredible things came about through the relationship between the politicians of the day and the land speculators and real estate people. This book reports how a premier of Victoria had to have himself appointed Agent-General and move to London in order to avoid a prosecution for his involvement in the land crimes in those days.

Getting back to the Northern Territory, the pattern of what has happened in land administration and land law here is rather illuminating and one wonders whether Else-Mitchell had a look at it when he was compiling his report. Under the South Australian administration from 1863 to 1910, the normal situation was freehold grant of town lands. With the transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth in 1911, we saw a rather incredible sequence of events leading up to the present day when, according to whichever government was in power, the whole of the land system in the Northern Territory, particularly relating to freehold, changed over. In 1910, the Northern Territory Administration Act prescribed that no land in the Northern Territory shall be sold or disposed of for any estate in freehold and in 1912 the Labor Government brought in local legislation for the Northern Territory which completely superimposed on the Northern Territory a leasehold system for the disposal of land.

In 1926, the right of conversion of town and agricultural leasehold land into freehold was reintroduced. In 1943, the Labor Government repealed this right of conversion. In 1963, conversions to freehold for urban land were reintroduced on a conditional basis, the conditions being that the covenant conditions be complied with

and the unimproved capital value of the land be paid. This opportunity was taken very limited advantage of by the people mainly because of the requirement to pay a capital sum. In 1967 the right for certain non-urban land, agricultural land, to be able to proceed to a conversion to freehold was reintroduced by this legislature. In 1971, the system relating to conversions was changed again so that on the payment of an administrative fee of \$100, applications for conversions could be processed. There was a rapid escalation in the rate of applications for conversions to freehold. Whereas 240 applications had been received in the 8 years between 1963 and 1971, 370 were received in the 2 years following that latter change.

With the change of government again in 1972 to a Labor Federal Government, the rate of applications for conversion to freehold doubled almost overnight and there was a rush on the bank. A number of people who thought history had shown that we would be departing from the freehold concept tried to get in and have their applications recorded and processed, but it did not work because in 1973 a series of events took place: the Else-Mitchell inquiry was set up, the 32-square-mile acquisition was invoked by a notice in the Commonwealth Gazette and on "Black Wednesday", 9 May 1973, we had here in the Chamber one of the blackest days which this legislature has ever seen. This was the infamous day when a special meeting of the legislature was called at short notice, a 1-day meeting, and without notice a bill to suspend the operation of the Freehold Titles Ordinance and to deny people the formerly available right to conversion was jammed through this House demonstrating the utter ruthlessness which politicians can show when it comes to dealing in their philosophies with land.

We have had all these chameleon-like changes in land policy and administration in the Northern Territory over the years. The Else-Mitchell Report is not the first report on land that we have ever had. In earlier days we had a number of reports, the best known of which is the Payne-Fletcher Report on land

and land industries in the Northern Territory of Australia. In section 104, under the heading of "Town Lands and Miscellaneous Leases", it says:

There is a need for a broader outlook in the administration of town and miscellaneous tenures and certain alterations in the ordinances are required. These matters are referred to in detail in the comments and recommendations which follow, "Comments and recommendations on land administration": Land administration is a matter of considerable intricacy. To secure the maximum development of which lands are capable under the economic circumstances of the time, land administration must be conducted with knowledge and understanding. It must be adaptable to the changing wants and requirements of the people from time to time and generally be helpful and encouraging to the lessees on whose industry and enterprise progress must depend.

The Commonwealth and Territory Land officers are conscientious men actuated by the highest public motives but their efforts are restricted by the rigidity of the land ordinances and by the whole outlook of the administration which has developed over a long period of years. This question of the right outlook is the foundation of successful land administration. From the earliest days of Australia's history, land administrators were always fearful that the granting of concessions might subsequently affect public interests in an adverse way. The interests of the many against the privilege of the few were always their dominant and laudable aim. Each viewpoint had a measure of right on its side. The administrators had a duty to protect future public interest and the right of the population which might be expected to grow. The owners had to achieve some security before they could progress. From these 2 viewpoints, acting and reacting reciprocally on one another, has been evolved our present system of land administration which in the states reasonably fosters and protects all public interests.

Further down they say, referring to the administration of land: "Protection of future public interest tends to become an obsession and prevents reasonable business terms being given to lessees". Much of the philosophy and the problems on land administration which are outlined in this report of 1937 are still with us today and have not been solved.

Going back to that section 17, on land administration outside rural areas, I would like to remind you of the part of the report of the Forster Committee on agriculture which dealt in part with land tenure. In recommendation 15, it says: "Freehold should be introduced for lands suited to agricultural development as distinct from those suited to purely pastoral pursuits. The freehold title should be granted under leases which provide rights of conversion to freehold after certain conditions relating to land development have been met". It was the Forster Report which was more or less acted upon in 1967 when the present amendments to the Crown Lands Ordinance were made. It would be entirely retrograde to put those amendments aside now and suggest that recommendation 17 should be the justification for doing so.

The Else-Mitchell Report must be seen in the context of earlier reports and observations made on land administration. It must be seen in the context of constitutional development. Unless the elected people of the Northern Territory gain control of finance and land - the key areas - the rest will be nothing. I believe that new policies in land should not be foisted on us at this critical stage. Give us the responsibility for land administration as well as land legislation. Let elected people in this Territory make the judgments on the systems to apply to land legislation and land administration, bearing in mind the Else-Mitchell Report, the other reports and our personal knowledge and experience of the history of this place and the needs for incentives and security. Let us in turn be judged by the electorate in the Territory as to the wisdom

or otherwise of the policies we adopt - not some public servant, some investigator or some politician operating in Canberra who never has understood us and never will.

Motion agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT - LANDLORD
AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS)
ORDINANCE

Continued from 11 August 1976.

Mr TUXWORTH: In rising to comment on the report, I would like to extend to the honourable members my appreciation of the work that they have done. It is a comprehensive report and one that has come to show the people that the Assembly has a thorough understanding of the needs of the private sector in relation to the provision of housing and rental accommodation in the Territory.

There are only four or five parts of the recommendations that I would wish to refer to. Number 6 says that there would be no rent control in respect to accommodation regularly used for the purpose of accommodating bona fide travellers or holiday makers, and number 8 says that both caravans and caravan sites must be subject to the ordinance in the same manner as other controlled residential accommodation. With respect, I would suggest to the members of the committee that, from my knowledge of the tourist industry, trying to impose or implement price control on such mobile things as caravans and determining whether they are being used for the purposes of permanent dwelling would be impossible. I believe it is one that could well afford to be left alone in any future consideration.

My prime concern with the inquiry into the control of rents in the Northern Territory from the outset has been very simply that the people who have invested money in land and building development in the Northern Territory should get a satisfactory return for their investment. To date, this has not been possible by virtue of the rent control situation. Unfortunately, the ordinance has determined that the amount of rent that may be collected is reflected in a formula drawn up whereby

the value of the premises at the time of building and an interest rate compiled by the Commonwealth Bank at a given point in time are the main criteria for determining what is a fair rent on any property. In the hard, cold business world, the return on an investment that a person should be able to get is the return on the market value of today and not of something 10 years gone.

I believe that the recommendations of the committee in saying that section 20 of the ordinance should be amended by repealing paragraph (a) and replacing it with a paragraph requiring consideration to be given to the market value of the premises at the date of any application for a determination is probably the most forward step that the committee could have taken. It will protect investors and entitle them to a determination worked out at the day of application for the rent assessment.

Mr Withnall: It might price people out of their houses too.

Mr TUXWORTH: The one thing that would probably affect the price of rent more than any other is the lack of development and building that will follow from any continued rent control situation.

We have heard over many years the cry that, if you control the situation, you will put an end to people being displaced or having to pay what is an unfair price for a commodity. We have seen in the Northern Territory a situation where the Housing Commission has been used as a yardstick for a fair rental situation but they have been very heavily padded by the government with cheap interest rates and capital grants to offset the high building costs for homes. Unfortunately, this yardstick has been applied to the private sector which does not have access to the resources of semi-government agencies and, while I think that is unfortunate, it has created within the Northern Territory a false appreciation of the situation that should really exist. One of the facts of life we have to come to grips with is that, if we wish development to continue in both the home and building sector of the Northern Territory and this development

to be financed by money from the private sector, we are going to have to pay the price that the market demands. That is not the price that the people of the Northern Territory determine, that price is determined by the Australian market as a whole.

I commend sections of the report to members because I feel it is a very forward step in the development of the Northern Territory and I believe the implementation of the recommendations cannot come quickly enough.

Mr KENTISH: I rise to support this report. I regret that I have not had time to go thoroughly into the whole of this report, but I speak now about a few sections that interest me and have attracted my attention. I think that the committee has been wise in its recommendations to retain rent control in the present Darwin context as far as residential housing is concerned because we are still suffering enormously from acute shortage of housing accommodation in Darwin. There has always been a shortage but, since the cyclone, it has been more acute than ever and it is a fact that unscrupulous persons have taken advantage of this shortage. I agree completely with the provisions that rent control on residential properties should be retained. I have noted that, for some time past, control of the commercial rental has been lifted and I do not think anything has fallen apart on account of that.

Sections VI, VII and VIII recommend that there be no rent control in respect of accommodation regularly used for purposes of accommodating bona fide travellers or holiday makers; that there be no rent control in respect of premises regularly used as hotels, motels, boarding houses or guest houses where guests' rooms are serviced; that both caravans and caravan sites be subject to the ordinance in the same manner as other controlled residential accommodation.

There is a new departure there. A few years ago hire caravans themselves were included in the rent control area and quite a few people who were interested in hire caravans immediately went out of them; others have persisted in

attempting to keep them. Whether legally or illegally, such persons have tried to retain a bond against wilful damage and they have been forced to charge exorbitantly high fees because of these factors, because rent control in the caravans immediately places them in the category of premises that have to go through eviction proceedings. As soon as you get into that category, you reach a stage of being at the mercy of people who make it a business to run up rent bills. All they have to do then is to put some clothes in a suitcase and leave overnight when they feel that the ground is getting too hot underfoot or that they have run up a good enough bill to be worthwhile. They go on somewhere else to repeat the proceedings. That action of putting caravans under rent control and therefore under eviction process has had a very disastrous effect as far as the cost of hire caravans to tenants has been concerned.

It is proposed to put the sites under control. This is a new thing and you can expect again that there will be difficulties because there is a continual element of people in this category of caravan dwellers - some very excellent people live in caravans and on caravan sites, and also the dregs of humanity, we have both sides of the scale. Putting the sites under rent control will automatically put them under the eviction process. I notice further on that the matter of eviction proceedings is to be revised and I presume shortened but, no matter how it is shortened and even with no control at present, these astute operators manage to get a month's free rent in the caravan park before they are finally headed on their way. It is a matter of psychological approach. They go into a park, pay a week's rent, and the next week they say, "We have not been paid this week, something has gone wrong. We will pay the 2 weeks next week". Then they manage with some other excuse to get another week; that will be 3 weeks. Then you give them a week's notice to leave which is the usual thing unless there has been some untoward offence committed and so they almost automatically get a month's free rent before they can be emptied out. There are quite a lot of people - well not a lot really but too many - who ride on this

free rent bus, people without any scruples. I noticed the composition of the committee: Mr Robertson, Mr Dondas, Mr Everingham, Mr Perron, Mr Withnall, and I doubt if any of them have a really intimate knowledge of the running and the management of a caravan park; they probably picked up quite a lot as they went along on the inquiry. That is a thing that is likely to be unsatisfactory.

In section IX it says that sections of caravan parks which are used exclusively for tourists or holiday makers may be declared exempt from the provisions of the ordinance. That means a complete caravan park. A complete caravan park which is catering only for the tourist would be in operation for 6 months of the year, from April till October approximately; the rest of the year they would be closing up under present conditions. There is so little traffic in the top end of the Territory between October and April that such caravan parks would only be in operation for 6 months. Whether anyone would be interested in running a caravan park under those conditions for 6 months, I do not know.

Some caravan parks in the Darwin area have made provisions for tourists when the end of the wet season is coming near. Some caravan park owners have advertised south and, having advertised south, they like to have sites ready for the tourists. It may just happen that they have some vacancies at the end of the wet because the wet is not a good time for filling a caravan park so they keep what vacancies they have and, like Mindil Beach which is rarely empty because of its favoured position on the beach, they may apply what is known as the 6 weeks' limit. This means that they give notice to some people to move out of the park at the end of 6 weeks to make room for southern tourists who they consider should have a share of the caravan parks in the Top End. I think it is well known to everyone that this has been a habit of that particular park at Mindil Beach. If these recommendations are carried out, this would be illegal. I do not know whether the committee have thought of all those things but there are many things that need deeper thought and perhaps more

experience in this situation. This particular arrangement would almost take away the opportunity of southern tourists finding any room in northern caravan parks.

In other words, it would be a very heavy blow to the tourist industry if all caravan parks were to be full of permanents. I do not know if that has been properly thought out. I have been advised that New South Wales have something like that provision in that, after 8 weeks, people are regarded as permanents and placed under rent control and subject to eviction notice. It may be all right in New South Wales but we have to think about something that will work satisfactorily in the Northern Territory and we have to remember that the Northern Territory is in two pieces as far as tourists are concerned - the northern end and the southern end.

Mr DONDAS: I rise to support the report. I will only delve briefly into it as I presume the chairman of the committee will make his remarks on another day.

The first recommendation is that the office of Controller of Rents be retained indefinitely. This was not an easy decision to make but, due to the lack of reasonable rental accommodation in Darwin, it would be very difficult for a committee, which was fair and impartial, to avoid rent control. During the course of the inquiry, there was a certain amount of concern shown with regard to the Rent Controller. The main area of concern was in the fair rental determinations. The complaints were that people were applying for a determination of the Rent Controller and it was taking as long as 6 months for a determination to be handed down. Then, it was being back-dated to the date of the determination. If the landlord was charging \$50 and the Rent Controller said that he could charge \$55, and the person who had been there for 3 months had left, the landlord had lost 3 months income at \$5 a week.

Thus, we recommend that "the determination of maximum fair rent chargeable in respect of residential accommodation remain with the owner or

lessor of the premises for a period of 12 months from the date of tabling of this report in the Assembly". That is, if the Assembly accepts the committee's report and the Rent Controller's office is to be put out of business.

"At the expiry of such period, the determination of fair rent may be made by the controller either by his own motion or that of any party to a tenancy agreement in respect of residential accommodation."

"That upon expiry of 3 years from the period mentioned in recommendation 11, the operation of rent control be reviewed with a view to determining the desirability of continuing any form of rent control." I feel that that recommendation is reasonable. In another 12 months or longer, the situation for rental accommodation may be as critical as it is now. This will give the people and this Assembly the right to review the recommendations that have been made today.

"That the definition of prescribed premises be amended to exclude premises regularly used for commercial, industrial or manufacturing purposes." We know that that no longer applies. The Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Evan Adermann, had taken this particular section out from the control of the Rent Controller; commercial premises are no longer the subject of rent control.

"That there be no rent control in respect of accommodation regularly used for the purpose of accommodating bona fide travellers or holiday makers." That would primarily relate to the hotel industry, to the boarding house industry, catering for tourists. The honourable member for Arnhem made a remark that he could not see why caravan parks should be involved under this particular ordinance.

Mr Kentish: You try and police them.

Mr DONDAS: Whether you are going to police them or not remains to be seen but the select committee are recommending that, if tourists are going to come up into the Territory, they are going to be here for 6 or 8 weeks and they

are not going to be bothered by the ordinance. But we have been having problems in the last 2 or 3 months with the shortage of caravan park accommodation and the Executive Member for Social Affairs has been attacking the DRC in the last 2 or 3 days because there are not enough parks. So if an unscrupulous person charges \$35 or \$40 for a site over the next couple of years, those people should be protected and it should not be allowed. I feel that the recommendation made by the select committee is a fair one. If people are going to come to Darwin and they are going to be here as tourists for a holiday, they will be here for 6 or 7 weeks and they will move off. Anybody who is going to stay after that period should have the protection of this ordinance while it remains in for another 12 months. I personally do not even want to have the ordinance operating. I would rather throw rent control right out of the door but unfortunately we are not in the position to do it at this particular stage of the game and my view was always impartial while I was on that select committee. There is some mention now that somebody is going to spend \$250,000 or up to \$1m on a caravan park on the Stuart Highway, at the 11-mile - 286 van sites at a cost of \$1m. That particular investor should be guaranteed that he is going to get a return on his money, but he is not going to get a return on his money if he is only going to be able to charge \$20 a week; he would be working till Adam had a son somewhere along the line. What basically I am trying to say is that if people are going to invest money into the retail rental market then they should be given every opportunity to get it back. As the situation is in Darwin at the moment, we have to be very wary, both from the political point of view and from a conscience point of view, that people are not robbed and taken to the cleaners.

"That the taking and holding of bonds or security money be allowed subject to certain controls and conditions which should be expressed in legislation." They take bonds in Western Australia; they have bonds of \$300 or \$400 in South Australia; they have bonds in other parts of Australia. Why should

not our landlords be protected here and allowed to have a bond, whether it be 2 weeks, whether it be 3 weeks or whether it be a month? People are coming in; they are here for 3 weeks; they pull the lights out and take them somewhere else; they cut the bedding up, dirty the walls, do not pay their rent and move out.

Mr Kentish: They will want a bond for caravan sites next.

Mr DONDAS: What kind of a business venture is that? The honourable member for Arnhem says that they are going to want bonds for caravan sites. What damage are they going to do to his sites, apart from digging a little bit of a hole on the ground or not paying the rent? If the manager of a caravan park has not got the integrity to collect his rent then he should not be in that job; he should be collecting his rents from one week to the next; every Friday you pay your rent or move out. If he lets it linger for 3 or 4 weeks that is not the fault of this ordinance, it is the fault of the person who is managing that caravan park.

Mr Kentish: You are not allowed to move them out.

Mr DONDAS: Yes you can. You have towed them out, Rupert.

Mr Kentish: Under evictions though.

Mr DONDAS: "That any Stipendiary Magistrate for the Northern Territory comprise an appeals board under the ordinance." There is nothing unreasonable about that.

"That all clerks of courts for the time being be appointed clerks of the board."

"That an applicant for a determination have the right to apply direct to the appeals board where the controller fails to make a determination within 42 days of the filing with him of an application for a determination of fair rent." That is reasonable. How long is a person going to wait for the Rent Controller to finally get off his backside and give him a determination so he

can start collecting his rent?

"That, upon appeal to the board from a decision of the controller, a party may obtain advice and assistance of an agent or representative including barristers and solicitors." Under the old ordinance, you were not allowed to appoint legal advice. You were at your own mercy; if you were clever enough to defend your action or put an appeal in, you were permitted to. The new recommendation gives every person a right to have legal counsel when he is asking for an appeal with regard to a determination. We are not talking about one little flat; we might be talking about a block of 50 flats.

"The sections relating to so-called protected persons be repealed." That is self-explanatory.

"That section 20 of the ordinance be amended; (a) by repealing paragraph (a) and replacing it with a paragraph requiring consideration to be given to the market value of the premises at the date of any application for determination; (b) by amending paragraph (e) to provide that regard shall be had to rentals of comparable premises only where those rentals are not rentals determined by the Rent Controller; (c) by amending paragraph (f) to provide that regard shall be had to the rate of interest to be determined by the Administrator's Council; and (d) by adding a subsection directing the Rent Controller to make his determinations primarily on the basis of the application of the interest rate determined under paragraph (a) with other considerations mentioned in the subsection being available only as modifying factors or used as checks upon the rentals so determined." That 3 minutes of reading took 5 or 6 hours of discussion. A decision of that nature was not arrived at within 5 minutes or 1 hour. Serious consideration was given to those recommendations. Section 20 gives the Rent Controller the method of determining how much rent is going to be charged. Today, I have not heard any great objections with regard to that particular subject.

We have already mentioned a little bit about eviction orders. Under the

old ordinance, eviction orders are very hard to get through the machinery of the local court due to the lack of staff or excess business there. This particular recommendation would cut down the time it would take for a person to be evicted and would also assist a landlord in the nature of the eviction, whether it be a person who has been guilty of wanton damage or whether a person has failed to pay rent or whether a person has become a nuisance to the other tenants on the property. That recommendation is a reasonable one.

The report itself is the result of many hours of hard work by the chairman. I do not want to say any more at this stage because I am quite sure that, after he has read everybody's views, he will certainly pass his own comments. I would sincerely like to say that the members of the committee regarded all points impartially, irrespective of their political belief or how they felt about rent control. They attacked the committee's problem with a lot of diligence. As you know, we travelled throughout the Northern Territory to Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and at all times carried out the investigations in the true spirit of the Assembly. When we were in Alice Springs, I said to the honourable member for Port Darwin, "I think we are wasting our time". He said, "Yes, we may be wasting our time but at least we have given the people the benefit of our presence and, if they want to put in a complaint or lodge an objection against rent control, then at least we have given them that opportunity".

Debate adjourned.

MEMBER FOR GILLEN

Mr STEELE: I move that the honourable member for Gillen be granted leave for today. The honourable member is undergoing medical treatment at Alice Springs and I am not too sure that he can get here for tomorrow but I will advise again tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

DEATH OF FORMER MEMBERS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Dr LETTS: I seek leave to make a statement arising from the recent death of two former members of the Legislative Council and to move a motion relating thereto.

Leave granted.

Dr LETTS: I refer to the deaths in recent days of Thomas Matthew Ronan and Kenneth Colin Waters. Tom Ronan was the elected member of the Legislative Council for Batchelor in the 1954-55 period, in the days when the legislature was battling through rough times, even to a greater degree than today. He made his services available in that capacity and, although he only served for a short time, he made his mark on legislation in the Territory. Tom Ronan also made an outstanding contribution to life in the north and people's knowledge of that life in his capacity as an outstanding author and I am sure that many members in this chamber will be familiar with the books he wrote like "Vision Splendid", "Moleskin Midas", "Deep of the Sky", "The Pearling Master" and "Packhorse and Pearling Boat", books which I personally have taken great enjoyment from. Tom was a symbol of a past era, the era of the drover and the packhorse. Not only as a legislator and an author did he make a contribution but, to those who knew him as a person, he was a man with a vital interest in his fellow man and the community. You could not get past Tom in the street; he always stopped you for a chat and there was always something interesting in what he had to say.

Ken Waters was the elected member for Arnhem in the Legislative Council for a term from 1961 and, in addition to this work in the legislature, he had a distinguished community record in local government in the Territory. He was also a member of many other worthwhile community organisations, including the East Point Trustees and many other institutions. Although he suffered from ill health in recent years, Ken maintained a continuing interest in commun-

ity affairs and in the working of this legislature and was a frequent visitor to the members' lounge to discuss with members the affairs of the day.

I think that we should record in Hansard for the benefit of the future the contribution that these ex-members made to the political and other life of the Northern Territory and extend our sympathy to their families on their passing.

I move that the Assembly record its sincere regret at the deaths of Thomas Matthew Ronan and Kenneth Colin Waters and place on record its appreciation of the meritorious service they rendered to the Legislative Council and the Territory and tender its sympathy to their widows and families.

Mr WITHNALL: I would like to join with the honourable member in expressing my regrets at the passing of the 2 persons who were former members of this legislature. I knew Tom Ronan very well and I think that there are probably only 3 people in the Northern Territory now who were members of the Legislative Council in October 1954, which was the first Council which Tom Ronan attended. They would be Harry Giese, Lionel Rose and myself. Tom Ronan was a man of tremendous integrity, a man who never minced his words and who was certain that whether his opinion be accepted as right or wrong it was his own opinion and it was worth saying. I remember very particularly the end of the first Legislative Council meeting he attended in October 1954. There is no Hansard of that meeting - the only meeting I think with respect to which there is no Hansard, but it was a memorable meeting. At the end of the meeting, Tom Ronan on the adjournment made a speech which sticks in my memory still. He said in the dour sort of way that he used to use: "The Romans governed Rome on a basis, it is said, of bread and circuses, and I think that the Commonwealth Government still believes in 'panem et circenses' - the Commonwealth Government gives the Northern Territory bread and it provides a dummy legislature for a circus". I do not purport to quote his words but this was quite clearly the intent of the speech that he made. He proposed then to resign

from the Legislative Council but he did not. He did not resign until after March 1955 when this building was opened. In 1955, when this building was opened, he took his seat in this building for one meeting.

He was a man whose resignation from the Legislative Council I personally deplored. I thought that he could have brought a fund of common sense and indeed of learning because he was not an unlettered man; he was a man with a tremendous education behind him. He could not stand the racket; he could not stand the problems that were put on the Legislative Council in those days when there were 7 official members and 6 elected members. He was heartily sick of it and, being the honest man that he was, he chose to resign rather than to continue under a system which he did not approve of. As the honourable Majority Leader has said, he was a great author. Indeed, I am now reading for the third time one of his books, a semi-autobiography, and still, at a third reading, I can gain a great deal of interest and a great deal of enjoyment from reading the book and appreciating his style of writing.

Ken Waters was a very different type of man. I suppose if one wanted to describe Ken Waters, one would say that he was a man who was determined to serve the people. He really did. Any way in which Ken Waters could obtain an office, obtain a job, and he was mostly unremunerated, to keep something for the people, he did it. The Majority Leader has already talked about his offices and I will not go into them but I think that the dominating interest in Ken Water's life was to be of service to the people and in that he did achieve a good deal. Perhaps if members of this Legislative Assembly achieve as much as Ken, they could be satisfied with their performances as officers concerned with public interest.

I suppose I was in a way responsible for Ken coming into politics because I said that he should stand for the electorate of Arnhem. I also told him not to be so silly as to stand against John Lyons in the electorate of Port Darwin. In the legislature, his time was noted for his concentration upon

the painstaking work that he put in and for the sincerity of his effort. When he was not elected on the subsequent occasion - not that I suggest the incoming member was any less worthy - the fact that Ken Waters was not here after that election, detracted from the value of this legislature.

Mr SPEAKER: I would like to associate myself with the remarks about both the late Ken Waters and the late Tom Ronan. I first met Tom Ronan in Katherine in the early 1950s and I saw him very often till he and his family moved from Katherine in the late 1960s. I visited him in Adelaide in February of this year. Last month, I was present when Tom's ashes were buried at Springvale Homestead near Katherine where Tom and his family had lived for 20 years.

I first met Ken Waters as executive officer of T.C. Waters, also in the 1950s, and I was always impressed with his courtesy and friendliness in the 20 years during which time he developed as businessman, politician and community leader. I add my own personal sympathies to both families.

Mr KENTISH: I had not the privilege of meeting or knowing Tom Ronan. I have heard a great deal about him since I first came to the Territory, but my first 13 years in the Territory were spent mainly outside of the Darwin area and I did not meet a great number of people in that time.

Ken Waters was well known to me and he was a man I respected and liked very much. I met him first when he was a schoolteacher at the Darwin school and later when he became a businessman in Darwin. He undoubtedly contributed a good deal to the city of Darwin in various organisations, on the city council and in business affairs, in the Legislative Council and in the East Point Reserve Trust in which he took a very active and interested part. He was an active man, an interested man and he gave a great deal to the community. We note with some sorrow his passing and I would like to extend my sympathies to his family.

Motion agreed to.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED
GOODS BILL

(Serial 121)

Continued from 12 August 1976.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to

Clause 3:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.1.

This was an error in the bill; it is a formal amendment only.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr WITHNALL: I suppose I should rise to speak to this clause because I want to make a few remarks about the answer the honourable member made to my suggestion that the court of summary jurisdiction should be substituted for the local court. Since the definition in this clause relates to the local court, I should make my remarks in relation to this clause.

I am frankly astonished by the reasoning behind the remarks made by the honourable member when she refuted my suggestion. The principal reason apparently is that the court of summary jurisdiction is a court which is concerned with criminal affairs. This is a piece of nonsense which even the honourable member might well have understood. Most courts have mixed jurisdiction and the answer given by the honourable member seems to me to be just a piece of flimsy nonsense.

What I was trying to do was to provide the sort of immediate relief, the sort of easy access to decision, which the court of summary jurisdiction provides. If the honourable member will examine legislation in other states, she will find that courts of summary jurisdiction, or courts of petty session as they are often called, are very frequently resorted to for relief of this kind. Would the honourable member suggest, for instance, that courts of petty session sitting in NSW and courts of summary jurisdiction sitting in the Northern Territory to hear applications

for matrimonial relief, applications for maintenance, are dealing with criminal matters? I think the honourable member has made a decision which she proposes to support by any argument which comes to her hand and the argument that she has used is scarcely adequate. However, since the honourable member has decided, no doubt with the full backing of 17 members of the Country-Liberal Party, that she is not going to accept any suggestions of mine in this respect, then I have no doubt that the matter will go through the committee.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 7 agreed to.

Clause 8:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.2 in the schedule.

This is a clarification confining the reference "to dispose of" exclusively to non-sale areas. The amendment is at the suggestion of my colleague, the honourable member for Port Darwin.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.3.

A new subclause (4) is proposed to make it clear that where a court determines a dispute between the bailor and bailee under part II, it can also make any orders that can be made by a court under part III which would include an order for the sale of goods.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.4.

This amendment merely clarifies the meaning of subclause (5).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.5.

This amendment proposes the deletion of the reference to the disposal of goods, bringing in again a distinction between disposing of and selling.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.6.

This is a corresponding amendment to 110.5, again being a distinction between dispose and sell.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 14:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.7.

The amendments to subclause (1) are designed to clarify the court's power under part III and make it clear that on an application for an order for sale the court can order disposal of goods in some other manner.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.8.

This amendment seeks to make it clear that the court can fix a date from which storage charges for goods shall accrue.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.9.

This seeks to clarify the bill to ensure that the court can fix a cost that can be incurred in the insuring of the goods.

I also move 110.10. This is a consequential amendment to that item in 110.7.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15 agreed to.

Clause 16:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.11.

This is a new subclause (2) seeking to make it clear that an application can be made to the court to resolve any dispute as to the goods at any time before they are sold or otherwise disposed of.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.12.

A new subclause (3A) proposes to give the court power to determine any dispute and in doing so to vary any order previously made for the sale or other disposal of the goods.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.13.

The defeat of this clause is invited. Further amendments to clause 18 are designed to deal with the matters contained in clause 17 in a more precise manner. I invite defeat of this clause.

Clause 17 negatived.

Clause 18:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendments 110.14, 110.15 and 110.16.

These are amendments designed to clarify the meaning of the clause without affecting it in substance; they are purely for clarification.

Amendments agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.17.

This is a formal amendment only.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.18.

Two new subclauses, (4) and (5), are proposed. The reason for this is that subclause (3) already defines those charges that may be made by a person selling or disposing of goods under part II without a court order but leaves in doubt those charges that may be made under the bill in other circumstances. Proposed new subclause (4) is designed to clarify this where the sale or disposal is under part II as a result of a court order determining a dispute. Proposed new subclause (5) seeks to clarify the position as to the charges that may be made as the result of a court order under part III.

Mr WITHNALL: The clause as drafted seems to be a little bit obscure. We have 4 paragraphs - (a), (b), (c) and (d) - but the introductory words to the subsection provide that where goods are disposed of the charge is recoverable (a) by the bailee, (b) by the person, and (c) says charges in excess and (d) says expenses in excess. The whole of these 4 paragraphs are governed by the expression "the charge is recoverable", and I do not think, with great respect to the honourable member, that the proposed new subsection makes much sense.

Further consideration of clause 18 postponed.

Clause 19:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.19.

The deletion of paragraph (c) of subclause (1) is proposed as it refers to disposal by gift.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.20

This amendment will make it an offence not to lodge a copy of records of sale with the clerk of the court in which the order for sale was made.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 20:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.21.

This amendment reduces from 6 years to 3 years the period during which the Administrator must hold moneys in trust after the sale of goods has occurred.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.22.

This is a formal amendment only.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 20, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.23.

This is a formal amendment the credit for which must go to the honourable member for Port Darwin who drew attention to the necessity for it.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 21, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.24 which is a formal amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.25 which is again a formal amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.26.

This amendment seeks to make it clear that the procedure to be followed under the bill can be prescribed by regulations.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.27.

This amendment proposes to rewrite subclause (7) to make it clear that, notwithstanding subclause (5), an order for substituted service of an application can be made where the identity of the person is known but he cannot be located. This was particularly relevant after the cyclone.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.28.

This is a formal amendment only.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.29.

This amendment proposes to insert a new subclause (9) making it clear that the normal court appeal applies under the bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 23:

Mr WITHNALL: In a second-reading speech to this bill, I asked why clause 23 required that a person who obtained title to a piece of property in pursuance of an order of the court should have to worry about notice. When a court determines a dispute and an order is made by the court, surely to goodness the purchaser is entitled to rely upon the court order and not thereafter to be affected by a notice which would in effect set aside his title in defiance of the court order. The honourable member does not seem to have dealt in her reply at the second-reading with the point that I made. I would emphasise that, where somebody obtains title as a result of a court order, this should be a complete protection and not a protection depending upon actual or constructive notice of some other person's right or lack of title to the goods. After all, if we are going to provide a law which lets the court order the sale of goods, surely to goodness the order of the court is going to be the last word about it.

Further consideration of clause 23 postponed.

Clause 24:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110.30.

This proposes the deletion of an unnecessary reference to disposal of goods.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110,31.

This also deletes an unnecessary reference to disposal of goods.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 108,32.

In addition to deleting a further reference to disposal, this amendment seeks to make it clear that the notice of intention to sell goods need only specify their estimated value.

Mr WITHNALL: I made the point in the second-reading that value was a matter of opinion. I do not think that use of the word "estimated" changes my criticism at all. The clause remains a matter of opinion because there is no suggestion in the clause as it is proposed to be amended as to who is going to do the estimating. Is it to be the estimation of the value by the bailee? If it is, it means nothing. The bailee can put twopence on it and say, "This is my estimate". I doubt very much whether the form of this subclause is going to be affected at all but certainly the criticism I made at the second-reading cannot be cured by merely adding the word "estimated" because, if you are going to put in the word "estimated", you have to indicate who is going to do the estimation.

Further consideration of clause 24 postponed.

Clause 25 agreed to.

New clause 25A:

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 110,34.

This is the addition of a new clause 25A which seeks to specify the manner in which notices must be given under the bill.

New clause 25A agreed to.

Clause 26 agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mr PERRON: I rise to say a few words on matters which concern me about Australia's shipping industry. We hear that shipping services around the coast of Australia are running at a loss in general and some of them have to be heavily subsidised by the Government to remain a viable competitor to overland transport. When we look at some of the salary scales being paid to ships' crews, it is no wonder that shipping is working its way out of business. Reference to the July 1975 issue of wage rates and earnings put out by the Bureau of Statistics shows that the shipping and stevedoring industry has the highest wage rates of all Australian industries. We could perhaps relate this to the fact that they have also the highest figures for industrial stoppages. The lowest paid members of ships' crews are among the top 6 per cent of wage earners in Australia, including all government employees, managerial staff and professional workers.

I have 3 examples here of what I consider to be a disparity in work values and wage justice in this country today. The tugs in operation in Darwin will be the first example. A master on the tugs here receives \$15,748 per annum and a deck hand, \$13,052 per annum. In addition to this, each man gets \$600 per annum travelling allowance in lieu of airfares and there are other various benefits as far as clothing and telephones etc. are concerned. These same deck hands, and it is not a very skilled task at all receive \$13,000 per year and also receive 140 days leave per year. I must point out also that tug crews in Darwin, unlike most other ships crews, are based on shore. They sleep in their own beds every night; they do not have to go to sea for long periods. The tugs rarely go to sea except in cases of emergency. The crews do a 3-hour maintenance period each day Monday to Friday on board the vessel and they have only

been required to work when the tug is needed. The average hours worked during the $7\frac{1}{2}$ months a year that these men are required to be on duty is approximately 20 hours per week. We can see in that example that a man working 20 hours per week for $7\frac{1}{2}$ months a year on \$13,000 is doing what we might consider to be above average or above even what is reasonable.

The self propelled barge and small ships award in the Northern Territory covers the officers and crews aboard vessels trading around the Northern Territory coast. The rates of pay for crews on the motor vessels "Fourcroy" and the "Warrender", 2 of the largest barges operating around our Territory coast: the master receives \$20,726 per year, the mate receives \$19,335 a year and the lowest paid group on board, the deckhands, receive \$14,315 a year. Additional benefits on the barges include 145 days leave per year, air fares every 2 years and, whilst members of the crew are on board the vessel during their 7 months of work, the employer supplies all food and accommodation free of charge. Officers on board these vessels receive 2 weeks paid study leave per year. They do not take their study time during their 145 days a year off but during the employer's time. Let us be reasonable. If a mate wants to sit for a master's ticket, air fares are paid by the employer to Sydney and return as well as accommodation in Sydney.

The last example I would like to put to honourable members is the crew of the Darwin Trader, the vessel that features quite prominently in our lives in the Northern Territory. Under the Maritime Industries Seagoing Award of 1975 the crews are entitled to 161 days leave per year. The master of the ship receives \$23,309 and I do not begrudge him a bit of it. He has an awesome responsibility. Let us look at the salary scales of a few of the crew though: the chief engineer, also a responsible task, \$22,900; the second mate \$17,167; the first electrician \$17,167; the shipwright \$15,058; the bosun \$13,795; an able seaman \$12,554; and a greaser \$12,474. I am sure that honourable members will be heartened to learn that they receive a little more

money per annum than a greaser aboard the Darwin Trader. In Addition to their salaries, free airconditioned accommodation and food is provided during the 204 days per year that the men are actually on duty. Altogether the Darwin Trader has a crew of 35 people. Considering that the ship has to have one and four-fifths crews to keep it manned all year round, the annual wages bill comes to something very close to \$917,000 a year to run the Darwin Trader to Darwin. That is for salaries alone.

With these unrealistic wages scales being paid in the maritime industry, it is little wonder that shipping around Australia's coast is losing millions of dollars. We hear that Australian ships cannot compete for international trade largely as a result of the cost to crew a vessel. Most large ships have 2 crews: one complete crew on their 6-month odd leave while the other one runs the ship. Perhaps the situation would not be so bad if the shipping unions would maintain a little industrial peace but unfortunately the Seamen's Union of Australia in particular is renowned for militancy and disruption. A recent proposal by the Australian line to withdraw a ship from the Tasmanian run brought screams of woe from the union yet figures released by ANL show that of the \$9m loss last year \$6m of it was attributable to industrial stoppages. The sad background is not so much the big money that is being paid and earned by ships' crews even though this money is paid by all consumers, but I believe that some of these union leaders are not working to improve the conditions of their members but working to destroy an industry. Unfortunately, they are succeeding.

Mr POLLOCK: Tonight we will hear the Budget speech and many people will be looking for money in that Budget. From an electoral point of view, the one area that I am hoping for some allocation of money is in relation to Aboriginal housing. I refer particularly to the Ilpapa community and the Ntapa Housing Association which has applied for 3 years for a lease of land to build houses and provide the Aboriginal community at Ilpapa with

respectable housing and decent health conditions. The condition in which the people live at the moment is absolutely shocking. They are right next to a swamp which is continually topped up by sewerage water from the sewerage ponds nearby which the Department of Construction seem to be continually overflowing, I believe, deliberately. It is a great mosquito breeding ground. Of course, these people want to move to a new site of land for which they have finally been granted the lease. However, recent policy has provided that there is no more money at the moment for Aboriginal housing developments because of some of the situations which have occurred over the last few years here in the Territory. I do hope that, in the Budget, housing associations like that at Ilpapa will be provided with funds to allow them to provide the services and housing that the people have patiently waited for and deserve.

We did hear the honourable member for Tiwi the other day speak of the work that has been done in relation to housing on Bathurst Island and the number of houses which have resulted from the money which has been expended there. However, in a recent tour of some parts of my electorate, in particular to Haasts Bluff, I was very disturbed at the amount of money which has been expended for so little return. It is these examples which cause concern and result in housing associations at Bathurst Island, and others who have not had the chance yet, having their money cut off.

The Haasts Bluff Housing Association was incorporated in May 1974 and since that time has been allocated \$359,060. That money has been expended on: establishment costs, plant and equipment, workshop storage and security, \$45,963; direct building materials, \$113,074; labour and associated costs, \$103,572; administrative costs and technical consultants, \$30,637; accounting consultants, \$14,837; office, \$10,398; repair and maintenance, \$11,944; total funds released, \$359,060; cash on hand \$17,000. For that sum of money, no houses have been completed. Three houses are 95% completed. I would doubt that from my observation of them the other week. One house is 50% completed

and 2 houses are 10% completed. An ablution block and 2 sheds have been completed but no houses. We have had \$359,000 allocated!

These houses which I have had a look at are designed to have concrete painted floors, steel doors on the toilet ...

Mr Steele: That's cyclone shelters.

Mr POLLOCK: We had \$55,800 spent on consultants but no houses finished.

The Areyonga Housing Association on the other hand has been allocated \$103,000 and, although its establishment costs are basically in line with others - for example, \$45,000 for plant, equipment, workshops, storage and security and its administrative costs have been \$16,000 - it has one house all but complete. However, it has got no new money to continue the work on which all the capital outlay has been made in the initial stages in relation to the establishment costs and consultants' fees in relation to the design.

The Papunya Housing Association had \$416,000 allocated to it; consultant fees paid so far total \$33,928. They have spent \$415,517 and they have completed 5 houses. They have another house 95% complete, one house 75% complete, one house 60% complete and one house 5% complete. They have been making a reasonable fist of it compared to some other associations. From my observations, they have a house of basic design. The consultants consider that they are no longer really required and have resigned. The work is being supervised at a local level by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs mobile workforce representatives.

At least, they do have some houses complete, unlike the deplorable situation at Haasts Bluff. It is through examples like that and lack of control over these funds which has been obviously displayed over the last couple of years that effective housing associations in other places are being penalised. I am quite concerned about that. I hope the department is taking appropriate action to cut these short-

falls out and to provide money for housing associations to be spent equitably and to provide returns for the dollars spent and to provide Aboriginal people with the housing and services that they will require.

Another matter which has caused me concern is in relation to Ayers Rock. The Executive Member for Resource Development today was not able to give us any more joy in relation to the development program for the Ayers Rock village, and here we are in another stalemate where nothing is going on and I quite deplore the situation. I hope that the department and perhaps the Minister will take note of the remarks and will get on with the job of providing the development plans required for the establishment of the new Ayers Rock village. The people who are there at the moment do not know whether they can do any work on the existing premises and upgrade them because they are only on short term leases. It is an absolutely ridiculous situation. It is a matter which has been lingering on and on and should not be allowed to continue any longer.

Another matter which I wanted to refer to this afternoon is in relation to new government rents for single people. Government rents have been increased for people who occupy a government house from 10 to 15 per cent of their salary, or \$35 maximum or economic rent. In some areas, there are units provided - in Alice Springs they have just recently got 20-odd - for single officers. They are small bed-sitter units that you can hardly swing a cat in. They are also expected to pay the full rent the same as a married public servant who is provided with house and everything that goes with it. The situation is quite inequitable. I did communicate with the secretary of the department and wrote to the Minister a couple of weeks ago but as yet I have had an acknowledgement of the letter, but no acknowledgement of the telegram to the secretary of the department. This situation continues to linger on and probably they hope that I will forget about it. They can be assured that, like the matter of the Aboriginal housing, I will not be forgetting about it.

Unfortunately, in Darwin, being a visitor, I have from time to time to use taxis to get around. That is why I raised the question of the number and the availability of taxis in Darwin. Although there may be 55 licences now, as before the cyclone, I do not know if they are all fully operative. If a person is required to wait at the public ranks around Darwin, he would soon find that there are not too many taxis around. When you do get a taxi, you then feel as if your life is at risk because of the mechanical condition of some of them. Two of 3 that I rode in last week were in an absolutely deplorable condition - rattles and bangs, the way brakes are operated and the safety belts have not been particularly effective or not able to be coupled up. It does need some attention from the registrar in relation to those matters. I do hope that the random checks which he says are done are carried out a little more effectively.

Mr KENTISH: I rise this evening to reply to the challenge which has been made to me in an editorial in the NT News yesterday. The editor or whoever has written the editorial has asked me to name these activists. Apparently the editor, or whoever has written this editorial, has objected to certain insinuations or accusations without actually naming the person concerned. In this Assembly, I often have some thoughts about whether I should name people. If you do not name people when you are talking about things, you become devious; if you name people, you become vicious. A person in this Assembly has to take a choice between being devious or vicious. If you name people, you are taking advantage of the privilege of the Assembly.

The editor has objected to these people not being named, he wants them named - "activists" he calls them. I would like to remind Mr Editor of something. On Monday 9 August he printed an article in the NT News: "Conference Blasts Land Rights. Sydney conference. The conference decided that the bill soon to come before Parliament had been altered so extensively ..." The Editor printed that article but there is no clue whatever as to who organised this conference, what the conference was

about and what its purpose was. It was a completely anonymous conference. He has not named anyone who attended that conference and yet there must have been people from the Northern Territory at that conference. Mr Editor is acting with double standards. He has got one standard for me and another one for himself. The material that came out of that article on the conference was not very nice stuff; there were some very nasty accusations in fact. These people have been granted complete immunity by anonymity. You cannot write a letter to the newspaper without putting your name and address on it, but these people have been allowed to do this. This report is not by local journalists; it has come up from the south. I would say that, a few years ago, a report like that without any sign of its origin would have hit the wastepaper basket very quickly. This is evidence that perhaps the ethics of journalism have slipped very badly lately. In fact, it is deplorable that such a thing can exist.

The editor has wandered considerably in his remarks about myself. Although he had a full copy of the Hansard report of what I said in the Assembly on Wednesday 11th, he has introduced into this "Newsview" other matters which he attributes to me. He has introduced the words "underground movement" which you cannot find anywhere in Hansard as having been said by me. Having introduced these new words, he attributes new motives to me. His "Newsview" report is quite inaccurate. Further on, he introduces some more material himself. He must have a very lively imagination. His lively imagination is really not a credit to him. He said, "Mr Kentish hinted at devious doings behind the scenes with Aboriginal activists furtively going from place to place in the dark of night manipulating their subjects". There is not a word about that in Hansard, not a word. This sort of rubbish has come out of the editor's mind and he has unfortunately attributed this to me. Having attributed it to me, he goes on to slate me for saying these things which in fact he has said. It is difficult to know just what he is talking about. However, that is what is there and I would suggest to Mr Editor that he take

hold of the Hansard report of my speech in the adjournment on Wednesday 11 August again and read it a bit more slowly and compare it with the distorted version which he has produced here in the "Newsview". Some of the words he has used in criticising me are not my words but they are his words. He talks about Aboriginal "activists" and an Aboriginal "underground movement". Nowhere have I spoken about an Aboriginal underground movement, nor have I spoken about Aboriginal activists. Those are the editor's imaginings or his additions to my speech. It is a matter of mental gymnastics perhaps.

Now the editor is wanting names. He is not worried about giving names himself to his own reports in the paper, the anonymous report he is wanting names from me. I would suggest to him that, if he wants me to produce names he does something like this himself, that he produces the names of the people who sponsored and organised the conference in Sydney, that he produces the names of non-traditional Aboriginal people who attended that conference in Sydney. I would also suggest to him that, having distorted my adjournment speech of 11 August, he print the whole speech this time and leave out his own suggestions and his own variations on it. Then I might be prepared to give him some names. If he does that, if he does inquire into this conference in Sydney, he may not need me to give him any names; he will find out some of the people who were referred to as the "theys" at the conference. They are not named in the report of 9 August. Also, some of the people I might refer to are unknown; they are faceless people who produced the Land Rights Bill, they are faceless to us. We perhaps could find out by devious means who produced this bill which is giving land rights to people other than the traditional landholders.

We had a peculiar report again in the paper yesterday where it says: "Under the new Aboriginal Land Rights NT Bill expected to be passed in Federal Parliament before the end of the year, freehold titles for Aboriginal land will be handed over to land trusts for safekeeping". It stops there and it does not say for safekeeping in perpet-

ual succession which the bill says; they leave out those words. It does not mention that they will keep it in perpetuity. The land trusts will hold the title to the land in perpetuity but not the traditional owners, not the owners of the land; they will never own it while it is perpetually in the hands of a land trust. These are the things that we are trying to expose, and trying to make known to the public. These are the things being done by certain people who will not put their names to reports in the paper, unknown people who make the land bills in Canberra. I cannot name these people, I am sorry. As much as I would like to oblige the editor, these people are unknown to me; they are faceless. But their intentions are known to me, their intentions are very plain and their intentions ought to be made known and ought to be plain to all the people of the Territory and the Assembly. Just in closing my contribution to the debate, I hope that the editor will be fairminded enough to print in full what I have said to him today.

Mr STEELE: I hope that editor gets out of hospital in a week or two.

The honourable member for Elsey has asked me to read a statement to the House this afternoon concerning the beef industry. The honourable member has been a great fighter for the pastoral industry and those people who live in the country areas. His statement reads:

The recent strike at the Katherine Meat Works illustrates just how vulnerable the beef producer is. The producer who makes possible the processors' and the meat workers' living has had in the past little say in his own affairs. This is one reason for the formation of the Australian Cattlemens Union. On the one hand, 240 firms make exporting meat their occupation and they are furious that cattlemen and the authorities dispute their value. Two hundred and forty firms are engaged in marketing meat throughout the world, competing with each other and disregarding the man who makes their occupation possible. One meat exporter claimed that the interference from

producers was "uninformed policies formed in the bush". How dare the bankrupt producer complain about being ripped off!

In New Zealand, where the whole nation respects and values the primary producer, the price paid to the beef producer is fixed by consultation. In this enlightened country, first the reasonable costs and no doubt profits to the exporters are calculated, then processing charges etc and the cattlemen get the rest. Here the meat exporter plus the meat processor take what they will and give the rest to the producer, to the industry's detriment.

Those of you interested in the beef industry, and I fear that most of you would not know a Clydesdale from a Berkshire, will recall that on one occasion cattlemen in the Top End were being paid \$10 per 100 pounds less than their counterparts on the eastern seaboard - \$10 per 100 lb or \$45 per head. Cattlemen swallowed the processors' arguments that it cost this much more to process and export beef in the Top End. The Government stood by and refused to intervene. The result of this rip-off was that cattlemen had that amount less to develop with and consequently, to develop, had to borrow more heavily.

Now cattlemen are watching developments closely. With the price for average cattle at Katherine 7 cents per pound - the average kill at Katherine over the years has been 13c per pound - it has opened at less than 450 pounds per beast. Cattlemen may well watch closely; they are too late. The new company is not interested in the little man. They are concentrating on the large Tablelands company-owned stations and this is their undisputed right. It is a free enterprise world, thank goodness. The cattle they will kill in 1977 will weigh well. They will be older cattle and it has always puzzled me anyway why Tablelands cattle travelled 2,000 miles to Townsville rather than 500 miles to Katherine. The cost of processing may well be the answer. It must be the answer. Vestey's, never a company to waste a

shilling, shift their cattle, the bulk of them, to Queensland despite the fact that they invested X million in Darwin in 1963 to build their service abattoir there. One would presume that transport of both cattle to Darwin and beef from Darwin plus strikes, plus high wages, together with the slump in world beef prices, made the abattoir unprofitable.

The meat worker seems to have priced the beef producer out of a market. As was stated on Saturday on ABC news, the ship building industry, recipient of a 35% subsidy, will wind down, leaving 3,000 or 4,000 workers out of a job. The beef industry faces the same trouble. Subsidies to me are, and always have been, a dirty word. We need markets. But now, despite protestations of cooperation from meatworkers' unions and the Territory generally, we have a strike at Katherine meatworks which will kill the Top End beef industry for 1976. The meatworks was due to open on 13 July, I understand, but there was a strike by about 30 of the non-professional staff, what are termed casual employees. On Saturday 17th, I talked with Messrs Bill Hodgson, George Brewster and Arthur Prindable of the meatworkers union. Mr Hodgson is the federal secretary and Mr Prindable the NT representative; Mr Brewster is the Queensland secretary. On the following day, Sunday 18th, together with the executive of the Cattlemen's Association of Northern Australia, I talked again with these gentlemen. It was put bluntly to them that, if they wanted a strike, they could not pick a better time; it was the end of July and most small cattlemen were loath to muster anyway because of the assumed poor prices the meatworks would pay for cattle.

The meat workers representatives genuinely wanted the meatworks to open. They said that once agreement had been reached with the new company that agreement would hold through the 1976 season - what was left of it - and there would be no more trouble. An agreement was reached and on Wednesday 21st killing commenced. Several unusual aspects emerged about

this strike. One boner who came out to Katherine in 1973 and has been there ever since claimed there was no strike, that the boilers were not in working condition and that the "meaties" were maligned. This despite the fact that there were 1,400 head of cattle in the yards waiting to be killed, and despite the fact that the officials of the meatworkers union had been addressing them at meetings day after day after flying from Brisbane. On Wednesday 17th, there was a stopwork meeting but no strike eventuated. Then on Friday 18th, there was a strike and I understood from the ABC today that the federal secretary has again called on the meatworkers to return to work; this they refused to do.

It appears that the meatworkers, or some of them, are killing the goose that lays the golden egg. They are pricing beef out of the market despite the fact that it is costing the producer money to provide their livelihood, despite the fact that the producer is facing his third successive year of prices the equivalent of 1963 prices or even less. These people, like Oliver Twist "want more". Damn the producer. This attitude is not peculiar to Katherine. The fair day's work for a fair day's pay attitude is gone. The meatworker works hard, gets \$600, \$800 \$1,000 a week for his hard work too before tax it is true - you can hardly expect it tax free. But the meatworker got to this economic stage at the producer's expense. Here in the Northern Territory it is admitted that there is a wage differential. But should there be? Should we cattlemen be at the mercy year after year of southern rip-off merchants who vegetate in the populous areas on social service benefits through the months meatworks are closed and who return, like McArthur, in April for another season, or should we employ our own Territorians?

An apprenticeship scheme whereby youths of either sex and any colour were trained in the skills necessary for boners and butchers could mean that the Territory would benefit. I feel, and have felt, that it is time

that producers took a much more active role in their own future. As I said last week, I am convinced there is a market for top end beef, all 7.5 thousand tons of it, in areas other than the US. Marrakai station can supply buffalo meat in Adelaide at 23 cents per pound killed under DPI supervision, fit for human consumption, yet it costs in Melbourne 12 cents per pound to process a 400 pound beast, or \$48 per head, probably 15 cents or more in Katherine. Probably this is because of US regulations which are designed to discourage Australian beef from entering the US. If BAE investigations discover the reason for these terrific processing costs, they could perhaps investigate contract rates paid to buffalo workers and possibly help solve our troubles.

Mr MANUELL: I wish to comment on a reply I got to a question addressed to the honourable Executive Member for Resource Development this morning. I am not dissatisfied with the ability of the honourable Executive Member to give me a reply, but I am somewhat concerned about the contents of it. During this morning's question time, I asked the honourable Executive Member if he was aware that the water pressure and service delivery in Alice Springs was diminishing at the present moment and that, in fact, some domestic garden sprinklers would not work. The reply that he received from his department was that it was known that a shortage of water existed in the town area and the shortage was occurring in the east side.

However, I would like to assure this House that the shortage of water during the hottest part of the day, the bulk of the day, in which people use domestic water supplies for both domestic purposes and watering their gardens, is most acute and it not only occurs in the racecourse area and the Gillen area but in every subdivided town area that I am aware of. The reply concerns me because it is vague. It says that "2 measures for increasing

the town's water supply are on this financial year's program". That extends through to next year and possibly after the summer. These are upgrading the Temple Bar pumping station and equipping new bores in the Mereenie Aquifer. The important part of the answer is this: "Whether restrictions are necessary or not depends upon the availability of finance to complete these works, an unknown factor, the severity of the summer, an unknown factor, and the pattern of construction also an unknown factor".

I would like to stress to this House the importance of placing pressure upon the Government to undertake without delay the construction of bores already sunk and as yet unequipped. There is absolutely no value whatsoever in the Department of Construction, after this coming summer, saying, "Well, it was hot", after everybody's garden has died. Let us face it, in Alice Springs, as in Katherine and Tennant Creek, we do not have the opportunities of the seaside or the seashore, so some of the children do enjoy running around in their bathers under a sprinkler on a hot summer's day, but this year there may not be any sprinklers because there will not be water to provide the pressure to those sprinklers.

The pattern of construction is entirely determined by whether or not the finance becomes available and the finance may not be available, unless it becomes available in tonight's Budget or unless the Department of Construction can perhaps reappropriate funds that may have been apportioned to other works of a capital nature I call upon the Executive Member for Resource Development and the Department of Construction to take positive action in undertaking these capital works to equip these bores and supplement a badly needed short water supply in the Alice Springs area before this summer commences.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Wednesday 18 August 1976

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

FEDERAL BUDGET 1976-77

Mr TAMBLING: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to present papers and make a statement with regard to the National Budget.

Leave granted.

Mr TAMBLING: I am pleased to present details of the 1976-77 Budget brought down by the Treasurer in the House of Representatives last night.

I now table the Treasury White Papers for the 1976-77 Budget. Honourable members have been given papers relating to the provisions made for the Department of the Northern Territory. A summary covering the whole range of government expenditure by all departments in the Northern Territory is now tabled.

I move that the papers be noted.

The Budget has been framed within a context of concern for the national economy. It is presented at a time of high inflation and rising unemployment. It remains a most important consideration that the need to restrict growth of public sector outlays is vital to the Government's top priority task of curbing inflation. The Government's strategy recognises the absence of soft options and accepts as inevitable that all sectors of the economy must share the burden if economic stability is to be restored.

The main areas of interest to honourable members in the white papers will be the Appropriation Bills Nos. 1 and 2, the Budget Speech by the honourable Treasurer, the Civil Works Program, the estimates of receipts, and the estimated expenditures for the year ended 30 June 1977.

I would draw the attention of honourable members to page 17 of the latter document where the actual receipts for the Department of the Northern Territory and details of the estimated receipts in 1976-77 totalling \$32.054m are shown. On page 12 under the heading

"Taxation" are the estimated receipts in respect of stamp duties in the Northern Territory. Receipts for hospital charges for 1976-77 are estimated to be \$11,654,000.

Details of the proposed expenditures on the operational costs of running government departments may be found in Appropriation Bill No. 1 under the following headings: Aboriginal Affairs, page 10; Administrative Services, page 13; Attorney-General's, page 29; Construction, page 44; Defence, page 49; Education, page 55; Health, page 79; Northern Territory, page 94; Postal and Telecommunications, page 102; Transport, page 126.

Expenditure on capital works and services is provided for under Appropriation Bill No. 2. I would draw honourable members' attention to Budget Paper No. 4 where on page 34 are shown the special appropriations under control of the Department of the Northern Territory.

One of the papers available to honourable members is a table which gives details of the amounts provided in the Civil Works Program for each centre in the Northern Territory in the various development categories sponsored by the Department of the Northern Territory and compared with similar details in 1975-76.

I am sure that honourable members will find all the papers tabled informative and of assistance in the ensuing debate.

It should be noted that the new administrative arrangements which applied from 1 January 1976 re-created the Department of the Northern Territory and transferred the functions of Registrar-General (formerly Attorney-General) and Police (formerly Police and Customs) to that department. The expenditure figures for Police in the Appropriation Bills Nos. 1 and 2 reflect only expenditures for the period 1 January 1976 to 30 June 1976. Further information on these expenditures is contained in papers relating to provisions for the Department of the Northern Territory.

The provisions made for the Northern Territory, which is even more adversely affected by inflation and rising costs than most other areas in Australia, will still ensure initiatives in all essential fields of government spending in the Northern Territory. The reconstruction of Darwin remains as the top priority program in the Northern Territory.

The stated objective of the Government is to meet its continuing responsibility for the special needs and circumstances of the Territory where the economy is still heavily dependent on a range of government expenditures and where the private sector has not yet developed to the level found elsewhere in Australia.

In the past year, several advances have been made in the constitutional development of the Northern Territory, the main landmark being the passage of the Northern Territory (Administration) Amendment Bill through the Federal Parliament. This new act will enable the Government to implement its commitment to progressively transfer executive responsibility to the Legislative Assembly for the Northern Territory with the ultimate objective of statehood.

Assistance to industry

The Government has provided support to the primary industries of the Northern Territory in the provision of \$7,209,500 for the operation of the Resources Development Division of the Department of the Northern Territory, including an amount of \$889,500 for the continuation of the bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis eradication campaign, and \$691,000 for the operations of the Mines Branch, consistent with the Government's intention to encourage mineral exploration in the Territory.

In addition, \$1,000,000 has been provided for assistance through the Primary Producers Board, of which \$600,000 is for carry-on finance; \$65,000 to allow for extension of the existing rural reconstruction scheme to 31 December 1976 while the Commonwealth negotiates a new agreement with the states; and \$335,000 for other loans. The special problems facing cattle pro-

ducers in the Northern Territory have been recognised in the form of government assistance totalling \$400,000 to producers to offset transport costs of moving cattle for sale during the remainder of the 1976 season. A coastal shipping service subsidy of \$48,000 and assistance of \$55,000 under the Water Supplies Development Ordinance has also been provided.

Loans and grants to organisations

The Government has again supported the activities of community groups this financial year to the extent of \$112,000. Contributions have been made to the YMCA, YWCA and other young people's organisations. Funds of \$84,000 have been provided for loans to church organisations for the development of hostel accommodation for young working people. Contributions have also been made to show societies and for the development, upkeep and operation of public recreation reserves under the control of trustees throughout the Territory.

Assistance to local government authorities

\$1,000,000 has been made available in the form of operational assistance to the Corporation of the City of Darwin - \$632,500, and to the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs - \$367,500. Assistance to the Darwin corporation includes a special grant of \$325,000 made available to the corporation to assist in the restoration of essential public amenities damaged by Cyclone Tracy. The grant meets the increased costs of restoration arising from standards set in the new building code. Expenditure in 1976-77 is estimated to be \$125,000. An amount of \$362,000 has been provided for payment in lieu of general rates (including street lighting) in respect of government staff residences at Darwin, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy.

Assistance has also been provided for the construction of roads, footpaths and drainage works: Darwin - \$317,000 and Alice Springs - \$683,000, a total of \$1,000,000.

Overall assistance to local government authorities totals \$2,362,000.

Boards

The programs envisaged by the various boards for development, maintenance and operation have attracted a total appropriation of \$2,128,600 made up of:

	\$	\$
NT Museums and Art Galleries Board - operational expenditure		352,600
NT Reserves Board -		
capital expenditure	102,000	
operational expenditure	1,082,000	
less estimated revenue	<u>248,000</u>	936,000
NT Betting Control Board -		
payments to racing clubs and charities	271,470	
operational expenditure	<u>8,530</u>	280,000
NT Tourist Board - operational expenditure		500,000
NT Advisory Boards -		
Land Board and Land and Valuation Tribunal		4,000
Town Management Boards (Katherine and Tennant Creek)		2,500
Building Board		2,000
Town Planning Board		5,000
Consumers Protection Council		8,000
Workers Compensation Tribunal		2,000
Primary Producers Board		17,700
Plumbers and Drainers Board		1,300
Soil Conservation Committee		4,000
NT Architects Board		1,000
NT Parole Board		6,000
Hospital Advisory Boards		5,000
Other boards -		
Veterinary Surgeons Registration Board)		
Electricians Registration Board)		1,500
Place Names Committee)		

Overall assistance to local government authorities totals \$2,362,000.

Social welfare

A total of \$903,000 has been made available this year for general welfare services under the control of the Social and Commercial Affairs Division of the Department of the Northern Territory against an actual expenditure in 1975-76 of \$870,428. This provides for the maintenance of state wards and other children, assistance to missions for the care of children and the care of those people in necessitous circumstances.

Cyclone relief

As mentioned earlier, a special grant of \$325,000, attracting cash of \$125,000, will be made available to the Corporation of the City of Darwin. In addition, specific provision under the Department of the Northern Territory allows for expenditure in 1976-77 on -

\$

Reimbursement of restoration and additional administrative costs in-

curred by Northern Terri- Port Authority	335,000
Storage of personal effects from cyclone damaged dwellings	50,000
Repatriation of popula- tion to Darwin	30,000
Hire of the "Patris"	23,000
Incidental and other expenditure	50,000

This gives a total of \$488,000.

Darwin Reconstruction Commission

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission is directly responsible to the Minister for the Northern Territory for all projects in relation to the reconstruction of Darwin within an area of 40 kilometres around Darwin, with the exception of those required for autonomous government authorities and the Corporation of the City of Darwin.

The financial responsibilities of the commission are provided for in the following manner:

	\$
Administrative expenses	3,020,000
Capital works and ser- vices - general	139,500,000
- defence	3,470,000

This totals \$145,990,000.

Honourable members are referred to Budget Paper No. 5, the Civil Works Program, where the commission's program is outlined at pages 79-93, and to the attached table: Darwin Reconstruction Commission - Housing Accommodation Program.

Home Finance Trustee

The Government has approved of a financial scheme for assistance to home owners in rebuilding or repairing cyclone damage residences in Darwin. The cut-off date for lodgement of applications for loans is 31 December 1976.

The 1976-77 Budget provides a further \$11.5m for these loans, making a total of \$21m since the inception of the scheme.

The Government has reiterated a clear commitment that the scheme will continue and that eligible borrowers can utilize funds advanced under the scheme at any time up to 31 December 1980.

The Home Loans Scheme for other categories of persons is still available for all centres in the Northern Territory to a maximum of \$15 000 at $8\frac{1}{4}\%$ interest.

Northern Territory Housing Commission

The funding arrangements for the Housing Commission in respect of assistance grants have been brought into line with the assistance currently given to the states under the States Grants (Housing) Act 1971.

This involves the following:

(1) Basic grant

The commission will continue to obtain its finances by way of an annual budgetary appropriation and receive a non-repayable annual grant to compensate for the loss of concessional interest, equal to 1/30 of the difference between amortising the principal and interest over 53 years at the long term bond rate and the former concessional rate.

(2) Rent rebate grant

A separate non-repayable annual grant will be paid to the commission to enable it to operate a system of rental rebate to assist needy tenants. The criteria for tenants' eligibility will be in accordance with the formula suggested by the commission and based on that in the 1945 Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement.

Housing construction program

The Northern Territory Housing Commission provides housing for rental to persons of limited means who are not adequately housed and who are not officers of the Government or Northern Territory Public Service. The Commission may also sell houses to tenants.

The commission's functions were broadened in 1968 to permit construction of housing for rental or sale to approved industrial enterprises and/or their employees.

From 1972-73, finance for the commission's operations were advanced by the Government in a similar way to the advances made available by the Government for housing in the states; that is, attracting interest at the rate of 4% and repayable over 53 years.

The commission is now undertaking a program of construction and rebuilding for which cash of \$21.2m has been appropriated in 1976-77. This compares with expenditure in previous years of: 1975-76, \$13,000,000; 1974-75, \$4,295,000; 1973-74, \$1,700,000; 1972-73, \$2,766,471.

The repairs and maintenance program

The total program for the Department of the Northern Territory in 1976-77 is \$40,940,000, which is estimated to require a cash expenditure in 1976-77 of \$36,960,000. The program for the Electricity Supply Undertaking totals \$19,165,000 and for the Stuart and Barkly Highways, \$16,538,000. Included in this program are works selected having regard to a need to preserve and improve the useability of these roads in the wet season and to improve the section which will be subject to additional traffic following closure of the North Australia Railway. Major bridging works will be carried out at Newcastle Waters, between Pine Creek and the Cullen River and at Wycliffe Creek.

I now table for the information of members those extracts from the Budget papers on the civil works and other expenditure as they affect the Northern Territory.

In particular, I would draw members' attention to these schedules which detail the Darwin Reconstruction Commission's Housing Accommodation Program, the Civil Works Program, in particular the new works, and the Darwin Reconstruction Civil Works Program which is detailed and broken up into the items of Land Servicing; Roads, Bridges and Traffic Control; Public Utilities; Housing; Education; Public Health and Welfare; Cultural and Recreational Facilities; Commercial and Industrial Facilities; Legislature, Law and Order and Public Safety; and General Administration.

The schedules also include details of the Department of the Northern Territory Repairs and Maintenance Program with regard to rental dwellings, the Stuart and Barkly Highways repairs and maintenance, other roads and stock routes, operational undertakings and other repairs and maintenance.

There are comparative figures in the Civil Works Program for the major departments operating in the Northern Territory, between the centres of Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and other centres, including settlements and missions. Also detailed in the schedules are the proposed new works for the Department of the Northern Territory under the various divisions that it operates.

The final 2 schedules relate to appropriations, firstly of the Department of the Northern Territory related to that department, and then to a summary of the major departments operating in the Northern Territory and their various appropriations under Appropriation Act No. 1 and Appropriation Act No. 2. You will note that these schedules indicate for those major departments - and I stress "major departments" because there are a number of others where there are minor appropriations under smaller departments - but this envisages a total appropriation for 1976-77 of \$441,460,900 for expenditure in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to turn to my own personal and political comments with relation to this Budget as distinct from the official departmental report which I have just given.

I see this Budget as a good, practical and realistic Budget for the Northern Territory.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr TAMBLING: In Mr Lynch's Budget Speech, it is interesting to note what is the underlying government philosophy of the intent of the Budget. Obviously it has a very 2-sided emphasis of positive stimulation for economic recovery in Australia. Firstly, it provides areas of major social impact. You will note that additional expenditure is in the area of most need - that is, the lower-income family. But it is also directed to areas where the most consumer and sales activity will generate. Secondly, there are significant incentives encouraging business community investment, and freeing considerable moneys for this purpose.

The impact in the Northern Territory will be seen, I believe, in the effect of the recirculation of considerable funds through all areas of the Northern Territory, at least \$440m and possibly a great deal more. The Budget should not be assessed only in terms of the Civil Works Program, but also in the totality of expenditure, including the massive salary and administrative votes of the departments operating in the Northern Territory. There are tremendous cash flow implications through domestic and commercial activities, such as through the outlets of retailing, suppliers etc.

The significant Budget highlights and new policies affecting the Northern Territory, I believe, fall into a number of categories. Firstly, and probably most importantly, are the areas of social reform. You will be aware, Mr Speaker, that a number of announcements were made in May of the initiatives that have now been put into action in this Budget. Let me detail some because they are very relevant to the Northern Territory. There are the new family allowances and the full personal income tax indexation. For aged persons, there are a number of highlights: the removal of property means tests for pensioners; the pension rate is to be adjusted automatically for movements in the consumer prices index; and there is to be

special assistance for provision of aged persons' homes and hostels. There are new exemptions from estate duty for estates passing to a spouse. There is special assistance to handicapped people. There will be a greater review of the Aboriginal housing priorities. I would draw honourable members' attention to the statement on page 17 of the Budget Speech that it has been necessary to look carefully at a number of Aboriginal housing programs. It is stated very clearly that pending further reviews of the objectives priorities and past administration of these programs and in the light of those reviews, additional funds will be provided. A further area of social reform is the continued support of community service and voluntary agencies,

Another significant aspect of this Budget is the encouragement it gives to small business. Let us not shy away from the fact that small business is a tremendously vital and important part of the fabric of the Northern Territory. There are literally hundreds of small businesses and companies operating; this Budget will create additional funds for business and investment activities and it is going to reverse the Labor policy of strangling business initiative, incentive and progress. Thank goodness for that.

We see introduced the first stage of company tax indexation through trading stock valuation adjustments for 1976/77 company income. There is also a relaxation of the distribution or retention allowance requirements for private companies, and the payroll tax exemption level, particularly in the Northern Territory, has been doubled. These particular incentives will have a phenomenal impact on commercial viability and activity in the Northern Territory.

In the area of transport, you will note from the Treasurer's speech on pages 19 and 20 that a further \$36.1m is included to finance the capital program of the Australian National Railways Commission and, most importantly, this amount includes provisions to continue the construction of the standard-gauge railway between Tarcoola and Alice Springs. The subsidy for the

"Darwin Trader" has been retained and there is a special appropriation of a loan to Connair to continue those vital air services throughout outback Northern Territory.

In the area of mineral and energy development, we see new taxation concessions for mining and petroleum companies and we see the abolition of the \$2 per barrel levy on crude oil for new discoveries. Again, this will give major encouragement for the return to the Northern Territory of companies that once played a very significant role in its development. For the last 3 years, they were forced out by direct Labor policy and action. This Budget is going to reverse that and I believe we are going to see a tremendous resurgence of activity in this particular area.

With relation to the rural industry, the Budget provides assistance to the beef industry, expenditure on rural reconstruction and special assistance to producers for transport costs in the moving of cattle.

Let me turn to another very important aspect of this Budget and that is on the collection side, the revenue raisings that are appropriate and applicable to the Northern Territory. In my first appraisal of these budget papers of the Departments of Northern Territory, Health, Attorney-General, Education and the taxation provisions of stamp duty, I believe that \$46m is to be raised in these specific charges in the Northern Territory. Add to this, the very significant factor of personal tax, company tax, payroll tax, customs and excise - and I do not need to mention what the alcohol consumption in the Northern Territory is like; we must make a significant input in that area - sales and other indirect taxes. I believe the total revenue raisings, whilst they are not shown specifically in the Budget papers, could well exceed \$100m in the Northern Territory.

I would like to turn to the Civil Works and the Repair and Maintenance Programs. Last year, the cash expenditure in the Northern Territory - and I stress the word "cash" - was slightly more than \$200m. This year, the figure for civil works, repair and maintenance

is in excess of \$230m. Let me quote you some figures. With regard to the commitment value of work, we had work in progress at 1 July on capital works of some \$235m and we add to this new authorisations for new works to commence in program value of another \$103m. The cash expenditure on that \$338m capital works program is to be of the order of \$184m. In the repair and maintenance program, we see amongst the various departments in the Northern Territory, work in progress at 1 July of \$7m, new authorisations proposed for repairs and maintenance, including the Stuart and Barkly Highways and other stock routes, and the operation of the electricity undertaking, was \$47m. That gives a total program value of \$54m with cash expenditure of \$45m. The revotes that will result from this particular program in cash terms will necessitate in the following financial year, that is 1977/78, at least a further \$150m expenditure.

There are significant works programs that have been initiated but I will leave these to other Executive Members to outline. It is interesting to note, when you look at the Civil Works Program, the percentage of the cake that we are taking in the Northern Territory of what is the Australian Government's civil works commitment. If you disregard the NCDC or the Canberra operation, of the work in progress at 1 July, we held 55%; of the commitment of the new works proposed we obtain in this Budget 37%; and in terms of cash expenditure of the total program we obtain 49%. If you do include the NCDC, naturally these figures are reduced because of the significance of that vote. However, they only reduce to: for the work in progress 34% of the total for the Territory, 24% for the new works commitment and 32% for the estimated expenditure in the Northern Territory. These are very substantial and significant cuts of the cake that we get to utilise in the Northern Territory.

In addition to the figures that I have been mentioning, we should also take into account the grants to local government, to other town services, to the various statutory authorities, to the Home Finance Trustee, and to

Aboriginal communities. In fact, the grants that are made to Aboriginal communities will exceed \$20m themselves.

I would like to mention specifically those areas that will relate to my own portfolio and that is, generally, the area of housing. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has a very high proportion of its vote dedicated to housing. Basically, it is the Government's insurance policy and the commitment to pick up the important tab of reconstructing this city following its devastation. The Northern Territory Housing Commission has been voted over \$21m and, whilst a significant proportion of this fund is also an insurance policy replacement, it is also very important that that commission has been recognised as having a vital role. The Home Finance Trustee appropriation of \$11m for the special scheme and the provision for the other loans scheme is also very welcome. There are a number of communities outside of Darwin that have received housing commitments; Alice Springs and Katherine, in particular, have received excellent new program commitments.

If we turn to the administrative and operational votes of all the departments, I ascertain, just by quickly looking through the documents, that at least \$173m - and I think you will find in one of the tables that it suggests that it is considerably more - was allocated in the following manner: the Department of Northern Territory, including the Northern Territory statutory authorities \$60m; the Department of Construction, \$20m; the Department of Health, \$43m; the Department of Education and the Darwin Community College, \$45m; the Department of Aboriginal Affairs \$5m; and in addition, the community grants that I mentioned earlier of \$20m. There are of course a number of other smaller departments such as Attorney-General's. It is a very important aspect to look at this Budget in terms of what the amount of money - the \$200 million - will generate in this particular community.

There are a number of areas about which I would like to express criticism

and they are basically linked to the manner in which the Budget was prepared. You will note in the votes for the Department of the Northern Territory that the statutory authorities have been dealt a rather severe blow. The heavy hand of bureaucracy, where political decisions are made by public servants, and the lack of consultation on priorities with these particular authorities obviously necessitates a particular view of that system. I believe it will change as constitutional development comes about in the Northern Territory.

My second area of criticism is with regard to the liaison with the Treasury. This has not been good. There is a brick wall in trying to get information there. And I must apologize to honourable members for the manner in which they obtained the white papers relating to this Budget.

Mrs Lawrie: I should think so.

Mr TAMBLING: To have the papers handed them like little boys at 9.30 pm at the end of the Treasurer's speech is, to say the least, insulting.

There needs to be a better identification by the Treasury in the Budget papers of all statelike functions. I do not know how much time other members were able to spend in studying these papers last night, but it took me until 3 am to get the appraisal that I felt I had to give them and just to go through the numerous areas that were involved.

It also shows that, linked with constitutional development, we have to improve a system of coordination between departments, not only to find out where the money is being spent and how it is being spent but to affect the priorities in a more appropriate community manner. We are living with a Labor Party legacy here in that the splitting of these departments and the responsibilities certainly does not help in any consideration of finances on an annual Budget day.

I think it is important to look at the types of criticism that will come out of this particular Budget in the

media. I anticipate that one of the areas that will be brought out will be in the Civil Works Program where there will be questions asked of the number of programs that appeared in the Labor Government Budget last year and do not appear in this Budget in proposed new works. In effect, they were either deferred or cut out in the mid-year changes or they have now been dropped by a political decision. There are a number of areas where this has happened but I believe, from the discussions I have had with all departmental officers, that it has happened in the context of the anti-inflationary policies of the Government and the need for the urgency and the essentiality of all those particular programs.

I would challenge anybody who is doing that exercise to look also at the program and see what new projects have come on, and there are a number of new ones. Let me refer to your home town, Mr Speaker. The housing program there has gone up to 40 houses; there were, I think, only 20 in last year's program. It was back to about 10 but at least it is now back to 40. There are significant changes. What we have got to accept is the reality; decisions have been made; new programs have been established in the context of the national Budget on what I believe is a very fair percentage of the total, and they fully recognise the development needs and the personal and social needs of the Northern Territory. Let us make sure that we do not conduct just academic exercises for media publicity.

Finally, I have praise for a number of people in connection with the final form that this Budget has taken. Particularly, I have a great deal of respect for the role that the Minister for the Northern Territory has played in obtaining the size of the cake which he did get. I am aware of the considerable effort that this has taken him to, both in the Cabinet room and in pleading our case. Had it not been for his strong and personal effort, we would probably have suffered a harder fate.

I am also aware that our member in the House of Representatives, Sam Calder, and Senator Bernie Kilgariff

have been consulted, as have the members of this Northern Territory Executive with regard to the establishment of the priorities and the actual need in a lot of these programs, I would not say so much for the other senator; I do not believe that any of his lobbying, if there has been any - and from what I have heard he seeks not to consult with Government - has had any effect,

I am personally very grateful for the assistance that officers of the Department of the Northern Territory have given to me in compiling my notes and my discussions of this particular Budget. However, I would like to close by saying I see an important functioning role being developed that is going to be far more important in the future in the link of constitutional development. Sure, we have got \$400m-odd of cash expenditure in the Northern Territory but it is interesting to note who still makes the authorisation - and it is not yet the Northern Territory Executive. I will be much happier when a larger proportion of the decisions relating to that \$400m - or hopefully next year well in excess of \$500m - will be made in this Assembly and by this Executive.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr TUXWORTH: In noting the annual Budget and the appropriations for the Northern Territory, it is with pleasure that I say that resource development has fared extremely well except for one particular area which is tourism. I will deal with that first.

As the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development has already outlined, the appropriation this year to the Tourist Board of \$500,000 is \$50,000 less than the board had last year and is \$125,000 less than the board sought. I believe that the reason for this cut is primarily that there was not adequate consultation between the board and the department in formulating this Budget estimate. The main areas of expenditure for the Tourist Board will be administration expenses of \$356,000, operational expenses of \$142,000 and promotional expenses of \$25,000 coupled with advertising expenses of \$43,000. I believe I

reflect the concern of the board and the industry when I say that the administrative expenses of \$356,000 and the operating expenses of \$142,000 are used primarily in collecting commissions on sales that amount to \$85,000. The other area of concern that I would like to vent on behalf of the board is that only \$25,000 has been obtained for promoting the Northern Territory tourist attractions in the other states.

On a brighter note, I would move to mining. As mentioned in the Treasurer's speech last night, the federal tax incentives that have been given to the mining industry, particularly the incentives for infrastructure and further tax reductions for equipment that will move ore, will do much to assist the Northern Territory mining industry where freights and harbour facilities are a very great portion of the industry's expenditure. The capacity of the industry now to amortise infrastructure costs over 5 years instead of 25 years will also be of enormous help. The payment of the world parity price for oil at the well head will bring to a quick conclusion any decision Magellan Petroleum was wrestling with as to whether to go ahead at the Mereenie and Palm Valley oil fields.

Departmental expenditure this year for the Mines Branch will amount to \$204,000 for plant and equipment; this is an increase of \$27,000. Administrative expenses of \$691,000 reflect an increase of \$91,000 on the previous year's expenditure. These increases will be used primarily in diamond drilling which will have an increase of approximately \$20,000 and geological mapping has an increase to \$15,000 - this will be appreciated by the small miner.

Expenditure in the Fisheries Section shows a slight increase of \$5,000 and, while the expenditure in this area is not all that it should be, it will be sufficient to enable the Fisheries Section to maintain existing programs of research and surveillance.

The Bushfire Control Board has had an increase in its vote this year. Plant and equipment, which has been appro-

priated as \$45,000, reflects an increase of \$34,000. Administrative expenses of \$143,000 reflect an increase of \$9,000. There is in this administrative cost a notional provision of \$100,000 for firefighting. I would like to say that this is purely a notional figure and could in fact extend to twice that value if firefighting activities in the Northern Territory are increased this year as a result of the dry grass that we have throughout the Territory. An additional \$17,000 has been provided to assist farmers in the Top End with fire breaks at Humpty Doo and Howard Springs.

Water Resources' activities for this year will reflect increases also. Appropriations of \$403,000 to plant and equipment show a \$100,000 increase. Administrative costs of \$1,825,000 reflect an increase in expenditure of \$50,000 and stores will reflect a figure of \$320,000 which is down on last year by some \$200,000. Included in these appropriations are additional funds for the survey of town water supplies in Alice Springs, Pine Creek and Katherine amounting to \$52,000.

Hydrographic assessment at Melville Island and on the Douglas and Adelaide Rivers will amount to an additional \$54,000 and one of the main areas of increase in expenditure will be in vehicle hire; the additional cost to the branch this year will be \$103,000.

Assistance under the Water Supplies Development Ordinance shows an increase of \$30,000 and the appropriation this year is \$55,000. These funds are used primarily to offset the costs of unsuccessful boring and drilling carried out by primary producers. Development of water resources for government projects shows an appropriation of \$550,000 which is an increase of \$150,000, and it is interesting to note that \$366,000 of this appropriation will be used for projects on Aboriginal reserves.

I wish to turn for one moment to the expenditures in my own electorate. I believe these, while not at the highest level they could have been, will reflect a continued rate of spending through the year that will sustain the

community. Local government administration funds have been increased to \$141,000. Street reconstruction and subdivisional works to be carried out in the second half of this financial year will amount to \$890,000. The construction of 14 homes by the Housing Commission will amount to \$345,000. The extension to buildings of the Tennant Creek Area School will cost \$420,000. Equipment of bores at Kelly Well will cost \$6,000 and the erection of a core shed at the government battery at Tennant Creek will amount to \$130,000.

Continuing works already in progress this year will be the Tennant Creek Hospital which still have \$6.5m of expenditure to go through, and the continuing construction of the 5-megalitre water storage tank on the east side for \$540,000.

On the more rural nature in the electorate, road realignment, reconstruction and flood repair work and the construction of the Newcastle Waters causeway will be in the vicinity of \$3m; and at Elliott the construction of a house for \$55,000 is also accompanied in that town by bore-sinking work of \$10,000.

I believe that these items of expenditure will contribute greatly to the viability of the Tennant Creek economy but there are 2 grounds of very great concern that I have. One is the failure of this Government to commit itself to the purchase of an additional generator for the Tennant Creek power station and I will be pursuing this matter vigorously. The department does not appear to have given sufficient attention and regard to the present rate of increase of power in the town; the lead time in commissioning a generator these days is approximately 2 years. They do not appear to have given sufficient regard to the fact that Peko Mines is unable to provide power into its grid as it has in the past, and they do not appear to have accepted the advice of the Department of Housing and Construction who regard the purchase of this generator as imperative. This is the second time that the purchase of this generator has been deferred. I believe that serious social and economic

disadvantage could come if the Government does not enter into an agreement or a letter of intent with some manufacturing authority to purchase an additional generator at the earliest opportunity. The other concern that I have is that there is no apparent expenditure this year from the Aboriginal Affairs Department to alleviate in both Tennant Creek and Elliott the appalling fringe-dwelling situations that we have in both towns. We have gone now from a phase of extreme waste in the last 3 years, when we spent \$300,000 and did not build a house, to spending absolutely nothing and doing nothing. It is time that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Northern Territory came to grips with the social problems that these people have and the shortages of housing, the lack of a satisfactory water supply, sewerage and garbage collection that we have in these areas of squalor and that something is done about it very quickly.

Mr POLLOCK: I wish to report on the 3 areas of Aboriginal affairs, social welfare and health. I have a rather mixed bag.

In relation to Aboriginal affairs, the allocations for this current financial year are \$28,627,745 compared to some \$36,612,282 last year. The principal areas of reduction are in relation to housing associations and business enterprises. Members have had circulated to them a circular prepared by the department in which most of the figures have been outlined and perhaps I might make a few explanatory remarks in relation to some of those figures. In relation to the Grants in Aid, Table 2, members will note the allocation for housing associations has been made at \$2m as compared to an expenditure last financial year of \$5.781m. This reduction of \$3.7m is basically due to the Government's announcement in recent months that it will only in this current financial year be meeting the legal requirements of housing associations until such time as an investigation into the operation and conduct of the housing associations to date has been completed and presented. I am told that this report is well advanced and should soon be considered by the Government. Although I have not been

told this, I do assume that when this report has been received and evaluated, then the matter of housing associations will again be reviewed. I would personally hope that, following that evaluation of the scheme, more money will become available in that area.

There has been an increase of \$140,720 to health services under Table 3, Grants in Aid. These funds are provided to the Aboriginal medical service of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in Alice Springs and in support of the Aboriginal Development Foundation to develop appropriate health education programs for Aboriginal communities. This allocation is now \$552,720.

In Table 5, Grants in Aid - Employment, there has been a considerable increase in the allocations. In fact, the amount has been more than doubled. Some \$470,000 is provided under this table for funds to afford employment and training facilities for Aboriginals by city corporations, the YMCA, private business and other organisations which may meet the criteria established. The criteria are established in consultation with the Commonwealth Employment Service. It is outside the NEAT scheme and it offers to employers full wages and additional costs for persons who engage Aboriginal labour and undertake training. This scheme operates particularly effectively in the municipality of Alice Springs. A great number of Aboriginal persons are employed under the scheme and, at the same time, improvements to the town are made. In recent times, there has been considerable footpath construction in Alice Springs under this particular scheme.

Welfare provisions are basically the same as last year - \$265,000.

The business enterprises allocation was drastically cut from \$4,335m to \$751,000. This was basically in the area of the cattle project in which there were no commitments in recent years. This area too is under special investigation by the department and, subject to reports, could be reviewed at a later time.

The town management and public facilities program is basically the same as

last year, the allocation being \$8,869m. Members will note that, in Table 5, there is a decrease of \$895,000. This is basically due to the fact that capital expenditure was made in the first year of this program; that is, last financial year. The amounts actually being allocated this year are quite comparable to last year when the capital expenditure aspect is removed from the figures.

Recreation and cultural support for the YMCA and St Vincent de Paul is basically unchanged from last year - \$180,000. Legal aid services are retained at \$500,000, a decrease of \$23,000. Minor items are all set out in this particular table attached to the report which I have made available to members.

Members should note that, in examining the capital works program, they do not confuse the 2 programs. The first pages outline the 1975-76 table, as compared to the 1976-77 table which does provide for capital works to be commenced in the coming year to the total value of \$7,525m.

Overall, there has been a cut in moneys to be made available for expenditure on the general area of Aboriginal affairs. They are, as I mentioned, basically in two areas, housing associations and business enterprises; both those areas are under investigation, and perhaps as the year progresses we may be able to see a brighter light.

Social Welfare provisions - correctional services has maintained its levels of expenditure. This year the appropriation is \$540,000, a decrease of \$53,846. This is basically due to 2 matters. There has been a reduction of \$114,373 required for the maintenance of prisoners interstate; there are a few less prisoners interstate at the moment. However, this is mainly due to an adjustment in the accounting procedure which required last financial year a greater amount of moneys to be paid in advance to the interstate authorities. There has also been a reduction of the requirement of \$14,282 this year for transport and vehicle hire in that prisoners do not have to be transported to and from the Darwin Police Station for instance, as they are now fully

housed at Fannie Bay. We do not envisage the transfers to other centres in the Territory to be as high.

General Welfare Services - the appropriation this financial year is \$903,000, an increase of \$22,573. I would say that, generally, this service will be maintained. It does include an allocation of \$54,000 for the assessment and training security facility at Alice Springs; that is, the operating of that facility which should be in operation towards the end of this year or early in the new year.

I am also pleased to note in the allocations an amount of \$6,000 for the operations of the Parole Board, which hopefully will have its first meeting next month.

The Department of Health - I am particularly pleased, actually, with the appropriations made to the department, which are an increase of some \$10m on last year's expenditure. The total provision of \$24,309,000 for hospital salaries and administration expenses represents an increase of 13% on the actual provision for 1975-76, and 25% above the expenditure of the Department of the Northern Territory division last year. These provisions, I am advised, are adequate to maintain services at their present level and it is hoped that the recent award to nursing staff and the improvement in conditions of service for senior hospital doctors and district medical officers, soon to be confirmed, will allow the department to recruit and retain the staff required to build up the Territory's health services.

In relation to community health services and other non-hospital services, together with grants and subsidies to the Red Cross, Order of St. John, employment of nursing staff in isolated areas, missions, and the Darwin Women's centre, a total of \$15,793,200 is to be provided, which is an increase of nearly 16% over last year's provision and 26% more than actually expended. These provisions are sufficient to allow community health services to continue at much the same level as last year. With gradual improvement in facilities combined with

better recruitment, it is hoped gradually to develop the quality of community health services both in urban and rural areas.

Provision for plant and equipment shows a reduction of 45% on last year's provision but 16% on last year's actual expenditure. This represents a considerable reduction of expenditure but it will be appreciated that a great deal of equipment was bought for the new Alice Springs hospital during 1975-76 and there is no corresponding requirement in 1976-77. The summary of recurring provisions for hospital services, community health services and plant equipment, a total of \$42,226,650, represents an expenditure of about \$432 per head in the Territory on just maintaining the health services, without providing the capital facilities.

With regard to the works program of the Department of Health, expenditure on works in progress this financial year is anticipated at \$7.920m and proposed new works \$480,000. Proposed new works include: at Maningrida, extensions to the health centre at a \$335,000 estimated total cost; Katherine Hospital, erection of flammable liquid stores; Alyangula, erection of two houses; Milingimbi, erection of 3 flats and modifications to the health centre; Alice Springs airport, erection of bureau medical hanger; Alyangula, erection of a health centre; Alice Springs, erection of Aboriginal health workers' training school; Alice Springs Hospital, erection of nurse aide training school and technical maintenance workshop; Adelaide River, erection of two flats. It would seem that with works in progress for community health centres at Utopia, Oenpelli, Umbakumba, Papunya, Hooker Creek, Yuendumu, Adelaide River, Docker River and the proposed new works, health services generally in terms of facilities are well on the way to the order which we expect.

In Darwin, under the Darwin Reconstruction Commission vote, work will continue. A community health centre will be provided at Berrimah. In Darwin, there will be restoration of the fumigation building at Dinah Beach.

At the Darwin Hospital, there will be extensions to the mortuary and, at the Darwin Dental Clinic, some extensions.

I might mention that in the Grants in Aid, the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service is to receive \$209,500 as compared to last year's actual expenditure of \$31,000. The order of St. John in the Northern Territory is to receive \$350,000, an increase from \$200,000. Grants towards the employment of nursing staff in isolated areas is \$125,000 compared to last year's \$93,761. The Darwin Women's centre is to receive \$60,000 from the Department of Health. Overall, the department's figures are considerably increased from last year.

I would like to mention my disappointment at the vote in relation to roads. I represent a very large rural electorate and was quite pleased last year to see on the roads program the proposed construction of the Erldunda-Ayers Rock road and the Jay Creek-Hermannsburg Road. However, both works were deferred and, unfortunately, there is no sign of them this year. In fact, the whole works program is quite small and, in my particular electorate, there is only a very few miles of existing road which is to be widened. There are other areas, I am sure, which are of concern but, overall, I think we must be satisfied with what we have got and make the most of it.

Miss ANDREW: I feel like the town cryer; I have the good news, the bad news and the disaster news, and I do not know which to give you first.

I shall start off in the area of education. Generally, there will possibly be a lot of public criticism over the figures that are given to the Northern Territory in the field of education. The overall estimate is \$55,149,600 and that is low in comparison with the \$67,418,000 in 1975-76. The main reasons for the reductions in these estimates are, however, a reduced program for the DRC, which was expected. Dripstone High School is not going ahead, thanks to our colleagues in Block 8 over the road who seem to have some objections against any educational institution. The Nightcliff Library facilities un-

fortunately are going to stay as they are in spite of the fact that they are going to upgrade it as a primary cyclone shelter. And at the Darwin Arts and Crafts Centre, in spite of the fact that there are over a thousand children attending the school, no adequate facilities are going to be provided.

The other area is the reduction in plant and equipment and this reflects the completion of the special outstations building and transport programs, but it still is down \$627,000 from what was asked for. Unfortunately, certain elements of continuance in the developing program of curriculum and establishment of schools as thoroughly equipped institutions will not be able to take place.

The operational estimate is rather exciting. Provision has been made for establishment of a stockholding in Darwin which will enable an improved supply system to schools. I am sure honourable members are all aware of the problems that schools have getting supplies during the wet. Eventually all over the Northern Territory, but this year starting in Darwin, there is going to be a stockpiling of paper, pens, books, etc to provide a buffer against transportation problems. This will be to the value of approximately \$500,000.

Provision of about \$87,000 for establishment of resource units for disadvantaged children in isolated areas of the Northern Territory has been granted and I am sure we will all applaud that move.

The 1976-77 civil works proposals for the Northern Territory, excluding Darwin, is \$12,025m although cash expenditure on 1976-77 items will be limited to approximately \$2m. Sadadeen High School, which I am sure the members from Alice Springs will applaud, is on its way; and the Yirrkala area school, stage one, is the other major item on the program. The program also includes a transportable school to Borrooloola and to Lake Nash, the Alyangula Area School craft block, extensions to the Tennant Creek Area School, Nhulunbuy pre-school extensions, and other minor new works, including - for your information, Mr

Speaker - the Katherine Area School science laboratory.

The department's policy to provide adequate housing for staff in remote areas continues, and \$885,000 has been allocated for this purpose. This includes housing at Newcastle Waters, Docker River, Maryvale, Neutral Junction, Lake Nash, Wave Hill and Garden Point.

The failure of an extensive upgrading of Ross Park School to make the program was most disappointing as this project had been timed to coincide with the opening of Braitling Primary School in order to have alternative accommodation available for Ross Park students.

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission program for 1976-77 only includes \$725,000 for new works in education including Ludmilla Preschool transportable classrooms and minor new works. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission policy was aimed at having the maximum amount of restoration upgrading work carried out during the coming year rather than committing large sums of money to new works. If the restoration upgrading schedule can be adhered to, most Darwin schools will be fully restored by July of next year. However, we still have not got Dripstone.

Turning to some other matters, an increase in the numbers of part-time instructors employed on an hourly basis has been approved and this will allow for a wider variety of music instruction because most of the music teachers in the Territory do not qualify under the Commonwealth Teaching Service program and consequently have to be employed as part-time instructors.

There will be an extension of the student driver education course. There will be a much stronger out of school activities program, the tie-dye team, theatre and education, drama and education have had an increase in part-time instructors, and immigrant education has been considerably increased, which will allow for an increased number of courses being provided.

A policy of greater principal education advising involvement in the actual

schools accounts for some increases in travel; however, the overall duty travel is down because of the imposition of ceilings on staff, although it is interesting to note that we still cannot recruit enough teachers to fill the ceilings allocated.

Office requisites are going to be cut down, as is to some extent printing, because of the drastically rising cost of paper and printing.

Supplies and stores - as I have already mentioned, there is the stockpiling situation.

The Aboriginal schools have got about \$61,000 and community schools about \$55,000. The increase in the community schools' vote will be for equipping and maintenance of resource units for teaching deaf and disadvantaged children, that is an amount of \$67,000 and is for initial equipment of a non-recurring nature. Aboriginal schools' increases include provision for Aboriginal adult education in 1976-77 and providing the materials for adult educators.

General costs have risen in terms of transport hiring, cleaning and the maintenance of school grounds.

Residential colleges - this year there will be an increase in the number of students attending Kormilda as a result of the upgrading and rebuilding of the kitchen and dormitory facilities damaged in the cyclone, and the number of enrolments expected there is 220 children.

Scholarships - apart from the recent announcement made by the Minister for Education increasing the air fares from 1 to 2 for secondary students outside the Territory, no further decisions will be taken until October.

The bi-lingual education program is to continue. Schools of the Air in Katherine and Alice Springs, recently upgraded, will be provided. The major area lacking is in the capital works program in Darwin and I do deplore the bureaucratic attitudes that have put a stop to Dripstone High School and the improvement of the Darwin and Night-

cliff High School areas. The Community College has been given \$1.5m for approved capital programs this year.

Turning away from education to the field of law, the only items in the Budget for the Northern Territory branch of the Attorney-General's Department that causes anxiety relates to administrative matters on travelling. This has been reduced by \$12,500 from the estimate and the estimate was already \$29,500 less than what had actually been expended in 1975-76. There is also the unpalatable fact that the \$100,000 which for some years has been the figure set to establish a Crown Law library this time has been struck out. I hope that approval can be given later under some other vote. Travel will naturally have to be kept to a minimum. There is also a reduction in the amount allowed for travelling under "Courts" but in fact the amount allowed is in excess of what was expended last year and, with few economies, there does not seem to be any major problems.

There will be extensions to the courthouse at Tennant Creek. This has been approved, tenders will be called this month and the estimated cost is \$65,000. Plans for the residences of Justice Foster and Justice Muirhead are prepared and the DRC is seeking approval to exceed the original estimate of \$95,000. For the Supreme Court building in Alice Springs, there is no provision this year. This will have to come before a PWC hearing which I hope will be held later this year. Other minor works include relocation of ALAO in Mitchell Chambers, rehabilitation of Block 3 for Attorney-General's Department occupation, a Supreme Court branch office in Darwin and an additional magistrate's court. I am advised that representatives here are hoping to rub their magic lantern in order to get some funds there. Legal Aid did very well with a total allocation of \$375,000 for the Northern Territory out of an overall figure of some \$16m or more.

Now we come to the bad news. Generally the allocations to the police force under the Department of the Northern Territory were acceptable.

However, some problems are going to occur. In the salaries and allowances figures, there was some \$6.5m allowed which should put a stop to the problems that they have had in payments of overtime and lack of staff. There will be 3 recruiting drives this year and these are catered for under the advertising vote as well as in the allowances.

Turning to capital works, as far as the police program is concerned, there are to be 3 new police stations. Hermannsburg and Oenpelli will have mobile demountable police complexes installed and tenders have already been called. At Hooker Creek, there will be the erection of a police station and 2 residences; the tender date for that is August. At Roper River and Maranboy there will be provision of mobile demountable police complexes. That should solve some of the problems in the settlements.

Looking at the overall budget for the police force, there are no areas in any of the sections where it appears that savings have been made to cover the somewhat substantial cuts in certain areas. The office requisites vote - and this includes stationary, forms, general supplies, printing, library services, and office machines - was cut by some \$15,000. This could be rather critical if the police simply are not able to provide forms, stationery and printing. Postage, telephones and telex are also cut and indications are that the police will have unpaid bills at the end of the year.

The motor vehicles vote was cut by some \$21,000 and it is considered that they will again not be able to meet these costs. In the area of operational supplies, the most serious cuts arise: \$89,000 was cut off this area which includes such important fields as communications, photography, firearms and ammunition, repairs and maintenance of equipment, general supplies, breathalyser consumables and outside laboratory services. The cuts here make it quite impossible to adequately equip the police force with this amount. The force has already suffered by having staff ceilings imposed on it and this is an area that really needs to be looked at. I suggest that some bureau-

cratic bungling has gone on because these are quite justifiable items. If you have read your explanations to the Budget, you cannot see how they can possibly be deleted. In the area of incidentals - advertising and transfer expenses and freight compensations - there was a cut of \$16,000. This situation could be embarrassing but they will possibly be able to meet their cost.

I would like for one moment to quote from "The Pattern of Australian Culture" edited by McLeod:

The growth of an indefinable and characteristic culture in a new land is unpredictable. The essentials for the development of such an indigenous culture would appear to be time, leisure and the social situation. Cultural maturation is most swift where, in addition, there is widespread official encouragement.

We have absolutely no encouragement. The area of this Budget that I find most distressing is in the lack of recognition by the bureaucrats in the Department of the Northern Territory of the Northern Territory as an entity in terms of its people who look for quality of life. The Northern Territory is constantly described as a cultural desert. In recent years, with the opening up of international air links, a number of groups of world standard have passed through, visiting settlements and towns. However, my moment of distress, in reading these papers, was to discover that the Arts Council have received nothing. I hope you were not looking forward, Mr Speaker, to going to an evening of music or drama either on an Aboriginal settlement or in any of the towns in the Northern Territory or in Darwin because you are just not going to have anything to go to. I regret that some of the members of the House do not seem to realise the significance of this deletion.

Under the area of community activities, the members from central Australia must be rather excited because out of the total allocation of \$51,000, Alice Springs and the central Australian area got \$15,000, and 5 out of the 9 organisations who got anything came

from Alice Springs. Then we look at the girl guides and the boy scouts; they got \$22,000.

Members: Hear, hear! There should be more.

Miss ANDREW: The Mataranka Progress Association, you will be delighted to hear, Mr Speaker, must be planning progress because they got \$12,000. But the Arts Council, a Territory-wide body, being one of the few that provides any kind of culture, any kind of input from outside groups in this area, got nothing. I rang the Department of the Northern Territory this morning and asked where the Arts Council allocation was and they said they did not know.

A member: There must be a mistake.

Miss ANDREW: It is about time this whole system of community grants was looked at. I am throwing a little bit of suspicion when I find association with girl guides and boy scouts in Alice Springs all bundled in and put on that committee.

Now we turn to Brown's Mart, providing a service of community activities in the area of Darwin. They got \$29,000. They applied for somewhere in the vicinity of \$61,000 which was eventually cut to \$50,000. They have a semi-completed auditorium; it is the only auditorium that can possibly be used for any form of cultural entertainment in Darwin other than the Octagon Theatre, but they cannot complete it because they just do not have the money. In order to run the community service that they do, they have 2 staff members which takes out of the \$29,000 allocated a total of \$17,000; they have \$8,000 to run the office and what have they got left to do up the auditorium with? They are having difficulties with the fire brigade because they are unable to complete the conversion of the building and consequently at the moment they have been closed down as a fire hazard. And now, after going so far, presumably they are going to remain a fire hazard for the rest of this year.

Now we turn to the field of museums and art galleries. It says in this

magic document that the functions of the board are to establish or acquire, manage and maintain, museums and art galleries under its control, preserve relics, satisfy needs and demand and develop appreciation of culture and training, and carry out scientific research. Mr Speaker, I suggest you have a look at this book. How on God's sweet little earth with the total allocation of \$350,000 can they possibly do that? Just look for one moment at the breakdown. You have lost \$143,000 in salaries, \$18,000 in travel, and \$111,000 in simply maintaining the place. \$61,500 is allocated for the collection of artifacts, display expenses, field collections and works of art. I can assure you we are not going to have a "Blue Poles" controversy in the Territory.

It is rather interesting, in the light of recent developments, that organisation of a collection point and the collection of some historical objects around the Territory has gone on in this department when there is absolutely no allocation to obtain specimens to put in the collection in the museum. All the museum can hope to do again this year, as it did last year, is simply subsist.

Turning to libraries, there is a more refreshing story here; \$147,000 has been set aside for the purchase of books and library material. It is aimed to get the relativity of books with people down to one to one basis. However, more realistically, nearly \$33,000, has been set aside for the operation of libraries, including freight on books and films, material for bookbinding and repair services etc. This would allow the removal of an ever-increasing stockpile of books cluttering up a Canberra warehouse to make their way to the Territory where they belong. These will go to all agencies and towns, including the 28 deposit stations. Cataloguing I believe is well underway - in Canberra of course - but I trust that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission will surprise us all in the field of cultural development and that we will soon see some library facilities in Darwin.

I can only hope that the people who have ignored the necessity for the cultural aspects of Northern Territory life - which do rely heavily on public support - will be made to answer for their sins. I generally take the line of the other speakers in complimenting the Minister for the Northern Territory and also the Minister for Education and the Attorney-General on the slices of the pie that they have been able to give us, although I think we would be grateful for a little more realistic dispersal of it at departmental levels in some areas.

Mr PERRON: When formulating this Budget, the Federal Government has had to undertake a most unenviable task of trying to unwind the economic mess that the Labor Government left behind. The Government has, with this Budget, taken a sensible and realistic approach to the nation's problems and hopefully it will be a turning point in our recovery. To have balanced the books with only a \$2,600m deficit, after making considerable concessions to the workforce and industry through tax indexation and incentives, is certainly commendable.

I turn to areas that fall within my executive responsibilities for comment. Unfortunately, time has precluded me from speaking with local government authorities and other people before this debate in the House today to determine their views. The local government corporations in Darwin and Alice Springs have been allocated \$1m in the form of subsidies for 1976-77. This represents an increase of \$222,944 over last year's allocation. The Darwin corporation will receive a capital subsidy of \$212,500, a cyclone rehabilitation grant of \$125,000, and a contribution of some \$5,000 towards the operation of the Leanyer Dump. These items are in addition to the \$290,000 which is the operational subsidy it receives each year under a 5-year agreement. Alice Springs, in addition to the \$215,000 operational subsidy, gets an extra \$152,500 in capital subsidies, and this figure represents an increase of \$92,313 over last year.

Government payments to the corporations in lieu of rates will decrease under this Budget by some \$44,136, the total now being \$300,000. This decrease is a result of the number of unoccupied housing lots in Darwin which belong to the Government; as they have not been built on and are not habitable, the Government feels that they should not be paying in lieu of rates for these blocks. One must take note of the special cyclone rehabilitation grant that has been made by the Government when looking at the problems and the justification for not paying for unoccupied blocks. In Alice Springs last year, the figure paid in lieu of rates included an extra \$16,559 which was in arrears and is a non-recurring item. Those 2 items must be borne in mind there.

Under an agreement whereby the Government is to provide finance to upgrade and construct certain roads and drainage works in municipalities, the Darwin corporation will receive \$317,000, and this will be to continue the construction of Winnellie Road. Alice Springs has been allocated \$683,000 to continue with the major program of upgrading streets within the municipality. The total amount in this category is \$1m, an increase over last year of \$31,523.

Another item which has some effect in municipal areas is the government-controlled section 307 roads. The Government is to spend \$80,000 in this area in the coming year, \$25,000 more than last year. A large proportion of this will be spent on upgrading lights on section 307 roads in Darwin. Under the DRC's vote, an additional \$160,000 has been allocated for street lighting in Winnellie and \$100,000 for street lighting in other areas under the control of the DRC. We can see that there is going to be considerable amounts spent on upgrading some of the traffic and road facilities in municipal areas.

Unfortunately, in the local government area, funds were not made available for the commencement of municipal chambers and a new works depot in Alice Springs, nor for the northern suburbs swimming pool complex in Darwin. Local government service-type functions in

the smaller Territory centres like Katherine, Tennant Creek, Batchelor and Pine Creek which are carried out by the Department of the Northern Territory have had an increase of \$38,021 and the total expenditure in the area will be \$514,000. The town management boards in Katherine and Tennant Creek each received about \$500 more than they did last year. Payments to trustees of public recreation reserves have been reduced considerably this year to \$145,000. Appropriation to these reserves is mainly of an operational nature only.

Although the Consumer Protection Council received this year an additional \$1,336 over last year, the total amount of \$8,000 will only allow the council to continue with its restricted role of advising the Administrator. Unfortunately, the Council will not be able to send representatives to meetings of the Australian Council of Consumer Organisations to participate in compiling policy and standards on a national level. I was pleased to note that the Federal Government has continued its support to the Australian Council of Consumer Organisations with \$75,000 for this year. The Consumer Protection Council in Darwin has a printing allocation under the Government Printer's vote of \$4 200 which should help somewhat in producing information for the public.

The activities of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council have also been fully supported by the Federal Government in this Budget. Realising the importance of the KAB's participation in community education, the Government has maintained a \$24,500 annual subsidy to the KAB in the Northern Territory.

The Territory has done relatively well out of the Budget considering the plight that the country is in. Whilst we may not have the money to undertake all the work we would like to see done, as Australians we share in the effects of this cancerous inflation and we must also contribute to the cure.

Mr WITHNALL: I rise for the 22nd time to make some comments upon a Budget. I expect that the comments I have made on the last 21 occasions and on this occa-

sion will not vary in the importance which anybody will place upon them. I think that the debates upon the Budget in the Legislative Council and in the Legislative Assembly have been the most useless debates that I have personally ever been concerned with. I do not think, in 21 years, anything that has been said in this Assembly has altered by one whit anything that is likely to be spent in the Northern Territory or has changed what is likely to be contained in the following Budget. It is a Budget about which nobody in the Northern Territory is consulted and which, after its production, nobody in the Northern Territory can affect. I rather suspect that this is the sort of feeling behind these speeches which have been made today. They have been speeches justifying, on party lines, what has been done.

There is, however, one smaller matter that I would like to draw attention to. I refer to the extraordinary situation that seems to have developed that, under the Budget, the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly is no longer responsible for the allocation of funds and the payment of money for travelling. Instead, it is going to be given to the Northern Territory Executive which, of course, does not really exist. It does not really exist at all but these non-existent people are going to be responsible for determining what travel will be undertaken by members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and they are also responsible for the payment of the moneys to them. Surely the fellow who compiled this Budget and gave such careful attention to this item must have been completely ignorant of parliamentary systems and completely ignorant of what has previously been the case even when we were under the lowly title of Legislative Council. In past years, the Speaker has been responsible for authorising travel of members of this Assembly and the Speaker himself is the only proper person who should be given any authority.

I do not know whether the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development, who probably does not exist ...

Mr Steele: Tell his wife that.

Mr WITHNALL: ... has had any information which would cause him to dispute the accuracy of the allocation which appears in this Budget. I would suggest that he might very well get up on his hind legs and say that it is a most insulting and unnecessary provision that an Executive which does not exist should have the authority to determine travel and payments for travel, instead of the Speaker who is in every Legislative Assembly, the obvious person to control these funds.

Dr Letts: You are living in the past, brother.

Mr WITHNALL: You may join with me in mourning the departure of authority from this legislature.

The honourable member for Victoria River has just said that I live in the past. He probably does not quite understand the systems of parliamentary government; he has not been here quite long enough.

Dr Letts: What about travel money in the Federal Parliament?

Mr WITHNALL: Money for travelling for members in the Federal Parliament is under the control of the Speaker.

Dr Letts: Rubbish! It is under the Minister for Administrative Services. Be sure of your facts before you make any criticisms.

Mr WITHNALL: I am proposing to make criticisms of you anyhow.

Dr Letts: Be sure of your facts next time because you are quite wrong.

Mr WITHNALL: The honourable member suggests that the money for travel for members is under the control of the Minister for Administrative Services. Who do you say that is now at the present time?

I regret that this step has been taken. It is entirely improper and, if the honourable member had any idea of parliamentary tradition he would not have accepted this decision. Last year, a very different situation developed and the Legislative Assembly had all

its travel moneys and its salaries lumped into one vote. At the end of the year, there was a complaint made by Treasury that the Legislative Assembly had been acting quite unlawfully because it had been taking travel money out of a vote which should have been limited to salaries. I do protest. I think that the conduct of select committees of the Legislative Assembly and the conduct of travel for members of the Legislative Assembly are matters for the Assembly itself and not for any other person. While the honourable member has suggested that other parliaments may have ministers who govern these things, we are not in that position at the moment and I suggest that, at least in the present state of development, it is not proper for an Executive - which I wish did exist but which does not exist - to have control of travel for members of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr RYAN: It is rather disappointing to be in a situation where the honourable member for Port Darwin actually fights me to get to his feet and leaves me to follow him up. Unfortunately, there is not much I can gain from this act today but there are other occasions where I wish this particular situation would exist.

With regard to the Federal Budget, the Member for Finance and Community Development mentioned a couple of points on which I would like to lend my support. One was the situation that existed in the Assembly here last night whereby we were given access to the Budget papers. I find this situation to be ridiculous. I was not particularly impressed with it last year but I thought maybe we could possibly progress in the years to come. But we had the same situation last night that, at the stroke of the finish of the Budget speech, the papers were made available to us. Mr Speaker, I am not lifting myself up to state minister level, but we are supposed to present a speech outlining our particular areas - and I am in no way defigrating the officers who made their time available last night and on other occasions to assist us - but to me it seems similar to the various state ministers within their own areas of responsibility on their budget

night being given their papers and having to prepare a speech and deliver it the next day, bearing in mind that the Federal Budget contains for the Northern Territory its state-like functions. I support the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development in this particular area; I think we should possibly be given a little bit more early official information on the Budget where it relates to the state-type operation.

I also agree with the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development with regard to what I think will be the effect of the Budget throughout Australia. I think, from what we have seen of it, it is going to be a good Budget. However, and getting to the local scene, I am not altogether happy with the Budget as it affects the Northern Territory in the areas that I have an interest in. With the exception of the Executive Member for Education and Law, the other Executive Members seem to be reasonably happy; I can only assume from this that they must be getting some benefit from the money that has not been spent in the areas I am interested in.

I will start with the main area, the road program. This time last year, if you go back and check your Hansard, I made comments that unless the road program was kept up we would reach a situation where the program could be put into a position where it will find it difficult to recover. That situation has not changed with the present Budget, and I am talking, initially anyway, with regard to the major highways, the Stuart and Barkly Highways. There was an initial 3-year program which finished to all intents and purposes at the end of 1974. The previous government certainly did not have anything to wave the flag about with regard to highways. They continued to procrastinate up until they were despatched. The second 3-year program was investigated by the Parliamentary Works Committee and was approved last October in the Federal House but we did not hear any more of it.

We now see, in the program this year, the improvement projects on the Stuart and Barkly Highways. We have Newcastle

Creek bridgeworks and roadworks. This has been placed on the program and has a value of \$2.4m. Members may not know that, in the original second 3-year program, the Newcastle Creek upgrading was not given a particularly high priority. We had not then had the situation of 4 years in which Newcastle Creek was flooded. Prior to that they worked on a 1 in 50-year cycle of the Newcastle flooding. After the first 2 years, they amended it to 25 years and now they have decided that it does command some priority in the program. However, if one looks at the figures, out of that \$2.4m only \$150,000 cash will be spent this year. The design work on this particular job will not be finished until November when tenders will be called. I would imagine that the Newcastle Waters bridgeworks will not be undertaken until possibly April or May. It will take about 2 or 3 wet seasons to cover the full job. We are sure to be without a suitable road across Newcastle Creek for the next 2 or possibly 3 wet seasons.

The Pine Creek-Cullen River section is a \$2.2m job. They are going to spend \$400,000. This particular section is not as important as some of the other areas. However, it has been put on the program and the target date is October. Quite obviously, a bit more work will be done on this particular job as it is not affected by the wet to the same extent as Newcastle Creek.

Wycliffe Creek bridgeworks has \$620,000. Of that money, \$150,000 will be spent this year. There are to be roadworks at Tindal and Maranboy at a cost of \$530,000; \$50,000 will be spent this year. And then on Mataranka-Larri-mah roadworks, \$850,000 is programmed, nothing will be spent.

I have taken a little bit of time and the honourable member for Jingili was a bit concerned that I intended to go through every road job in the Territory - that might not take all that long either if I decided to do it. But I wanted to point out that out of \$6.6m in the program this financial year, \$750,000 in cash is going to be spent. And as far as I am concerned that is just not good enough.

It is my opinion that, in arriving at the priorities, roads always seem to suffer, particularly when the people who decide what the priorities are tend to be academics involved in the money side of the operation. Unfortunately, the practical men are quite often ignored. The people who are looking after the money look at a road and say, "Well, if we do not spend that \$1m on the road this year, the road is still going to be there next year, but if we do not spend \$1m on houses, there are not going to be any houses".

I accept that there is a need for houses - in Darwin in particular and in the Territory in general - however, I do not think that the people who decide should ignore the fact that, if we are going to have houses and if we are going to put people in the houses, we are going to need roads throughout the Northern Territory. In this respect I feel that the Northern Territory has been let down and I am afraid that because of this attitude, road construction generally in the Northern Territory is slipping back to the point where the lack of proper maintenance is causing the roads to deteriorate. The end result is that with less money being spent each year, the road deteriorates each year, the asset value drops and the money needed to get the roads back into the sort of condition that we need is getting further and further away. On that particular point, I would like to point out to support my argument that last year, taking into account the problems with the cyclone, the road program and the amount of money spent on the roads was not particularly good. It was not a very good year as far as roads were concerned. Last year, \$17.15m in cash was made available and the amount spent was \$16.5m, which was a slight shortfall, but still fairly close to the money they had to spend on roads. This year, however, the cash allocation is \$14.94m and if one takes into account inflation one would find that in real value the money spent on roads this year has dropped quite drastically.

That is the area of this Budget that concerns me more than anything else. Some of the smaller items which I will

get on to shortly are reasonably satisfactory but I am concerned that not enough attention is being given by the people in control - and I am not being critical of the Minister; I agree with other members that the Minister has done a good job in getting money for the Northern Territory. What I am suggesting is that maybe the Minister does not realise, and maybe his advisers do not realise, that to keep the development of the Territory going we have to have good roads. I was also hopeful that with the loss of the railway - and I certainly made approaches to the Minister for the Northern Territory and to the Minister for Transport - that extra pressure would be put on and because of the fact that we had lost the railway and the roads could be subjected to more use, particularly the Larrimah to Darwin section, we might have got some special treatment. With the information that I have, I do not know if this end result here includes special treatment. If that is the case, I would be highly distressed to know what it would have been without the special treatment.

There is a bit of improvement in expenditure on development roads. Last year, \$3.73m was made available, \$3.41m of which was spent; this year \$4.7m is made available. Development roads are going to receive enough money to at least give them the same value, an extra \$1m. They have got a 25% increase which is most probably an improvement taking into account inflation. Hopefully, this will benefit the people in the country areas, particularly if we find that the beef industry picks up. I would assume, while not being an expert on the beef industry, that if the beef industry picks up the roads that have not been used to a great extent over the last 12 to 18 months might all of a sudden be subjected to a lot of traffic. I hope this occurs. I also hope that they have not been let go so far that further damage is going to be caused.

Towards the end of last year, at the time when all the strife was occurring in Canberra, a Parliamentary Works Committee hearing was to be held in Alice Springs to look at the second 3-year development road program. The

Executive Member for Social Affairs mentioned his roads and his disappointment that these roads have not been included in the program. He is quite correct, they have not been included in the program, nor has the Parliamentary Works Committee hearing into the second 3-year development road program been held. So while they are spending a little bit more money this year in the area - and I have no doubt that it will be well spent - I feel that once again the people concerned have got to look at the overall situation

I believe I am running out of time which is a pity. I will quickly go through the other areas

I would like to correct one particular item. This morning the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development mentioned that the "Darwin Trader" was receiving a \$43 000 subsidy. This is not in fact applicable to the "Darwin Trader"; it is for coastal shipping within the Territory, barge operations to various settlements. The "Darwin Trader" has not received any subsidy. I do not think this has any particular effect on the situation that exists in the Northern Territory relating to the "Darwin Trader". That was made fairly clear in the answer that I gave earlier this week.

The fire brigade, from what I can see, has been increased in its funds sufficiently to enable it to continue in a satisfactory manner and, taking into account the fact that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission are going to repair the fire stations involved in Darwin, there should be a satisfactory situation existing with regard to the fire service.

The Port Authority, from an operational standpoint is quite happy with its appropriation; it received the money that it required. I did not expect to see anything in this Budget relating to the upgrading of the port. However, this time next year I hope that due consideration will have been given to this aspect of the development of our transport needs and that we do have a situation where next year I can possibly get up and say we have been given some money to develop the port

area. It is another area that needs looking at and once again, unfortunately, it seems to have been passed over.

Bus services is an area in which I am afraid I do not really know in which direction we are going. I will not go through the details here. The amount of subsidy required this year will be \$388,000, and under that it says that the department is examining ways and means of reducing costs by re-arranging the service. That covers it fairly briefly; there is a lot more to trying to reduce the cost of the bus service in Darwin than re-arranging it. We have to give the people of Darwin some sort of public transport and I am not altogether of the opinion that we could re-arrange them other than cut some of the services out and, as I said the other day, I feel that this would be something to be decided after due consideration with members of the department.

Alice Springs is being looked after with regard to the Stuart Highway up to the Alice Springs hills but, unfortunately, not through the Alice Springs hills. This was another area that I felt should have gained a bit more priority. However, there are various jobs programmed for this year that will repair and upgrade the Stuart Highway through the town up to Mount Nancy. Hopefully, that will keep the local contractors employed until such time as the powers-that-be recognise that the matter of roads in the Northern Territory is an important area and give more money for that particular expenditure.

I will certainly be a lot happier when the cash allocation is increased to improve the prospects of the companies involved in building roads in the Territory. The department is also affected by staff ceilings. The whole industry is running down. If we get a big re-vote next year and a lot of money is suddenly injected into the road program, we could get another unhappy situation similar to the building program in Darwin where the demand exceeds the capabilities and we get a sky-rocketing of price. I would like to see the departments look at the possibility of getting things moving

upwards now so that we do not get hit by a strong growth influence which will force prices up because we will not have the capacity to handle the amount of work that will be coming through.

Dr LETTS: In the beginning, I would like to comment on a couple of remarks made by the honourable member for Port Darwin. He referred to this as a useless debate. I believe he would have been more accurate if he had referred to it as a limited debate. It is true and we would not attempt to deny it, that we have limited access to the preparation of the Budget and the estimates and we have little effect on what happens about variations afterwards. However, in the 9 years or so that I have been personally participating in Budget debates in this legislature. I have always believed that members had a role and an obligation to look at the Federal Budget as it applies to the Northern Territory generally and their electorates in particular. This is done on behalf of those electors who do not have access to the hotch-potch of papers under which the Budget comes out and do not have the time or means at their disposal to dissect it and find out what it means to them and to the Territory. Indeed, that is a proper part of our function and one of the reasons why we were put here. I make no apology for having today been occupied in a Budget debate.

As to the section of the Budget to which he devoted his particular attention, namely the funds that are used in various ways by this Assembly, we are in an awkward situation. In the past, the funds have been in the hands of the Speaker and the Department of the Legislative Assembly up to a point. For example, the funds for inquiries have come under the Department of the Administrator because the decisions in relation to the appointment of those inquiries have been under the Administrator in Council. I would agree that the time has probably come when we should have 2 votes. The Speaker and the Department of the Legislative Assembly do require finance for particular purposes but certainly there are other functions which are not appropriate to the Speaker, including that of the inquiries.

The honourable member for Port Darwin, as he has done before, tended to denigrate and undervalue the work and the status of the Executive Members in this Assembly. He fails to recognise that Executive Members are recognised by the standing orders of this Assembly; that they are recognised by the Remunerations Tribunal set up by the Commonwealth Parliament in so far as the payment to those Executive Members and various privileges which attend to them are concerned. And probably more important, he fails to recognise that the Federal Government has passed an Act of Parliament in Canberra which gives statutory recognition to those Executive Members, and to which I expect assent and commencement will be granted in the very near future.

The honourable member, as I said, is living in the past. He has his head in the sand and it is unfortunate because the honourable member has the ability, and experience and the capacity to make an excellent Executive Member. It is by his own choice that he sits where he does.

Mr Withnall: There is no one getting into your boots.

Dr LETTS: You have got no chance, brother.

Turning to more important things, Mr Speaker, I would like first of all to compliment and congratulate the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development on his presentation of the Budget papers this morning.

Members: Hear, hear!

Dr LETTS: In all the years that I have either been associated directly with this legislature or sitting on the sidelines listening, and going back to the years when the senior official member had the job of doing what he did this morning, I have never heard a presentation of what the department said and then independent comment on it that would equal the presentation given by our Executive Member this morning.

Turning to the industries which I have some particular responsibility and interest in, that is to say, the rural

industries of the Northern Territory, the primary industries, it would be a mistake to see this Budget as the cure-all or an attempt to be the cure-all for the beef industry's problems. The fundamental problems of the rural industry, and particularly the beef industry problems, in Australia and the Territory today are things which are not susceptible of correction by budgetary action of this type. The real problem lies in the world marketing situation in a country which depends so heavily for more than 50% of its beef production on the export market. It is up to the Commonwealth Government and the state governments and the authorities which are set up by them to continue to do whatever they can - and the industry too - to improve the marketing situation at home and abroad. At the same time there are strategies available in the form of orderly marketing practices legislation and systems, price stabilisation strategies, which I am sure the Government or governments will be looking at very hard at the moment and would be the subject of separate initiatives. But what we look to in the Budget are support measures for this industry which has been the second most important industry in the Northern Territory over a long period of time and I believe will go on having that degree of importance. When we look to budgetary action, we find there are a number of things in the way of support measures which will help to keep the industry alive while the fundamental difficulties are being overcome in other ways and in other places.

Many of these support measures were known to us before today because the Ministers concerned have indicated the decisions over recent weeks and things like the special freight assistance plan for the Northern Territory is confirmed in the Budget. This has in fact been operating for some time. The level of carry-on finance at the moment, which is confirmed in the Budget, is something which we should feel reasonably satisfied about. Outside the Budget again, the Government took considerable and successful initiative in the opening of the meatworks.

There are a number of other things detailed in the Budget which are useful

in maintaining the industry's viability: the dropping of the meat export levy charge; the investment allowance for plant and equipment; the new taxation arrangements. All these things will help to form a pattern of assistance to the industry. The main weakness in those support measures is the lack of adequate treatment of the rural reconstruction support segment. It is rather disappointing to find that, when \$10m in actual cash will be available for rural reconstruction for the rest of Australia between now and the end of the calendar year, the Territory's share is \$65,000. We are down well below 1% even though our industry does constitute a much greater percentage than that in the overall scheme of things. The beef industry of the Territory, without any of the other primary industries, runs at about 5% of the total beef industry of Australia and yet we find, when it comes to rural reconstruction assistance, we are down to something less than 1%. Something more has to be done about this.

I am heartened by the statement issued by the Minister for Primary Industry last night after the Budget in which he said, after running through the various support measures, "Other programs will be undertaken as and where industry circumstances require, particularly in the beef industry and where drought or market circumstances prejudice producers' economic existence". That is a fact in the Territory today. The market situation does prejudice the economic existence of the industry and a number of producers. I think that we have a case based on that principle to go back to the Government and ask for a strengthening of the support measures, particularly in relation to the rural reconstruction side.

Another area of the Budget on which I wish to express some reservations is that dealing with parks and wildlife conservation. This is an area of particular interest to me. The Northern Territory Wildlife Service has been put on a tight rein and the Reserves Board has taken one of the most severe cuts in this Budget. It is about \$200,000 below last year's allocation and something like \$400,000 below the year before. In other words, they are going in reverse.

I believe that both of these organisations have an important role to fulfil. In the Budget allocations that have been made the Government has not recognised or accepted the changes that we are on the brink of. This Assembly has passed legislation to bring the wildlife and the parks services together, and as I understand it, the Government accepts this situation; they are going to be a completely new organisation within this financial year. It will be an organisation which generates capital. It has receipts at the moment running at the level of about \$0.25m, so it does produce something. With events which might transpire during the course of this year, such as the granting of new mineral leases out in the uranium province, the job of the Parks and Wildlife Commission is going to become more important than it ever has been before. Therefore, I would have been looking for a strengthening of the organisation, a strengthening of their work rather than a fairly serious cutback. I can only hope that there is room for argument here. I certainly will be doing some arguing in this area because it is important to me, if decisions are made in that area and mining is to go ahead there, that these regulatory services and specialised services are on the job and able to handle the situation at the same time.

The public sector, the branches in the areas which I have particular interest in, like the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch, have all been put on a very tight rein. Their figures look about the same as the previous year but when one takes into account inflation, then in real terms they will be getting less and they have to tighten their belts. I suppose in some of their activities this is possible. In difficult times for things like experimental work and so on you probably have to accept a slowing down for more essential and urgent work, and a lot of the money in this area goes into the funding of experiment stations. But the most important thing in that situation is to make sure that the plant and equipment is not allowed to run down and degenerate to a point that it cannot go on doing its job when the time comes to reactivate those experi-

ment programs. I will be looking very carefully at the plant and equipment side of these operations to make sure that it can be maintained and is not being allowed to run down.

A very small item in the Budget but one of interest to you, Mr Speaker, is the allocation to shows. I notice that the matter is the same as last year and I think that you and I can count ourselves somewhat fortunate in that the \$10,000 is divided between Katherine and Adelaide River. I would just like to make mention of the fact - because I do not think the Executive Members who have an interest in the recreation areas did mention this - that I know of one show society, namely the Darwin Show Society, which has very promising and useful plans for complete redevelopment of its area to provide a major recreation centre for Darwin on a much more widespread use basis than the present showgrounds are. They want to put in a full-size sporting arena and so on and I have no doubt they will be looking for some assistance in this and that they would merit some assistance. But that is a matter that I will be taking up with the appropriate people later in the year.

I have some reservations about the bushfire vote which was mentioned by the Executive Member for Resource Development this morning. I can only agree with him that the notional amount will probably have to be increased if our worst fears are realised.

I also have some reservations about the vote for the inquiries that are set up by this Assembly. There is \$20,000 allocated for an inquiry which we moved just 12 months ago. This is the anniversary of the lottery and gaming inquiry motion and the funds that are available now do not give us any provision for any new inquiry which we might make during the course of the 1976-77 year. The only executive power which this legislature has had in the past 15 years lies in the Inquiries Ordinance, our only power to really do anything, and if the Federal Government is going to interfere with that and by financial stringency try to stop us from mounting inquiries, then I believe that I can place little credence on

their often avowed intentions regarding constitutional development here. So I would say that if we do see the need for an inquiry I would expect the Commonwealth Government to be able to fund it for us.

Having pointed to those individual specific things, the final thing I would like to say is that when I look at the Budget I look at it in the light of, "OK, if I was making these decisions in relation to the Northern Territory what different ones would I make?" As I have indicated, in a few instances there is some different emphasis which I would place in particular places but by and large I think that the distribution in the main areas is fairly reasonable in the circumstances which apply. I think that we have done quite well in relation to the Commonwealth subventions for other parts of Australia.

Mrs LAWRIE: Other honourable members have spoken, as I expected, in general terms of support for the present Budget although some Executive Members have expressed reservations in particular areas. I feel that to the extent that the present Government made its policies quite clear in May in its so-called mini-budget the present Budget becomes no more than an anticlimax. It is not only an anticlimax but to a percentage of the community which includes myself - not necessarily on a political division - it leaves us with a feeling that it is somewhat inadequate and is not suited to meet the nation's present problems, social problems, divisions within this nation which should not exist. It seems to me the Budget has one central thrust and that, unfortunately, is for the Federal Government to abrogate and avoid its responsibilities and that these steps are to be a requirement of the new philosophy of federalism. If in fact I am correct, it augurs ill for the Territory.

I believe my remarks may be supported in part by the past and present remarks of the various state premiers again not so much in political terms, because Liberal premiers have criticised the present philosophy, but as concern for the people whom they are elected to

represent. In this Budget the business sector - and I am speaking broadly and not in Northern Territory terms - is supposed to respond to these so-called incentives to invest but unfortunately in the present Budget that involves almost no cash for business in the current financial year. We all understand that the most important industries are the ones most underemployed which is an evil in our midst. Until consumer demand increases, however, there is not likely to be an upturn or justification or need for further investment and business confidence. And yet both the Treasurer and the Prime Minister have made clear that the whole Budget strategy is for real wages to be reduced. Somehow perhaps this is to promote consumer spending. They must be joking.

Savings are at an all-time high level. Is this because of the lack of confidence in the future? How can the Government expect that people will change their attitudes towards the need for savings? The Government has said publicly that they want people to go out and spend to reduce the level of savings yet I feel there is nothing in the present Budget to stimulate this consumer confidence in spending on which business depends. In that sense, I think that the philosophy of the Budget may well prove to be farcical.

If we come back to the Northern Territory budget, I will turn first to the remarks made by the honourable Executive Member for Education and Law because the papers to which she addressed herself appear first in the explanations given by the Department of the Northern Territory. We find on page 25 under "Community activities" that reasonably large amounts of money, given our straitened budget, are allotted to the Alice Springs Gap Youth Centre, the Alice Springs Girl Guides, the Alice Springs Scout Association, the Alice Springs Youth Centre and the Centralian Children's Holiday Scheme - a total of \$15,100. With this, I have no quarrel unless it can be seen with reference to the rest of the Northern Territory budget.

We find then that the Girl Guides Association (NT) gets \$10,000; the

Katherine Citizens and Youth Club, \$3,900; the Mataranks Progress Association, \$12,000; the Scouts Association of the Northern Territory, \$10,000 - a total of \$35,900. As the honourable Executive Member said there is no allocation for the Arts Council. NT and a very poor allocation to Browns Mart which is centred in Darwin I would assume from these figures that Mataranka has become the cultural centre of the Northern Territory, in which case, I wish them well; I like Mataranka and good luck to them. But there seems to be a most peculiar imbalance in the spread of moneys to community activities.

I would point out, as the honourable Executive Member did clearly and well that the Arts Council, NT is not concerned only with Darwin activities it is concerned with promoting and assisting cultural, art musical displays, right throughout this Territory. Yet they have received no money! This is a very strange position when we have \$15,100 going to girl guides and scouts and youth centres in the centre, a further \$10,000 going to the Girl Guides Association (NT) overall and a further \$10,000 going to the Scouts Association. The girl guides, the scouts and the centralian organisations are doing very well but God help the Arts Council, NT, I think that the Executive Member for Social Affairs would have some regard to this, given the fact that the Arts Council covers the entire Territory and not one particular centre of the Northern Territory.

When reviewing grants to the various centres, one has to have regard to the cutbacks overall in the Territory.

Mr Dondas: Did they apply for a grant?

Mrs LAWRIE: With some malicious delight, I leave the Country-Liberal Party to their internal wranglings, but I must say I do support the remarks made that the imbalance is apparent and should be noted.

We see the one bright spot in the Budget where, under "Advisory boards - fees and expenses ...

Members interjecting.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Speaker, may I point out that I paid the Executive Members and others the courtesy of listening quietly to their speeches as I thought I might learn something. I was wrong, of course; I learnt very little. However, they do not wish me to be heard even with the numbers at 17 to 2 and on occasions 18 to 1. Perhaps they feel the one outweighs the other 18 and would like me to be heard with less courtesy.

On page 51 of the Department of the Northern Territory explanatory notes I see with some pleasure that the Parole Board has been allocated \$6,000. This Parole Board was established some years ago and has yet to meet. It will be the concern of the Executive Members for Social Affairs and for Law and Education that this long needed and overdue reform can at last be implemented. The legislation to set up the Parole Board was supported fully, and I believe with the present Assembly there has been little dissent, and yet we have still to see the first meeting of this board. If more than \$6,000 is required, let it be forthcoming. I would expect the relevant Executive Members to make such approaches to ensure the Parole Board's activities are not curtailed.

Having regard to my rather sad remarks about community activities in the Northern Territory, let us have a look at the amount of subsidy given to the Keep Australia Beautiful Council. We find, although the Arts Council does not deserve a cent, that KAB gets a subsidy of \$24,500. I do not expect very many Country-Liberal Party Members will be aware of the reasons for the founding of KAB or in fact their funding, but there are the odd few that will be aware of where they received their money; it was mainly from the steel can companies. KAB has been under criticism from various environmental groups - and I am not referring simply to environmental councils, but other larger perhaps more important groups throughout Australia - as being no more than a tool and mouthpiece of the steel can companies. KAB still receives, I believe, a fair subsidy from them. Yet in the Northern Terri-

tory budget they have got \$24,500. That is a pretty fair whack of our money when we are being told constantly that this is a time of budget restraint, a time for all honest citizens to tighten their belts and accept the stringencies in the Budget. I find it difficult to accept that KAB gets \$24,500 and various other community groups throughout the Northern Territory receive a pittance or nothing at all. I challenge the wisdom of this allocation and I would like to know who approved the allocation and on whose advice it was granted. I doubt very much if it was a member of this Assembly. If it was a member of the Assembly, I would invite him or her to stand up and make the fact known. One would expect that it was one of the same nameless people who perhaps provided the imbalance in the cultural grants to other parts of the Territory.

We go on to fire brigade services. I notice with a somewhat malicious delight that a sum of money has been allocated for Nightcliff and I quote from the papers provided: "Increased rates, electricity and sewerage has resulted in a substantial rise in the 1976-77 requirement for Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and the 4 Darwin stations, Daly Street Casuarina, Nightcliff and Winnellie". I only make the aside that I am so pleased to see a public acknowledgement of the fact that the Nightcliff fire station is an entity and still exists and will be funded.

I make a small aside on page 66, Division 455/3/26, "Information and Public Relations". There is a decrease. For "NT Economy", last year's expenditure was \$1,000; this year it is nil. I must assume from that we do not have an economy this year. I guess it is because of the change of government.

I notice that there is a decrease, as the honourable Majority Leader has said, on the Reserves Board Subsidy, a decrease of \$209,000. Given the rate of inflation of course, that decrease is higher in real terms and I agree with him that this is unwarranted and that there are groups throughout the Territory which should have received even in these so-called stringent budget

times, excellent funding and support. Yet we see a decrease of \$209,000. This is a most unfortunate allocation and again one wonders who came to this dramatic conclusion that the Reserves Board could have done with a decrease.

Like the honourable Majority Leader, I too have noticed that there is an appropriation this year of \$20,000 under "Northern Territory Public Service Executive - committees of inquiry", which is to fund the resolution calling for an inquiry into the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance. I also note with some dismay and reservation that there is no further allocation. If this Assembly decides that another inquiry is merited, there is apparently to be no money provided in the coming year. Given the fact that this Assembly does not have administrative responsibility, only legislative responsibility, and therefore a very important role to play in the setting up of such relevant inquiries, I think that this is a very sad and indeed a significant oversight. The Legislative Assembly has limited resources in staff; they do an excellent job but we do not have research facilities. The Majority Leader does not have research facilities, let alone the other members of the Assembly who may not belong to the Majority Party. It therefore means that the only way in which a searching inquiry can be carried out under the present administration of the Northern Territory is under the aegis of this Northern Territory Legislative Assembly; it is through our committees of inquiry; and yet we see no further money provided in the coming year. I think that it is an indication of the feeling of the present Government towards this present Assembly - so-called statehood within 5 years notwithstanding - and I understood the Majority Leader's remarks to more or less support me in the feeling that I have.

We find also that under the expenditure allocated to the Assembly for select committees there is no increase at all. There is an expected expenditure of \$5,000. That appropriation should be viewed in the light of the remarks I have made about the previous allocation for committees of inquiry.

We come then to the allocation for the Northern Territory Home Finance Trustee and, as I said in my opening remarks, given these statements in May in the mini-budget, this is no more than an anticlimax. The Northern Territory people by this stage are aware that there would not be an increase in appropriation other than the one canvassed which of course is for \$11.5m. The expenditure in 1975-76 was \$9.5m and we have an increase this year of \$2m giving a total of \$21m. There have been figures quoted in the paper which have not been denied, and which in fact have been since confirmed, that the commitment for the Home Finance Scheme for the coming year is already a little over \$18m, leaving approximately \$3m yet to be committed. The present Minister for the Northern Territory, on departmental advice, seems to feel that the remaining \$3m plus the commitment value of the \$18m will be sufficient cash to see us through the coming year.

Perhaps because his prime adviser, Mr Livingston, does not live in the Northern Territory, the Minister is unaware that building was slowed down through the wet season but, by about March next year and well before the coming financial year, there will again be an upswing and the total of the \$21m is quite likely to be expended. The Minister has apparently based his \$21m cash allocation on the advice of his department that it is all that will be needed.

There are two things to remember. One is that it is servicing not only the 6% home finance loans but also the \$15,000, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ % home finance loans. I would be interested to know if other honourable members living in the Darwin area have experienced what I have the last few weeks. There has been an upsurge in people not eligible for the 6% who have bought land and who are attempting to borrow the \$15,000 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ % loan. Because they are relying on the same funds, my fear is that the \$21m over the 2 years will not be sufficient and that the Minister for the Northern Territory will be unable to get other money from Treasury. Following some public controversy, the Minister announced that funds would be diverted

from other housing programs under the auspices of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Again my fear is that the Minister has received bad advice and does not realise that, at the time these funds are going to be needed, the other funds which the DRC has will already be committed in contracts let. I hope I am wrong and that his advice has been better than I think it has been and that, if extra cash is required, the cash will be forthcoming.

I have a couple of remarks to make on the Civil Works Program. The Federal Treasurer and the Prime Minister have spent the past 3 months saying that funds have to be diverted from the public sector to the private sector for the good of Australia. What they may not have realised is that to divert funds from the public sector in the Northern Territory in civil works is in fact diverting it from the private sector. Private contractors throughout the Territory rely on the letting of public works contracts such as the new subdivision schedule for various centres throughout the Territory. These are not carried out by Government day labour but by contracts and subcontracts let to private industry. Without a continuing government expenditure, the private sector in Darwin will wither. I have had large civil engineering contractors living in my electorate who have been putting off staff because the continuity of contracts is not there at the moment. Not only do they put off staff, but what happens to their tremendous capital investment in their plant and equipment? It is deteriorating and they are in a parlous position. Most of them, of course, voted for the Country-Liberal Party and they are now starting to wonder what they did.

Mr Ryan: They will again too.

Mrs LAWRIE: I find that difficult to believe, Mr Speaker.

Perhaps the present Government has not considered that public spending in the Northern Territory means in fact an advance to the private sector no matter what it may mean anywhere else in Australia.

Let us have a look at the Civil Works Program. Before I do that, I noted with some interest the annual report of the Master Builders Association of the Northern Territory for 1975-76 in which they expressed some reservations about continuing government expenditure flowing through to the private sector in the Northern Territory. I will quote from the president's address and would be happy to table it if any member so wishes:

The Government works program for the Territory was drastically reduced and had it not been for the Government's acknowledgement of its commitment to rebuild Darwin through the letting of contracts by the DRC, the funding of the Home Finance Trustee and the Housing Commission, our industry would by now have been defunct. As it is, the industry is in a desperate situation in all areas except Darwin and it is only barely adequately employed there. Last year the Federal Government approved a work program of approximately \$200m for the Territory (\$140m in Darwin and \$60m elsewhere) and under normal circumstances we could have expected that contracts for this program would have been arranged by June. However, because of the Government's new policy, the value of the contracts arranged during the year amounted to only \$45m. Of this amount, \$16m was for areas outside Darwin and you will not that these figures tally almost exactly with the amounts stated earlier in the year by your association and denied heatedly by two Federal Ministers and members of our Legislative Assembly during the controversy over the Government's cutbacks in capital works expenditure in the Territory, I believe those figures are reasonably accurate.

Are you about to call me to order, Mr Speaker?

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

Mrs LAWRIE: You aren't going to give me an extension?

Mr Ryan: We weren't going to get one, why should you?

Mrs LAWRIE: The Executive Member for Finance and Community Development got one. That figures.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I rise to support the Budget papers for 1976-77 and the comments by the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development and those of other members who have spoken.

We were told in December 1975 by the new Prime Minister that he would probably be one of the most unpopular Prime Ministers because of what he and the Treasury and the Cabinet would have to do to the economy in the first 12 months and the following 2 years to bring Australia back from financial ruin as was the case under the Labor Government; and, Mr Speaker, one does not have to think hard about the chaos that the previous Government caused to us all. Even one of their leading politicians said during their reign that the Labor Party Government spent money as if it were going out of fashion. I am sure that each and every one of us realises that.

May I say that we are proud of what Malcolm Fraser's Government has done to bring the economy to some sense. We are not fully recovered yet although the deficit has been reduced by \$1,000m. That is still a remarkable achievement in that short period of time. There has been a lot of criticism of the Federal Treasurer recently but I am sure that there would not be too many criticisms of his first progressive budget as presented last night.

With regard to the Northern Territory, we have been treated very respectfully and I think that we should be given special treatment, particularly as we are moving towards constitutional development and statehood. The areas in which we should be given special treatment are transport, the beef industry, road building, the police force, rural and urban development, planning and community activities. It can be seen very clearly in the Budget that the Minister for the Northern Territory has worked very hard for the Territory. I am sure that each and every one of us appreciates that.

However, I am somewhat disappointed with some of the decisions, particularly those affecting my electorate and other electorates too. For instance, the proposed sealing of the Yirrkala Road for which \$300,000 was appropriated last year has been dropped from the capital works. I can only say that, if this continues to be dropped, it will cost much more than that.

I have been continually asking questions in relation to police boats in the Territory. I see that there has been no allocation for any police boats for the Territory. We need one badly at Nhulunbuy, not only for police work but for the customs officers. Also, there should be more consideration given to the police strength in the Territory and their requirements to uphold the law as we know they can.

In the field of education, I was pleased with the appropriation of \$400,000 for the pre-school at Nhulunbuy. That was appropriated last year anyway. Also, there has been an allocation of \$2m for the first stage of the Yirrkala School. That is something that those people need. I was disappointed to find that there has not been any interim decision on the new high school proposal and there is no allocation for any first stage or second stage. That school will not only be a high school, it will also have library facilities for the townspeople.

There has been a lot of talk about Brown's Mart and the Arts Council. They are non-profit-making organisations, they work hard to bring some sort of culture to the Territory and I can only support the other speakers in this regard. There is a stupid situation at Brown's Mart where they need money to put panic-locks on the doors so that people can get out of the place. The fire brigade have said that performances may not be held there because there are no panic-locks. That is a ludicrous situation because that building was built under the DRC building code. I will say no more about that.

There has been a lack of interest in the Budget, particularly in the Nhulunbuy area. We have not been given

consideration for a number of other community activities. I will not go into the various community activity grants that have been given but, if you look down the list, you do not see Nhulunbuy anywhere at all in those appropriations. I am very disappointed in that. We are the third biggest town in the Territory. We are a closed town that is run by a company and they think that because it is run by a company, people have got to spend all the money on us. I am sure the people of Nhulunbuy are some of the highest taxpayers per capita in the whole of the Territory, if not higher than any in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs - the whole lot.

Mr Ryan: You tell them; you tell them!

Mr BALLANTYNE: I was very disappointed to read Senator Robertson's remarks in the paper yesterday about the proposed Budget. I am sure that he will eat his words. I am very disappointed in him as a senator who was voted in by the people of the Territory; he has not supported the Territory people. But we have Senator Kilgariff and we have the federal member for the Territory working hard all the time; all they think of is helping the Territory - and not only those people but the Majority Leader and the Executive Members who have been in some ways pushed down in their jobs. All the MLAs have tried hard to help to obtain in some way some support for the Territory, and I give them full marks for that.

There is not much more I can say. I support the Budget and I would particularly like to convey my thanks to the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development for the way he did present that Budget; it was a credit to him and it is a credit to the whole Assembly.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr MANUELL: I believe that the debate on the Budget is drawing to a close and little be it to me to adopt the position of speaking close to the end. However, I believe I have a few remarks to make that may be of some value to the Assembly and it also gives me an oppor-

tunity of making some remarks about the Budget as it affects my electorate.

In opening my remarks, I believe that it is worth making comment that I believe that the Federal Treasurer has made a valiant attempt to present to the nation of Australia a Budget with a degree of reality. Also he has endeavoured to deal with it in a way which is professional from an accounting point of view. It was probably unfortunate for both the listeners to the radio last night and those members of the nation who listened with interest to the Budget - but probably more so for the Treasurer himself - that he had to engage in such a lengthy preamble prior to introducing his Budget in an attempt to explain why he had to create such measures to try to contain the economy of Australia.

I believe that the Federal Treasurer, in the Budget that he brought down last night, has dealt with the Territory in a very fair way. It appears to me that all of us here in the House today would have liked to have seen a greater amount of money appropriated. That is our natural selfishness; we always want more because we know we need more. But I think it is about time that not only we in the Territory but other people throughout this nation of ours accepted the fact that, unless some restraints were made, the nation of Australia was about to run away at an economic level. I believe that it was well within the realms of running away under the guidance of the Labor Government because, accounting-wise, I am convinced they had absolutely no knowledge of where they were going, except to the Arabs.

I listened with interest to a couple of the remarks made by the honourable member for Nightcliff. I do not wish to use this opportunity this afternoon to point the bone at her particularly; however, I believe that in some of her remarks she was perhaps somewhat, if not misguided, in possession of information that misled her. I refer in particular to her reference to real terms. I believe the realities that were dealt with last night in terms of the Budget really referred to real work. The Treasurer spoke about realities in terms of wage indexation

price indexation and other forms. Unless this nation of ours is prepared to accept the fact that the people who work in it must really work, you can forget every form of indexation that you may like to implement. It is about time that our workers in Australia accepted the fact that, if we are going to contain this rate of outrageous inflation, no matter how we try to control it at a federal level, people must do a day's work for a day's pay.

The other situation that comes to my mind in the remarks that the honourable member for Nightcliff made, was in reference to an annual report made by the Master Builders Association. They were concerned about on-going work and contracts flowing from the Government for work to be undertaken by the civil construction and engineering firms. I agree that there must be a degree of concern; I too would be concerned if I was involved in the building industry. However, I believe that the remarks the honourable member made simply endorse the Majority Party's claim for statehood in the Northern Territory. If we had statehood, there would be investment and confidence. At the moment, because we are subject to Federal Government control by appropriation, we have absolutely no destiny. We have absolutely no control over what we look to as our investment potential and our investment guidance. I believe that the sooner we arrive at statehood, the sooner we will find a degree of stability and satisfaction amongst those contractors and those investors who are intent on fixing their roots in the Northern Territory, no matter what form of industry they are involved in at a private enterprise level.

In turning to the Budget, I do not intend to repeat remarks made by earlier speakers except to say that I would like to refer to a number of appropriations that refer more particularly to my own electorate. I do believe that it is probably appropriate for me to extend a degree of thanks to the Federal Treasurer and the Government for the treatment that the Alice Springs district and the municipality have received in this Budget. Frankly, I am surprised to see the Alice Springs area has been so well treated. On going

through the appropriations, it appears that Alice Springs alone has a capital works program for this year of no less than \$12,667,000 and ...

A member: Too much.

Mr MANUELL: I believe that it may be too much but I think that is also a question of opinion. I believe that Alice Springs can justify it because it has some demands that are already as yet unmet. Amongst those appropriations, we have at least an item to put a bridge over the Todd River which has been needed for many years. It will be very gratifying to see that the residents of the east side of Alice Springs will be free and able to travel to and from their place of employment if their place of residence is on the east side, and vice versa if the situation applies, without being interrupted by the flooding of the Todd River.

Of course we have already had the announcement of the Sadadeen High School development and this in itself will create a degree of activity and fringe activity in the Alice Springs area amongst the contractors and sub-contractors which is so badly needed.

The other gratifying appropriation is the upgrading development of the Stuart Highway within the municipality of Alice Springs itself. This will enable the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs to undertake further development work which has been dependent upon the completion of works undertaken by the Commonwealth.

I do wish to refer to the appropriation that has been made to the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs itself which is equal to last year in terms of allocation of funds covering its operational expenditures. It has, however, been extended a substantial addition to its previous grant for capital works and it has also received a sum of \$683,000 for upgrading of municipal roads and pavements.

I share the sentiments of the Majority Leader when he referred to the reduction in appropriations to 2 most significant boards in the Northern

Territory, the Reserves Board and the Tourist Board. However, I also believe that it is relevant that this afternoon I share with this House the knowledge of my contact with both of these boards and their management and their directorships. I think this is something that perhaps people like the honourable member for Nightcliff might well bear in mind in some of the remarks they make from time to time, that there always appears to be a degree of resilience in private enterprise and I do not think it is coincidental that you find that the people primarily involved in the management of both these boards are people with private enterprise backgrounds. They accept their lot. They accept with regret the cutbacks they have received but they say that they will handle the situation and survive. That is private enterprise thinking. They will not be put down and I believe that the Reserves Board and Tourist Board will survive this cutback in the present federal Budget and look forward to perhaps an increment next year if federal funds are available.

I also believe that it is relevant to say that in contrast to last year, for the Reserves Board - perhaps in contrast to the Tourist Board which operates in a different manner - last year's consumption of funds was largely at a capitalisation level. This year, the Reserves Board, having capitalised to the extent that they did last year, are probably more able to survive on the extent of funding they receive this year.

I am also gratified to see that the Bushfires Council has received an appropriation. In talking to the Bushfires Council they seemed to indicate to me that that will be sufficient for their needs and, in fact, it is at least a 10% increment on what they received last year.

I support the Federal Treasurer in his Budget and I support the remarks that were made by our Finance and Community Development Executive Member this morning. I congratulate him also on his presentation of the Budget to this House.

Mr STEELE: Approaching this Budget debate is like approaching a beast after a drought - the dingoes have got at him and there is not much left. I will have to recap on a couple of sections whether you like it or whether you don't. I will just start on the wheelbarrow ride of the Budget papers coming into the Assembly about 9.30 last night. It must be an illustration to members that they are playing into our hands. Really we are not the underdogs; we are on the way up. This must be recognised because it cannot continue for ever and we will remember.

I must make some mention of the Reserves Board. I have gone very carefully through this gigantic document. The Reserves Board has lost over \$200,000. The powers-that-be seem to be aiming at the areas where there is a bit of private enterprise and a bit of organised and proper thinking. What they tend to forget is that the general public outside would be most unhappy with any sort of reduction in a board like this because of the public interest areas, areas that have to be protected and areas that will significantly contribute to our future economy over the next year or 2. With the reduction of this sort of money - and it just goes into padding of the public service - these sorts of things will be lost to the community. The blame rests squarely on their shoulders. I hope they will remember.

Animal industry is up \$132,000-odd. This is quite significant. Even though the industry itself is in a very depressed state, we have to maintain a fighting force in the field to keep up the program of disease eradication and controls. If this was allowed to fall behind, the country would be in a very sorry situation.

Urban development and town planning has been increased from \$17,763 to \$30,000. We have not had a great say in the affairs of the Urban Development and Town Planning Branch. It is long overdue. They have some extra money, but they have not got any increase in say from elected representatives from the Northern Territory. There is one

remark that puzzles me greatly, if I can draw members' attention to page 34: "The volume of materials required has increased because of the need to maintain offices in Brisbane and Darwin". That does not sound right does it? We had better fix that one up.

The money provided for traffic warning lights is up \$5,500. Another 150 pedestrians will probably be killed by the time they spend that money, or perhaps I am being a little bit too facetious.

The Tourist Board vote is down \$50,000. One of the areas where we can significantly contribute to the income of the Northern Territory is the tourist industry and they have dealt us a king hit in this regard. We have no show if they put us down in this area. It is a king hit, there is no doubt about that.

In the beef areas, we have some significant advances: there is the freight subsidy of \$400,000 and the Primary Producers Board vote has been lifted. We have other areas that have been most needed; what I should have mentioned in my comments about the Animal Industry Branch was the increase of \$392,000 towards contagious abortion and TB eradication.

I will go on to the failure of the Government to distinguish between the Parliament and the Executive as far as funding is concerned. I accept the explanation of the Majority Leader but there are some areas where they still fail to take into account all the real facts.

The Housing Commission - it is good to see a real increase from \$13m-odd to \$21m. I have 90 people in my electorate waiting to purchase commission homes. I trust that in due course I will be able to go back to them and advise them of the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development's proposal about purchasing homes.

The Home Finance Trustee - I refer only to the amount of \$15,000 as a loan to the people not entitled to the concessional loan. \$15,000 is probably a very nice amount but it is totally

inadequate and in the future obviously we are going to have to look at this figure; if it is anything under \$25,000, they might as well forget about it.

In the Australian context we are trying to recover from the worst economic destruction inflicted on the Australian community. This coincides with the worst primary industry recession Australia and the Northern Territory has seen since before the second world war. I think the Government is on a responsible path and for those that complain, I would remind the knockers that there is a difference between a half-empty glass and a half-full glass. It is a matter of attitude and, Mr Speaker, if I had to forgo my lunches, which I dearly enjoy, I am quite sure that I could handle that quite easily. I commend the Territory and Australian Budget to honourable members.

Motion agreed to.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr RYAN (by leave): I wish to answer a question that was asked of me concerning a contractor in Katherine having some difficulty. This was the question concerning Barcar Holdings who are working on the Giles Street subdivision. According to the information, and this has been confirmed, some of the subdivision has in fact been waiting for sealing since February. Spraypave have been unable to make available the equipment necessary for the sealing of the area and the Department of Construction have been in the same situation as the private contractor concerned; they have been unable to carry out the sealing work that they have wanted to do. However, the Department of Construction have advised me that Spraypave expect to be able to carry out the work for Barcar in approximately 2 weeks' time, following repairs to one of their bitumen spray wagons.

Mr TAMBLING (by leave): I wish to provide information on a question asked of me by the honourable member for Casuarina on caravan statistics. The Housing Commission advises that it has 8 caravans sited and waiting alloca-

tion, 5 caravans requiring maintenance before allocation, 5 caravans at site office waiting to be sited for restoration work. The Department of the Northern Territory has 12 caravans sited and held for relocating tenants while their houses are under repair, 4 caravans in the process of allocation. The Department of the Northern Territory has 104 caravans in store. These have been returned by both the department and the Housing Commission. 40 caravans are serviceable for issue; 64 caravans are in need of repair.

MEMBER FOR GILLEN

Mr STEELE: I seek leave of absence for the honourable member for Gillen. I understand from the communication he has passed on to the honourable member for Stuart that he will not be here this week because of his medical problem.

Leave granted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

(Serial 130)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

We have long had the ridiculous situation in Darwin whereby the city council's bylaws do not apply to our major roads and highways. The purpose of this bill is to allow municipal corporations to enforce parking and litter laws on roads which have been declared under section 307 of the Local Government Ordinance. Honourable members will recall that section 307 roads are roads within the boundaries of a municipality which the Minister has declared to be under the care, control and management of the Administrator. In Darwin, McMillans Road, Bagot Road, the Stuart Highway and McMin Street are all section 307 roads. Motorists using these roads regularly disregard traffic control signs in the full knowledge that there is little likelihood of the police getting involved with parking offenders and that municipal inspectors have no authority whatsoever. The clearway which is supposed to exist on

the Stuart Highway in Stuart Park during the peak hour traffic is a prime example of this disregard for the law. There is rarely a period when vehicles are not parked in the kerbside land disrupting the traffic flow and making it difficult and dangerous for vehicles to gain access to the highway from the side streets.

Litter is also a major problem on our highways, particularly in the vicinity of take-away food shops. This will, if adopted, put an end to the absurd situation where municipal inspectors can enforce the litter laws on a side street but not a few feet around the corner on a section 307 road.

I would rather see the whole situation resolved by not having any roads declared as being outside the control and management of a municipal corporation but there seems little possibility of this being the case in the near future, I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

FIRE BRIGADES BILL

(Serial 139)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The purpose of this bill is to correct an irregularity that occurs in the ordinance in sections 9 and 10. The ordinance currently relates to the Chief Fire Officer and Station Officer with regard to going to fires. Clause 3(1)(a) of the bill is to amend section 9 of the principal ordinance by inserting after "the Chief Fire Officer" the words "or Station Officer, or a person authorised to do so by the Chief Fire Officer or Station Officer". Currently the legislation does not allow for this authorisation; the only people mentioned are the Fire Chief and the Station Officer.

Clause 3(1)(b) is to correct another small anomaly by adding at the end of section 9 "or dealing with an emergency". This is to cover the situation where there is an emergency that re-

quires the attendance of the fire brigade.

Clause 3(2) amends section 9 of the principal ordinance to get over the problem of delegation or authorisation. It now adds: "Where the Chief Fire Officer or Station Officer or authorised person directs 2 or more of the members of a fire brigade to proceed to a location, he may direct one of these members to be the senior member". This now enables the delegation, whereas under the previous section this was not able to be done.

Then to clarify it even further, we have clause 3(3) of the bill: "Where the Chief Fire Officer or Station Officer or authorised person does not direct the person to be the senior member in pursuance of subsection (2), the highest ranking member of the fire brigade directed to proceed to the location or, if 2 or more members so directed are equal in rank and no other member so directed is higher in rank than them, the member so directed who has held the highest rank for the longest time shall be the senior member". I think that quite clearly defines the authorisation. I believe it does; it certainly sounds confusing when you read it but this is to get over the problems we have in getting a message across with our language.

Clause 4(1) relates to an amendment of section 10(1) of the principal ordinance by inserting after "Station Officer", wherever occurring, the words "or senior member of the fire brigade who is directed to proceed to the location", and by omitting paragraph (b)(i) and substituting the following paragraph: "(i) so much of the fire brigade as has been despatched to the location". This is to clarify the matter a little further. You may only want to send some section of the fire service to the particular fire or emergency.

In clause 4(2) section 10(2) and (3) of the principal ordinance are amended by inserting after "Station Officer", wherever occurring, the words "or the senior member of the fire brigade who is directed to proceed to the location". That clarifies the situation and will enable the Chief Fire Officer or

the Station Officer to direct personnel to fires without necessarily having to attend the fires themselves as is currently stated in the ordinance. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LICENSING BILL

(Serial 132)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

It has been the policy of the Majority Party not to continue the patchwork that has gone on over a long period with the Licensing Ordinance. In fact, this is the first amendment to be made to the ordinance, apart from cyclone provisions, in the life of this Assembly. It had been the early intention of this side of the House to completely review the ordinance; however, 2 matters are considered in need of action and they cannot wait for that review.

The first arises from a situation that has arisen on our national parks where there are no publicans, storekeepers or roadside inn licences, no outlet of liquor to the general public, but there are private hotel licences. This class of licence allows the holder of the licence to provide liquor for any bona fide guests and their guests. So at places like Ayers Rock, a national tourist attraction, the many day visitors and visitors on camping tours who are not necessarily staying at these licensed outlets are unable to be provided legally with liquor. It is therefore intended to insert a new section in the ordinance to allow the holder of a private hotel licence situated on a reserve within the meaning of the National Parks and Gardens Ordinance, and not within 30 kilometres of a publican, storekeeper, or roadside inn licence, to sell and dispose of liquor in a similar manner to the holder of a publican's licence. There is an additional condition that the liquor can only be sold or disposed of in open containers for consumption on the premises.

The second provision of this bill is to insert a new subsection to provide an additional ground of objection to the renewal of storekeeper's licences. The new ground of objection will be that the quiet and good order of the neighbourhood in which the premises are situated has been or will be disturbed by the renewal of the licence. There has been a great deal of controversy concerning activities in communities near some licence-holders. The new ground of objection may help to overcome some social and community problems. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

LITTER BILL

(Serial 131)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The socially nauseating litter problem we face is not because the goods we consume come enclosed in paper, tin or glass; the problem is one of the irresponsible disposal of that packaging by a particular sector in our community. It appears that a sizeable portion of our population has no civic pride whatsoever. No matter how many bins are erected in the streets or elsewhere, we are still faced with the obnoxious individual who will not walk 2 metres out of his way to use them. Pleas for co-operation and to keep our country clean and to save the taxpayer a fortune are wasted on this section of the community. It seems that the only way to get the message to these people is through their pockets. Nothing else has worked.

I wish to make it quite clear that the proposal I advocate in this bill is not intended merely to raise revenue. I would be far happier if there was no necessity to have a Litter Ordinance at all, but we are stuck with the problem and any revenue which is collected by way of fines will at least alleviate some of the financial burden on taxpayers who currently foot the bill. In Darwin alone, the city corporation budget for the scavenging gang which has

to run around cleaning up after people is \$83,000 a year. Street sweeping and flushing costs another \$32,000 annually. These figures represent something like \$12 for every ratepayer in Darwin, and the place still is not clean. One could imagine what condition the town would be in if this \$115,000 a year was not being spent to clean it up.

However, the cost of litter to the community cannot be measured in financial terms alone. There are the injuries caused by broken bottles and cans; rubbish and dead animals indiscriminately dumped breed flies and pose a health risk to everyone. The most distasteful aspect, however, is the visual pollution which spoils our cities, beaches, picnic areas and highways.

This bill amends the Litter Ordinance to allow defined officers to issue on-the-spot litter fines. The procedure is similar to on-the-spot parking fines which have been in operation in Darwin for some time. Legislation of a similar nature exists covering municipal areas in all the states. In South Australia, their act comes into operation on the 22nd of this month. The on-the-spot fines in the states vary between \$10 and \$20. Officers are defined in the bill as members of the police force and persons employed to enforce bylaws by the Reserves Board, Port Authority or a municipal authority, or persons appointed by the Administrator.

Under the existing ordinance, a litter officer is compelled to go through a detailed and complicated procedure in order to obtain sufficient evidence to press charges. The procedure is so involved that I believe it to be the reason why - as far as I can establish anyway - only 2 cases have ever been brought before the court under the Litter Ordinance.

I would like to read to members a portion of an official guide which lays down the procedure for litter officers appointed under section 5 of the ordinance when interviewing offenders under the existing ordinance. It may give honourable members some idea as to why there have only been 2 offenders brought to court. The document I have

is called "A guide to interviewing offenders against the Litter Ordinance", and it sets out the number of steps that the litter officer must take:

Point 1. "My name is I am an officer appointed under section 5 of the Litter Ordinance. Here is my identification." And the litter officer shows his card.

Point 2. "What is your full name and address?" If not given, show the person section 11 of the ordinance.

Point 3. "I would like to ask you some questions regarding something I have seen. You do not have to answer these questions, but if you do they will be taken down and can be used in evidence. Do you understand?" Await reply.

Point 4. If the answer is affirmative continue. For example, question: "Did you throw that orange peel on the road?" Question: "Do you know that this is a road used by the public?" Question: "Do you know the name of the road?" Question: "Can you see that the peel is lying on the bitumen surface of the road about 2 feet from the gutter?" Question: "Did you know that there is a rubbish receptacle about 20 feet from where the peel is lying?" Question: "Do you see the receptacle I have referred to?" Question: "Why didn't you put the peel in the receptacle?" It is desirable to identify the object thrown or discarded by description rather than the word "litter", and to identify the place where the item is thrown by such words as "footpath", "lane" etc. Record all the answers at the time or as soon as practicable after the questioning. Always be polite.

I will not go on any further. That is an official guide put out by the Government and checked by the Attorney-General's Department. If the litter officer is going to exercise his powers under the ordinance and take a person to court and charge him with littering, that is the rigmarole he has to go through. To my mind it borders on absurdity to try and clean up the litter problem by going through a

procedure like that when you are facing what in many cases will be a hostile situation.

Under the proposed bill, an officer who has reason to believe an offence is being committed against the Litter Ordinance may serve a notice indicating the nature of the offence on the person involved either personally or by post. The notice advises the offender that if he does not wish the matter to be dealt with by the court he may sign the notice and pay a \$20 penalty within 14 days. Honourable members will be aware that the maximum penalty for an offence against the Litter Ordinance is \$200. The bill does not prevent an officer from instituting proceedings before a court in respect of an alleged offence if an on-the-spot ticket has not been issued in respect of that offence.

The principles contained in the bill have the full support of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council the municipal corporations in both Darwin and Alice Springs, the Northern Territory Reserves Board, the Port Authority, the Department of Health, the Northern Territory Tourist Board, and the Darwin Regional Tourist Promotion Association. I have letters from all those people indicating strong support for the move. I believe that it also has the full support of all responsible citizens in the Northern Territory. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BILLS

INTERPRETATION BILL

(Serial 140)

ADMINISTRATOR'S COUNCIL BILL

(Serial 141)

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

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

Dealing first with the Interpretation Bill, the purpose of this bill is to enable the recent amendments to the

Northern Territory (Administration) Act to operate effectively through the laws of the Northern Territory. Honourable members will recall that those amendments formally create an Executive Council in place of the Administrator's Council and also create the statutory office of Executive Member. The act has not yet been brought into operation. When it is brought into operation, there will be created offices of Executive Members with determined functions, the Administrator's Council will cease to be and will be replaced by the Executive Council.

The functions to be performed by Executive Members will be those presently performed by Ministers, the Administrator or the Administrator in Council. There will be a need to amend the relative ordinances referred to to replace those offices with reference to "Executive Member".

Similarly, the functions of the Administrator's Council will be absorbed into those of the Executive Council.

This bill amends the Interpretation Ordinance by inserting the necessary definition of "Executive Member" and "executive office" by reference to their creation under the Northern Territory (Administration) Act. Honourable members may note that the citation of the NT (Administration) Act in this bill differs from the form previously used; this follows on recent Commonwealth legislation, the Acts Citation Act which permits the use of the base year only as meaning that act as amended.

The bill also defines the Administrator's Council as meaning the Executive Council. This removes the need to alter every reference in Territory legislation to the Administrator's Council. It enables such references to be read automatically as the Executive Council.

Finally, this bill will repeal the Interpretation Ordinance of 1975. Honourable members will recall that that ordinance was passed, together with the Transfer of Executive Powers Ordinance 1975, for reasons similar to the purpose of this bill. The amend-

ments to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act have superseded the Transfer of Executive Powers Ordinance; that ordinance certainly cannot operate now in the form in which it was passed as it would be ultra vires to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act. An examination is being made of it to see what must be done but the amendments to the Interpretation Ordinance made by the 1975 ordinance certainly cannot operate now and must be repealed.

Associated with this bill is a bill to amend the Administrator's Council Ordinance to ensure its effective continuing operation. I turn now to the Administrator's Council Bill which is designed just to ensure the effective operation again of the amendments to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act.

The bill merely repeals section 4 of the Administrator's Council Ordinance; that section states: "In this ordinance the Administrator's Council means the Administrator's Council established under section 4ZA of the Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910-1959". As I explained when discussing the Interpretation Bill, the amendments to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act will, when brought into operation, in effect abolish the Administrator's Council and replace it with the Executive Council. The amendments to the Interpretation Ordinance will ensure that references to the Administrator's Council are read as references to the Executive Council. The Administration Act defines and explains the Executive Council.

Removal of this section merely removes what will be an incorrect definition; the balance of the ordinance will remain and provide the machinery for the operation of the Executive Council.

These bills are necessary at this time to ensure that action by the Commonwealth which has taken initiative to transfer executive functions to the Territory are not impeded or held up by deficiencies in our legislation. For that reason, it will be my intention to move tomorrow for the suspension of

standing orders to permit the bills to pass at this sittings as I would hope that we will get some action on the Northern Territory (Administration) Act before the next sittings of this Assembly. Both bills would then come into operation on the date of commencement of the 1976 amendments to the Northern Territory (Administration) Act. I commend the bills.

Debate adjourned.

REGISTRATION OF DOGS BILL

(Serial 134)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

It could easily be said that dogs in Northern Territory towns are out of control, especially at centres outside the municipality of Darwin.

Mr Ryan: And in Darwin.

Mr POLLOCK: One of the reasons frequently cited for the lack of control over dogs marauding the streets is the failure of the local registrar to exercise his authority. Under existing legislation, only the Registrar of Dogs can effect the duties required of him and, at places like Tennant Creek where the registrar is the local district officer, he finds his duties in other areas of more priority than catching stray dogs.

The amendment to the ordinance contained in the bill allows the Registrar of Dogs to delegate his authority; in effect to appoint agents who can effect the powers of the registrar to the degree specified in the instrument of delegation.

It is hoped that the passage of this bill will allow prompt and drastic reduction of uncontrolled dogs in Territory towns. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

TRAFFIC BILL

(Serial 143)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

The bill I am presenting seeks to clarify and improve upon the special licence provisions in the Traffic Ordinance. Members may be aware that the honourable member for Port Darwin does have a bill before the House at the moment which concerns itself with some of the provisions and we have attempted to co-operate with the honourable member for Port Darwin, I would like to thank him for the co-operation that he has given us in this regard. I believe that the honourable member does have a few areas of discontent with the final decision of the Majority Party relating to this particular piece of legislation; however, I was appreciative of the assistance that the honourable member gave me and it is a pity that we could not agree on all matters but I guess that this will be a situation that will arise from time to time.

Before I get on to the bill, I will briefly outline the problems. At present, if one loses a driver's licence, for any reason, one can make application to the court for a special licence and by section 55B of the principal ordinance, subsection (2)(a), the court can order the registrar to supply a special licence, if it is satisfied that it is a condition of his employment that the applicant drive a motor vehicle at certain times. This is if the registrar has no opposition to the matter concerned. If the registrar has opposition to this, he can in fact stop the person from making the application so it never gets to the court, and that was the particular part of the legislation that the honourable member for Port Darwin was concerned with. We have taken steps to amend that particular section satisfactorily as far as the member for Port Darwin was concerned, relating to his particular

bill. The other areas had been raised by other persons as well.

The other section we were concerned with relates to the situation that arises if a person is granted a special licence and he is a bus driver or a hire car or taxi driver. Quite obviously we would not expect that this person would be issued with a special licence if the offence had been committed while he was driving one of these vehicles. However, he may have been picked up driving his own vehicle, and subsequently lost his licence. Under the old provisions, it was a condition of his employment that he drive a vehicle and therefore the court was quite right in issuing the particular person with a special licence to drive a bus or hire car or taxi. At the end of the suspension period, when the driver regained his full licence under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, he became a provisional driver. As a provisional driver, you cannot drive a motor omnibus, taxi or a hire car. This is quite an inequitable situation in that, while you are disqualified you can have a special licence to drive a bus, hire car or taxi, but when you retrieve your licence, you can no longer drive the vehicle concerned because you have become a provisional driver. We have amended that part of the legislation.

Clause 4(1) amends section 55B of the principal ordinance by inserting after subsection (1) new subsections (1A), (1B) and (1C). New subsection (1A) says that the court may at the time of disqualification referred to in subsection (1)(a) accept an application under that subsection and set a date for the hearing of the application. This means that, at the time the person appears before the court and loses his licence, he may then make an application, not necessarily to the magistrate but through the courthouse, to apply for a hearing for a special licence. The new subsection also provides that the court may direct that an application under that subsection shall not be made for such period as the court specifies. This means that, if the magistrate considers that the offence was serious enough, at the time that he actually disqualifies that person from driving, he can direct that no applica-

tion will be received until such period as the court specifies. He can say to the driver, "You will not be able to get a special licence for whatever period the court decides".

Proposed subsection (1B) goes on to say, "Where the court rejects an application made under subsection (1), it may direct that the applicant may apply again at the end of such period as the court specifies". At first this appears to say exactly the same thing as in (1A)(b) and this is one area about which the honourable member for Port Darwin was concerned. However, it relates to where an application has in fact been made. The magistrate may not at the time of disqualification say to the person concerned, "You cannot make an application", but when the application is made, the magistrate may decide that he will not allow a special licence to be granted for a period of time. It actually carries it a little bit further and tightens up the legislation.

Proposed subsection (1C) relates to the notice of application made under subsection (1). It says "Notice of an application made under subsection (1) shall, unless the court otherwise orders, be given by the clerk of the court by post or otherwise to the registrar, and the registrar or his agent may appear and give evidence and call, examine and cross-examine witnesses on the hearing of the application". This gets over any problem of the registrar not being aware that a certain person has made an application for a special licence. Previously, the application had to be made through the registrar who could veto the whole operation. This has now been changed. The registrar is now informed by the court that the application has been made and, if he has any objections, he can appear before the court and notify the court of his objections to the granting of a special licence.

Clause 4(2) states: "Section 55B(2) of the principal ordinance is amended by omitting paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) and substituting - (a) if it is satisfied that it is necessary for the purposes of earning a livelihood that the applicant drive a motor vehicle at

certain times; and (b) if it is satisfied that, if a special licence is granted to him in pursuance of an order made under this section, the applicant will be likely to drive without danger to the public". Previously, the ordinance stated "if the court was satisfied that it is a condition of his employment". This made it a little bit difficult for people who were actually in their own employ. By changing the wording to "for the purposes of earning a livelihood" now covers the whole attitude towards work. It could be for the reason of getting to work. You may find somebody working at odd hours where public transport is not available; he may live some distance from the city and it would not be practical to expect him to engage the services of a hire car or taxi. It may be considered that to earn his livelihood that particular person must have a special licence. There was some discussion as to whether "other serious reason" could be included in this particular amendment. This would possibly make it easier for magistrates to issue special licences and it was decided to restrict that particular section to the livelihood situation. The honourable member for Port Darwin may have something to say to that.

Mr Withnall: Not a word.

Mr RYAN: Clause 4(3) states: "Section 55B(2) of the principal ordinance is amended by omitting 'in the course of his employment to drive a motor vehicle of such a class for such purposes'." That is pretty well self-explanatory.

Clause 4(4) states: "Section 55B(4) of the principal ordinance is amended by omitting 'a fee of \$1' and substituting 'the fee prescribed by or under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance for the issue of a licence to drive a motor vehicle of the class for which the special licence is issued'." This is to save any problems when the fee is increased or decreased; it will no longer be necessary to amend the Traffic Ordinance.

Clause 4(5) amends section 55B of the principal ordinance by adding at the end subsections (7) and (8). Subsection

(7) says: "Notwithstanding section 10 and 10A of the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, the registrar may, subject to any provisions of an order made by a court, upon the expiration of a period of suspension of or disqualification from holding or obtaining a licence, grant a licence under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance to drive a motor omnibus or a licence to drive a public or private hire car to a person who, immediately prior to the expiration of that period, held a special licence to drive a motor omnibus or a special licence to drive a public or private hire car as the case may be. Subsection (8) says: "Subject to any provisions of an order made by a court, a licence granted by reference to subsection (7) shall not be a provisional licence to drive a motor omnibus or a provisional licence to drive a public or private car, as the case may be, but it shall be a provisional licence in so far as it licenses the holder to drive any other class of motor vehicle".

That satisfactorily takes care of the situation of the motor omnibus driver and corrects that inequity.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (POST CYCLONE ELECTIONS) BILL

(Serial 142)

Bill by leave presented and read a first time.

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

Most members will be aware that 2 aldermen of the Corporation of the City of Darwin resigned for health reasons on Monday of this week. It is necessary to hold a supplementary election to fill the vacancies caused by these resignations. The Local Government Ordinance contains provisions detailing the procedures to be followed in supplementary elections. Honourable members will recall that in March last year this Assembly passed the Local Government (Post Cyclone Elections) Ordinance. That ordinance took note of the existing situation in Darwin at the time and provided for representative

elections for Darwin to be held. It did 3 things: it abolished wards, it provided for 10 aldermen and, most importantly, it provided that every person who was on the electoral roll for Darwin as at 24 December 1974 continued to be on the roll for those elections. The purpose was to enable the thousands of persons evacuated from Darwin to participate in the municipal elections. The council was required to advertise throughout the Commonwealth concerning the election and the various Darwin welfare committees in the states were used as agencies to assist in the conduct of the election.

No one could foresee the future at that time. Happily, times have changed, and although there are still people evacuated from Darwin who intend or hope to return to Darwin one day, the strong reasons which existed at that time have faded considerably. There is now a re-established Darwin population and the people who should be able to vote at elections for aldermen of the city of Darwin are current Darwin residents.

When the provisions of the Local Government Ordinance were examined, further complications were discovered. Sections 58 and 110 of that ordinance, when read together, provide essentially that nomination day shall be not later than 21 days after the event which led to the election; while enrolment day, the day on which rolls of electors are compiled, shall be 21 days before nomination day. As the resignations leading to the elections that are coming were last Monday, nomination day would at the latest be in 3 weeks' time, while enrolment day would have to be last Monday. If, as is usual, nomination day was a Saturday, it would reach the absurd situation of enrolment day being on the Saturday before the resignations were received. It is practically impossible to comply with all these requirements. Also the council is concerned that some time be available for interested persons who are not on the rolls to get on the rolls before they are closed.

In the circumstances, to ensure that an election which could have some meaning would be held, it was decided to

amend the Local Government (Post Cyclone Elections) Ordinance to make specific provisions for the supplementary elections to be held consequent on the recent resignations. Members will note that clause 3 of the bill provides a timetable for those elections. Enrolment day is to be 5 September and that will give interested people a chance to get on the roll before it is closed. Nomination day will be 12 September.

The bill will also repeal sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Local Government (Post Cyclone Elections) Ordinance. These are the sections that include in the municipal electoral rolls all persons who were on those rolls on 24 December 1974 and which require the council to advertise the elections throughout the Commonwealth. The electoral rolls will then include all those people who are on the Commonwealth roll and 5 are presently resident in Darwin. Postponing enrolment day until 5 September will give all interested persons a chance to enrol.

For obvious reasons, it is my intention to seek the passage of this bill through all stages at the current sittings of the Assembly. Without this bill, the required elections could be a disaster. I advise honourable members that, immediately the current sittings are finished, I intend to meet with the council and work out acceptable amendments to this and the Local Government Ordinance to ensure that simple and effective procedures are available for the conduct of elections as required in the future. I firmly intend to introduce a bill to achieve that purpose at the next sittings of the Assembly.

I foreshadow a minor amendment to the bill as printed. The dates 5 and 12 September printed in the bill are Sundays. The required dates are 4 and 11 September, both Saturdays. Our draftsmen would seem better at reading law than calendars. I commend the bill.

Debate adjourned.

HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL SERVICES BILL

(Serial 133)

Dr LETTS: Mr Speaker, I do not know whether something should have been clarified under standing orders before. With this bill introduced during this sittings, it would require an urgency motion. Is that correct?

Mr SPEAKER: The Majority Leader has sought urgency under standing orders 152 for this bill and I agree that the bill should be declared an urgent bill. I am satisfied that the delay of one month provided by standing order 151 could result in hardship being caused.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr POLLOCK: I move amendment 112.1, omitting the definition of "salaried medical practitioner" and substituting the following definition: "'Salaried medical practitioner' means (a) a medical practitioner who is employed on a full-time basis by the Commonwealth; or (b) a medical practitioner who is employed on a part-time basis by the Commonwealth but only during the period he is so employed".

Honourable members will recall that, during my second-reading speech, I foreshadowed an amendment to this clause. The amendment replaces the definition to make it clear that a doctor working part-time at the hospital comes within the term only during the time he is actually working there.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 7 agreed to.

Clause 8:

Mr POLLOCK: I move that clause 8 be amended in accordance with circulated amendment 112.2.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

New clauses 9 and 10:

Mr POLLOCK: I move that at the end of the bill new clauses 9 and 10 be inserted.

(See Minutes for text of new clauses.)

New clauses agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

Mr DONDAS: I rise to call upon the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development to instigate an inquiry into the operation of the Home Finance Trustee and to make every representation to the Minister to have the finance section of the Department of the Northern Territory return to Darwin earlier than the intended date which I believe is in November. There are still delays occurring in issuing of progress payments, in some cases up to 7 weeks.

Another area of my concern with regard to the Home Finance Trustee's operations lies in the actual processing of applications for loans. Since 1 July to 6 August of this year, there have been 56 loans approved in approximately 4 working weeks; this would total something like 14 loans approved each week. This morning, I asked the honourable Executive Member for Finance and Community Development a question without notice about the number of people who were employed in processing these special home loans and his reply was 16 people. In actual fact, 16 people have processed 14 loans during that particular week which works out to 3 loans per day amongst 16 people.

Mr Tambling: Plus doing all the work on the other 500 approved loans.

Mr DONDAS: The point that I am trying to make is that there were 611 loans approved from May of last year to 6 August this year. The total value of money was over \$18m and the total number of loans approved was 611. That is roughly 60 working weeks. In that period it still boils down to only 10 loans per week being approved.

Mr Tambling: They have a lot of work other than approvals.

Mr DONDAS: Irrespective of that, we have the Home Building Society which from 1 July to 6 August this year - the same period - have approved 40 loans, both first and second mortgages. The total value of the loans averages out between \$25,000 and \$30,000, much the same as the average Home Finance Trustee loans which run out to about \$30,000. In the same 4 working weeks, there have been actually 10 loans approved every week but the difference is that the building society have only 2 staff; the Home Finance Trustee have 16 and there must be other support staff somewhere. The question I asked was how many people were actually working on processing the 6% concessional loan; I did not ask how many people were working in that department. The building society, private enterprise, has only 2 people, and they are also the agents for the Aboriginal Loans Commission, yet they are still processing a couple of claims each week. In actual fact, you could say that they are probably processing somewhere in the vicinity of 12 to 15 loans a week on par with the Home Finance Trustee. It is becoming a great area of concern; it is no good the Home Finance Trustee having the money if you cannot get it out of him.

We also have the original loan of \$15,000 at 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ %. People are bypassing that particular service which the Government is offering to people on their first loan to go to the Home Building Society to get their money at 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ % or 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. The reason they go there and are willing to pay more interest is that they cannot be bothered getting involved in a hassle with the Home Fin-

ance Trustee. I do not wish to delve into this particular problem with too much ...

Mrs Lawrie: Oh, come on! You slam the entire section and then you don't wish to delve.

Mr DONDAS: There are a lot of people in there that I know are working very hard.

Mrs Lawrie: The whole 16?

Mr DONDAS: The whole 16 of them. But the reason I am asking that the Home Finance Trustee's department be investigated by the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development is that there are so many people being mucked around. They go to the counter to ask, "How is our loan going?" The young lady comes out and says, "Everything is fine; we'll let you know in 2 or 3 weeks". They go back in 2 or 3 week's time and ask, "How is our loan going?" and the young lady at the counter says, "Look, I'm very sorry but we are still waiting for you to give us this information". They reply, "Why didn't you tell us that you were waiting for the information before you processed the loan?" "I'm sorry, a mistake has been made."

This is happening continually. The honourable member for Nightcliff said that I am trying to slam the entire department. There are people in there who are friends of mine but, irrespective of whether they are friends of mine or not, I do not care; we have an obligation to the people who want to rebuild and if they cannot do their jobs then they should not be there.

Mrs LAWRIE: I rise to reply to some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Casuarina. While he works hard for his electorate, I think that was one of the poorer examples of the honourable member's abilities. He used a reply to a question he asked this morning relating to the present staffing position of the Home Finance Trustee to malign the entire staff as I said in an interjection, and intimate they were processing loans at a very poor rate. I am surprised that the honourable member did not do as I did

which was approach the Minister when the delays were quite serious. Perhaps I am wrong and the honourable member did do this, but if he did he made no mention of it in his speech. I spoke to the Minister recently when the delays were at their height and I received a reply from the Minister. He referred to my telegrams concerning the delays in approvals of the 6% home loan applications, delays which were occurring and which were causing extreme hardship and he advised me in the following terms:

During my recent visit to Darwin, I initiated action to lessen delays which have occurred since the middle of May. The period taken to process a fully documented application for a loan at that time was 8 to 10 weeks. The corrective action initiated since has resulted in a reduction to 6 to 8 weeks. Whilst this is a much welcomed improvement, I have asked my department to reduce it even further.

The backlog in progress payments built up at about the same period. However, the time factor here has now been reduced to a 7-day turnaround in the home finance section for straightforward claims. There will be a further 7 days for the processing through the normal account section procedures, including preparation and despatch of cheques. This means that an owner or builder can expect to receive cheques within approximately 14 days of lodging the claim for payment, provided of course the building work is satisfactory and the documentation is in order.

The situation for mid-May through June was brought about mainly by increased volume of business in relation to dry season activity, but was further aggravated by staff resignations, sickness and other unavoidable staff absences. Departmental officers have been instructed to ensure that the target times for processing payments are maintained and every effort is made to reduce the delay in relation to approvals.

The letter was signed, "Evan Adermann", and dated 6 August 1976. In other words, the letter is current. If we have a look at this letter, follow-

ing the disparaging remarks of the honourable member for Casuarina, the Minister admits that the delay in processing a fully documented application was up to 8 to 10 weeks, something which he did not need to tell us - we knew it already - but apparently he has taken action which has resulted in a reduction to 6 to 8 weeks, which the Minister also agrees is an unconscionably long time.

When the Minister is speaking of delays in progress payments, he has now made a statement, dated 6 August, that he expects those payments to ensue at 14-day intervals following the due date. If in fact the Minister is shown to be wrong, if building work has been done in a satisfactory manner and documentation is completed and if, given those facts, 14 days is being exceeded, then it is the responsibility of all members of this House to advise the Minister that his efforts have not been successful.

I take great exception to the member for Casuarina using the debate to cast aspersions on the staff. I know full well that the staff was greatly depleted and that the people who were left were dealing with trouble which had been caused at a political level. It was caused by the Minister making a statement that there was to be rationing; it was caused by previous statements of the Minister, through the ill-advice of his department, that there was to be a freeze on loans. This resulted, of course, in people putting extra work on the staff, not only through lodging applications in the hope of getting them through but in the interminable queries of distraught Darwin citizens who went to that section worried about the status of their application. That blame I take directly home to the Minister; we have a system of ministerial responsibility. I acknowledge that he fell into it through the very poor advice given to him by his Department of the Northern Territory. Nevertheless, the Minister made the statements concerning the freeze and the rationing and it was the poor buggers in the office who had to put up with the distraught populace trying to find out what had happened to their loans. And let us take that in

context with the present Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, sticking a freeze on the recruiting of staff. They could not get staff. They were dealing with people saying, "The Minister said so and so. What the hell am I going to do?" You can hardly blame the girl at the counter, or the bloke administering the loan, when it was initiated by the Minister, compounded by the Prime Minister putting a freeze on staff, and also compounded by sickness. You cannot blame people for being sick and having to take sick leave. I think the honourable member for Casuarina should have done a little more research, instead of asking what is the present staffing position and using the present position to comment on what had happened some weeks ago. I have a letter here which I have read and in which the Minister admits it was a pretty poor position, but it was not the staff's fault.

Now, Mr Speaker, it is very easy for politicians to get up and slam sections of the public service. If it is deserved, fair enough, especially if they do not mention names, which I acknowledge the member for Casuarina did not. But when people are working in a highly sensitive area, when they have to wear the decisions taken 2,000 miles away by a Minister without the benefit of local advice from this Assembly and with the very dubious benefit of advice from fat cats who have not had to apply and never will have to apply for the 6% loan, then it is grossly unfair to attack those very public servants who slave their guts out over the administration of this loan. I think the honourable member for Casuarina ought to think twice before he addresses the House in those terms again.

Mr VALE: I would like this afternoon to present a speech on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Before I read from this speech I would like to say that I have briefly read it and I am in complete support of what the honourable member for Elsey has to say. The speech reads as follows:

There are approximately 125 children in the Northern Territory who have to complete their education outside the Northern Territory because there are no hostels in the

Territory to cater for them. The 2 hostels, one at Alice Springs and one in Darwin, do an admirable job but there still are those 125 children with no choice but to go interstate for their last years of secondary schooling.

As readers of Hansard will know, I have been pressing for hostel accommodation in Katherine, not only for children from isolated areas but also for convalescents - people not ill enough to warrant hospitalisation but who take up hospital beds because there is no suitable accommodation elsewhere. My representations have fallen on deaf ears and now, due to the depressed state of the beef and mining industries, parents find it impossible to continue to pay education bills without government help.

Yesterday, I said that "subsidies" is a dirty word. Put it another way: parents do not want subsidies but they want and deserve equality of education.

It is acknowledged that it costs \$2,000 to educate each and every child in the Northern Territory. To send a child to an interstate school costs about \$3,000 for board and tuition, plus incidentals, plus air fares, or about \$4,000 per annum. The Government has agreed to pay for an additional return air fare each year, making 2 return air fares for students. But this recent concession only enables parents to have free transport for their children to a school; the parents cannot afford this because the isolated children's allowance is \$350 per annum. True, this is for each child.

We hear of indexing wages and pensions but no action has taken place to counter increased school fees with school allowances for isolated children other than an urgent survey of the needs of isolated children. I believe the Education Minister and the Director of Education recognise this need. I am certain the Executive Member for Education and Law does. I know of families who have had to leave their homes to educate their children and

leave their jobs to educate their children. I know of mothers who have had to rent or buy a home near suitable schools so that their children could complete their education, thus incurring unreasonable financial penalties simply because successive governments have ignored the problems of the outback and ignored the plea for equality of education.

For some areas of education, the Government is to be commended. There is the Katherine School of the Air - a group of those pupils were in this place yesterday at question time. There is also the Alice Springs School of the Air. These are imaginative institutions but they cater for primary pupils. The need is for secondary pupils to be accommodated close to education of a suitable standard. The Government must either erect hostels or assist financially. The need is urgent. I know of parents who have their sons and daughters at home this year; they cannot afford school fees in this economic climate. I know of many more parents who will make the same decision this year or next.

To clarify the position, it costs any parent of any child at any boarding school \$3,000 to \$4,000 per child per annum. The Government will help to a maximum of \$1,000 per child if the parents have no income at all. If the parents have no income at all, who will pay the missing \$2,000 or

\$3,000? The scheme is ludicrous and needs immediate action to remedy these faults and to put into real effect the intentions of the Government to provide equality of education for all - even including isolated children.

In fact, after the criticisms of education for Aborigines and for other children, it is time for an inquiry into education - all aspects of education - by an independent body. I have felt for many years that there must be some middle ground between practical, manual education and academic education. I have felt for many years the need for a rural college to teach and improve the practical skills of particularly deprived children who, without some manual skill such as a boner or a butcher or a handyman, are virtually condemned to social benefits at the taxpayer's expense for life.

I do hope financial assistance will be given to allow isolated children to complete their education. The need is now, not in 1977. Beef and mining may be better then, but now producers in the Top End, with industrial unrest at the only NT meatworks are sorely affected and the Government must act now.

Motion agreed to: the Assembly adjourned.

Thursday 19 August 1976

Mr Speaker MacFarlane took the Chair at 10 am.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO TRANSPORT

Mr RYAN: I seek leave to make a statement on the Federal Government's refusal of a request by this Assembly to conduct a royal commission into transport in the Northern Territory.

Leave granted.

Mr RYAN: Mr Speaker, in the letter you received from the Minister for the Northern Territory, he stated that the Department of Transport through the Bureau of Transport Economics were going to conduct an inquiry into the transport situation in the Northern Territory and that, as far as the Government is concerned, this should be satisfactory. It is a pity that the Government did not accept our request to have a royal commission because this would have been held under slightly different conditions than the conditions which will be undertaken by the Bureau of Transport Economics. However, the decision has been made and my attitude to this situation is to ensure that the inquiry that is being undertaken by the Bureau of Transport Economics gets as much information from as many people as possible in the Northern Territory so that they can come up with the answers that will solve our problems. We have seen many inquiries undertaken in the Northern Territory on various areas and a lot of suggestions are made, some of which are carried out and some of which are shelved.

The situation in the Northern Territory relating to transport is so serious that any recommendations will have to be implemented otherwise we are going to find ourselves in a lot of trouble. The Minister for Transport has advised me that I will be able to speak to the people concerned when they come to Darwin to collect evidence. I will also be able to act as a contact for any people in the Northern Territory or anywhere else who are interested in talking to the representatives of the Bureau of Transport Economics. I will

certainly be approaching those people that I think have something to contribute and also Mr John Cameron, the Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Northern Territory Transport Planning Branch, will be organising the discussions for the bureau because the bureau does not have any offices in the Northern Territory. I will be in close contact with him. In fact, this week he is in Melbourne and will be talking to officers of the Bureau of Transport Economics and next week I will be going through the arrangements with him. I hope that those members who come from out of town will assist me as much as possible by letting the people know in their particular electorates that this inquiry is taking place. I will be making a press statement to ask people to contact me or Mr Cameron but, if the various members can let me know or put people on to me, I can get them through to the Bureau of Transport Economics.

I should mention that the Bureau of Transport Economics is considered to be an independent body and not necessarily under the control of the Department of Transport. However, that is something that I could not speculate on any further but certainly the bureau is set up so that it conducts independent inquiries. I hope that with the co-operation of everybody concerned in the Northern Territory, we can give the message loud and clear to these people about our situation and with their expertise, I am hoping that they can come up with proposals and recommendations which, if accepted by the Federal Government and implemented, will improve the transport situation in the Northern Territory.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION AND TABLED PAPERS COMMITTEE - SIXTH REPORT

Mr WITHNALL (by leave): I present the sixth report of the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee and I move that bylaw 14 of chapter 4A of the amendments to the bylaws of the Municipality of Darwin, Regulation 1976, No. 17, be disallowed.

The bylaws in question were tabled in this Legislative Assembly on 10 August and deal with the parking of vehicles in car parks controlled by the munic-

ipal council. The bylaws are in such terms that section 354A of the Local Government Ordinance applies to them but the only objection that the committee has been able to find is that bylaw 14 seems beyond power and, in any event, is in terms which render it most undesirable that it should continue as a law.

The bylaw reads as follows: "Where a person commits an offence against bylaws 5, 6 or 7 and continues to be in default of complying with those bylaws, he is for each period of 30 minutes during which the default continues guilty of a further offence and liable to a further penalty of \$25." If during the day, a vehicle is inadvertently left in a car park, if this section came into law, at the end of the 10-hour parking period, the owner would be liable to a \$500 fine. Honourable members will agree that a provision of this nature provides a penalty far in excess of what is reasonable and proper and that the bylaw ought not to be on the statute book.

The provision of continuing offences in bylaws is a matter which the Member for Municipal Affairs might very well take up. I think that it is entirely improper that parking offences should be subject to any law which creates continuing offences. It may be through inadvertence, through difficulty, through illness or some other proper cause that a vehicle is parked over time. If it is parked over time, an offence is committed, but to say that offence should continue and should be repeated for any period of time at all is not a proper law to be made by a municipal council.

I do not propose to take up the time of the Assembly any further. I think that the terms of the bylaw are such that every member will immediately accept the need for its disallowance.

Dr LETTS: I rise to support the motion for the disallowance of bylaw 14. As a member of the Administrator's Council, I do not wish to try to justify or explain the error which was committed here. There have been a number of regulations made by the

Administrator in Council in connection with bylaws and other things over the past 2 years. This is the first occasion on which the Assembly has had to move for a disallowance so our record in that regard is perhaps somewhat better than in the past.

We do have some difficulty, and will probably have more in the near future, by virtue of the fact that the Legislation Section of the Department of the Northern Territory is now non-existent. They have no staff left at all. At the period when this particular subordinate legislation was going through, our chief adviser on legislation was also absent through illness and other causes. However, we shall continue to do our best to scrutinise the subordinate legislation before it comes before the Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

SOIL CONSERVATION AND LAND
UTILIZATION BILL

(Serial 137)

Bill presented and read a first time.

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

In introducing the amendments, I would like honourable members to cast their minds back to the latter half of the 1960s when the principal ordinance was being considered and to recall the events which precipitated the ordinance into law. The Alice Springs district had been through the worst drought in its history. It was so disastrous that the then Northern Territory Administration had to turn to the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service for their advice and this gave rise to a report known as the Condon Report. Attention was being focused on the catchment of the Ord River. While the Western Australian Government had recognised the severe erosion in this catchment and had started to take action to remedy the situation, the Northern Territory had done nothing, even though a large part of the catchment area is in the Northern Territory.

The Tipperary Land Corporation had

arrived on the scene and had caused the Crown Lands Ordinance to be amended to allow arable agricultural and pastoral leases. While some were praising the enterprise of this American company, many were saying that such broad-scale operations, with lack of planning and consideration for the intricacies of the environment, were bound to fail. The massive urban growth, not only of Darwin but of other centres too, had started to spread. This was starting to produce problems of land degradation, notably with the extractive industries and along the coastal foreshores. The northern coastal plains country was being opened up for pastoral development. Access was being improved and in its train were coming tourists and 4-wheel drive vehicles. Mineral exploration was moving at full speed ahead and the big mines at Gove and Groote Eylandt were opening up.

Against this background, the principal ordinance was drafted and it was only natural that the Administration should have turned to the New South Wales model for assistance because of the long experience of that state in soil conservation control. The New South Wales soil conservation legislation came about because that state had an enormous soil erosion problem. The thrust of the legislation was aimed at controlling existing erosion rather than preventing further erosion. Thus, the model has not proved a very apt one for the Northern Territory. In addition, the principal ordinance is concerned solely with pastoral and agricultural erosion.

The purpose then of these proposed amendments is to create a Soil Conservation Ordinance which is able to deal effectively with the multitude of different land uses and which is at the same time relevant to the Northern Territory situation and the needs and aspirations of its people and the people of Australia. To emphasise the change from erosion control to the prevention of erosion by correct and wise land use, the title of the ordinance will become the Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Ordinance.

Two definitions are to be changed. Instead of soil conservation inspect-

ors, we shall have soil conservation officers. Soil conservation is not run elsewhere in Australia as an inspectorate and nor should it be in the Northern Territory. Instead of work, we propose treatment because soil conservation is not just a question of surgical treatment but is one of correct land use and land treatment.

It has been found necessary to spell out the powers and the functions of the Soil Conservation Advisory Committee. In particular, I would draw honourable members' attention to the clause stating that this committee shall advise of the state of erosion on all lands including land administered by government departments or agencies. Coastal foreshores are specifically included because, in some parts of Australia, separate coastal authorities have been established. This we see as being unnecessary in relatively undeveloped and sparsely populated areas such as the NT. Nevertheless, it is necessary that there should be one body in whom is vested the authority for maintenance of foreshore stability. It is proposed that the Commissioner for Soil Conservation be able to enter into cost-sharing agreements with landholders whether or not the assistance provides benefits for the public. The question of public benefit has been found to be a difficult one to resolve in many grey areas.

Two of the most important legislative powers suggested in these amendments concern the power of the commissioner to prescribe precautionary measures. In cases of overstocking, it is suggested that the commissioner be empowered to order a landholder to reduce the number of stock he is carrying. I would foreshadow here that an amendment in the committee stages will indicate that this power of the commissioner will have to be authorised by the Administrator in Council. The commissioner will be empowered to require a landholder to provide him with the detailed plan of his present land use and his proposed use. This power has been found to be necessary in dealing with large land developing companies who propose major and extensive land use changes. Without this power, effective control has been found to be impossible.

Probably the most radical and far-reaching amendment proposed concerned the new section of the control of members of the public on declared areas. The main purpose of this amendment is to control vehicles off-road. We certainly do not wish to be seen as taking away the pleasure of a very large sector of the population. We do wish to conserve and protect for posterity those more fragile and erosion-sensitive areas in the Northern Territory wilderness which the present generations see fit to visit in increasing numbers. The off-road vehicle is doubtless here to stay but all drivers, local and interstate, must learn to respect the fact that often the most beautiful parts of the environment are also the most fragile. This section authorises the Administrator in Council, acting on the advice of the Soil Erosion Advisory Committee, to declare an area of land to be an erosion hazard. It also makes provision for the landholder or a proper authority to make representations to the committee for a declaration over land under his control. Within such a declared area, an unauthorised person will be forbidden to possess or drive a vehicle off main roads, remove or damage vegetation, remove soil, sand or other extractable metals, interfere with the soil conservation works or alter the natural drainage of the land.

I want to emphasise once again that it is not the Majority Party's wish to interfere unnecessarily with the lawful pursuits of people in the Northern Territory. Our purpose is to protect the areas of land which are generally considered of importance to the public from unnecessary or wilful destruction by soil erosion. If this means that some people may have to change their habits, I am sure that we can all recognise this as a symptom of the Territory's growing maturity. I would also like to point out that, as far as it is within our power to do so, we will ensure that for any recognised group or association which wishes to drive vehicles across country for the purpose of sport or pleasure suitable land will be available.

The final major series of amendments will concern the provision of loans for soil conservation. Firstly, in line with the soil conservation treatment concept rather than works, loans are to be available for treatment. Secondly, loans are to be available for the purpose of the hire of equipment for soil conservation purposes. An amendment, which at first glance may appear radical, removes the clause in the principal ordinance whereby, before approving a loan, the Administrator must be satisfied as to the economics and desirability of the loan for producing more efficiently agricultural and pastoral products on the land. Since soil conservation is concerned with land use in its broadest sense, there seems to be no validity in limiting the scope of loans to agricultural or pastoral production. For instance, a town council might wish to apply for a soil conservation loan for foreshore stabilisation or better stabilisation. The economic desirability of a loan should not be so important in the soil conservation context as the maintenance of stability in the productive capacity of a piece of land. While the Administrator must be satisfied as to the ability of the applicant for the loan to service the loan, the person making the application for the loan is the best judge of its economic desirability and the commissioner should be the best judge of its desirability from a soil conservation point of view.

In general, penalties under this ordinance should be increased from \$100 to \$500 per day for a breach of the ordinance. The thinking behind this is to provide a large enough deterrent to those company landholders who in the past have regarded the Northern Territory as a land to be exploited. To account for inflation, wherever \$10 000 has been mentioned in the principal ordinance, this is to be increased to \$20,000.

In conclusion, in commending these amendments to this Assembly, we should remember, as we move towards accepting greater responsibility for the running of our own affairs, that the land resources of the Northern Territory are all we have got. Exploitation either

wilful or through ignorance and abuse of land cannot be tolerated in modern society. Rational and sensible development of our land resources will not only provide the sound economic base on which the growth of the Northern Territory depends, but will also instil into our population that feeling of concern and pride for the land which is characteristic of other states.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (POST CYCLONE
ELECTIONS) BILL

(Serial 142)

Continued from 18 August 1976.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, on the application of the Majority Leader, I declare this bill to be an urgent bill because I am satisfied that a delay of one month provided by standing order 151 could result in hardship being caused.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 115.1.

As I mentioned in my second-reading speech, the dates, 5 September and 12 September, as printed in the bill are Sundays. The intention is to have both these days fall on a Saturday. I am therefore moving that the dates be changed to 4 September and 11 September.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

URGENCY MOTION

Dr LETTS: I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the bills under item 2 of the Notice Paper being read a second time at this meeting and the bills being passed without delay.

Motion agreed to.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BILLS

ADMINISTRATOR'S COUNCIL BILL

(Serial 141)

INTERPRETATION BILL

(Serial 140)

Continued from 18 August 1976.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

Bills passed the remaining stages without debate.

DISPOSAL OF UNCOLLECTED
GOODS BILL

(Serial 121)

Continued from 17 August 1976.

In Committee:

Postponed clause 18:

Amendment 110.18, by leave, withdrawn.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 114.1 as circulated.

This replaces amendment 110.18 and was framed to meet the criticisms of the member for Port Darwin. It clarifies the original amendment

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Postponed clause 23 agreed to

Postponed clause 24:

Amendment 110.32, by leave, withdrawn.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 114.2.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 114.3.

This replaces the amendment 110.32.

Amendment agreed to.

Miss ANDREW: I move amendment 114.4.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without further debate.

POLICE AND POLICE OFFENCES BILL

(Serial 113)

Continued from 3 June 1976.

Mr WITHNALL: I oppose the bill and express my concern that section 61 could even be thought to be extended in the fashion in which this bill proposes to extend it. Section 61 is probably one of the harshest sections in the criminal law. It is a section which completely denies that the Crown has to prove a case against a person and, in effect, presumes that a person found with goods merely suspected of being stolen must prove his own innocence. I would be opposed to that if I were reconsidering section 61 as it presently stands. It is an undesirable provision in the law and one that ought certainly not to be extended in the way in which it is proposed to be extended by this bill.

It is true that the courts have limited section 61 in a way which practically makes it apply only to goods which have been stolen. I thoroughly applaud the decisions of the courts that have reached this result. Now it is sought to go behind these decisions and to force a person to prove his innocence if someone suspects that something in his possession has

been unlawfully obtained by any means whatsoever. I foresee that this will be used in circumstances which will create injustice and hardship and I will oppose the bill with every strength that I have.

It may be possible that persons who have money in their possession, if this section is amended as proposed, may be required by a police officer and finally by a court to explain how they got their money. That is something that I would oppose. I do not think that a provision like that ought to be in the law at all. I trust that members of this Assembly will think twice about amending the law in such a fashion as this.

Debate adjourned.

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA
(NORTHERN TERRITORY) BILL

(Serial 116)

Continued from 12 August 1976.

In Committee:

Clauses 1 to 9 agreed to.

Clause 10 agreed to with formal amendment.

New clause 10A

Mrs LAWRIE: I move that new clause 10A be inserted after clause 10.

(See minutes for text of new clause 10A.)

New clause 10A agreed to.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clause 12:

Mrs LAWRIE: I simply ask whether the formal amendments which you have to clause 12 are to be incorporated from the Chair. There are such things as spelling errors and capitals instead of small letters. The only one which seems to have much substance is amendment 12.1: "Administrator" should read "Administration". Again it is a printing error.

Clause 12 agreed to with formal amendments.

Clause 13 agreed to with formal amendments.

Schedule:

Mrs LAWRIE: I move that we omit from sub-rule (2) of proposed rule 22 "The Council and every employee of the" and substitute "The accounts of the National Trust shall be".

This was referred to in my second reading speech. It was a misprint and it is sheer gobbledegook as it stands.

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill passed the remaining stages without debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Miss ANDREW: I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

I would like to draw attention to a problem that is becoming rather serious so far as the police force are concerned. Whilst I applaud the program that Mr Livingston has outlined in terms of bringing his officers back from Brisbane, it would seem that having industrial relations inspectors and arbitrators parked out of the country seems to be causing problems of a monumental nature. I received this morning this letter from the Police Association and am quite happy to table it but I would like to read from it:

Our association considers that the policy of having industrial relations inspectors and arbitrators directly responsible for industrial harmony between the Northern Territory Public Service and the Administrator based in Brisbane, some 3,000-odd miles away from their fields of responsibility, is ludicrous and not in the realm of industrial harmony.

They go on to say that some matters were drawn to the attention of these

people some 2 years ago and they still are not resolved. In fact, I was only hearing this morning that, as a result of determinations that have been made, the police do not get accreditation for public holidays. It is about time that this Department of the Northern Territory came back to Darwin or the Northern Territory with as much haste as it can possibly muster because their reluctance to do so in the last 18 months has not been very impressive. However, if there is some reason and presumably it is one of accommodation amongst other things, for these people living in Brisbane, it is high time that they got themselves over here and gave the true assistance to the Police Association that they should be giving. In fact, I have heard it is said that, because some other groups of people are a little less reluctant to strike than the police force, their demands are met with due haste. However, because the police are not known for taking such action, and I am delighted to say that they do not intend to, they seem to be just left out on every score.

There seems to be some concern in the community over the emergency service operation. I would just like to give assurance that I am hoping to formalise the planning and the authorities at the next sittings of this House. The Northern Territory Disaster Council formed by His Honour the Administrator vested in the Commissioner of Police the responsibility for the co-ordination of operations in the event of emergencies occurring in the Territory. Following the formation of this council, a draft Darwin disaster counter-measures plan was drawn up and this was tested on exercise "Warm-up" day on 28 October last year. Lessons arising from this exercise have been noted and are under study. The development of the Emergency Service Organisation existing in both the Northern Territory and the states is promoted by the Australian Government through the National Disasters Organisation. The material assistance provided includes a wide range of equipment, which is in the Northern Territory, as well as the provision of training facilities.

The Department of the Northern Territory, in the meantime, continues to provide material assistance, as was visible in the budget to the Northern Territory Disaster Council, by means of executive and training staff operating as an emergency service section of the Social and Commercial Affairs Division.

Mr POLLOCK: Members will be aware that there has been a delay in bringing the Parole Board into operation. This has been quite regrettable and is a matter of some concern to me. One of the reasons for the delay is that certain defects have been found in the 1974 ordinance that created the Parole Board. The Senior Judge of the Supreme Court, who is chairman of the Parole Board, has indicated that the board should not be brought into operation until these defects are cured. Unfortunately, they involve some complicated redrafting and it has not been possible to introduce the bill at these sittings as I had hoped. However, drafting is now in rather an advanced stage and the bill should be ready for introduction at the next sittings of this Assembly. To avoid further delay, I will be seeking urgent passage of this bill when I do introduce it at the next sittings, although I would be pleased to discuss the proposals with any member before those sittings.

I would like to indicate briefly the matters presently considered defective. It is unclear whether the 1974 amendment gives the Parole Board and its chairman jurisdiction with respect to non-parole periods and parole orders made before the commencement of the board. This would be a serious defect if left uncorrected. In addition, in a Supreme Court decision, it was held that the ordinance did not enable individual sentences of less than 12 months, but totalling a period of more than 12 months, to be aggregated so that the non-parole period could be fixed and a person released on parole. Legislation to correct this has recently been passed in the ACT, and some similar amendments are considered desirable in the Northern Territory.

There are several other technical matters which require attention. I

hope the matter will be able to be proceeded with without further delay so that the Parole Board can begin to function.

Honourable members will be aware that in the estimates and budget papers tabled yesterday there was provision for \$6,000 for the operation of the Parole Board in this current financial year. However, until the ordinance has been actually commenced, it is considered in some circles which control the finances that none of this money can be expended by calling the board together until such time as the ordinance is actually commenced. Then of course, there will be a period of delay when the board meets to consider just how it should actually conduct its meetings and functions and its operating rules. These will need to be ironed out and there would be a period of a month or so in which persons could not have parole applications processed. This is indeed unfortunate. But the main concern at the moment is whether for persons who may be granted parole, or who have been granted parole at present, those parole grants would be valid or whether there would be any control over them by the new Parole Board when it comes into operation. We thought that this was going to be a rather simple matter to amend and the legislation was actually prepared and printed for introduction at this sittings. However, at the eleventh hour, the matter was reconsidered and found to be even more complex and, unfortunately, the drafting was not complete in time for introduction here. I would assure members that it is my earnest desire and the desire of persons generally in the field that the activities of the Parole Board are implemented as quickly as possible. Therefore, I would ask members to discuss any matter of concern with me in the next few weeks so that, when this legislation does come before the House at the next sittings, it can be passed with minimal delay.

Mr TUNGUTALUM: I was disappointed to hear the Treasurer's speech that expenditure on Aboriginal affairs throughout Australia was to be reduced and that the total money to be provided for the Northern Territory would be \$7m

less than last year. I read with interest what he had to say about the reasons for this and that most of the reduction was in the money for the housing associations and business enterprises.

I also heard what the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs said last night on a TV program about this matter. It was good to hear his assurance that additional funds and in substantial amounts would be made available if the results of an examination which he had directed to be done indicated that expenditure of these funds could be properly controlled and that therefore good value would be obtained from every dollar that was spent.

It will be very difficult for some of my people to understand why these cuts have been made, particularly in view of what has been said in the media. I believe, however, that every attempt should be made to let all of the communities know what the real facts are and what the Minister has said about money becoming available as soon as the examination has been completed.

It is important that the Government make a decision as soon as possible so that some of these activities and particularly the housing associations that have done good work should be able to continue their work. I know that my people at Bathurst Island are very keen to continue with their housing program and some business projects and therefore they would like the Government and the Minister to make up their minds as soon as possible. It would help all the communities if the Minister could be a little more definite about when he will finally make these decisions and when the money will become available.

Mr BALLANTYNE: I would like to speak about amateur theatre societies and cultural interest societies in the Territory. I was a little bit disappointed in the budget allocation to Brown's Mart in Darwin. You will realize that the DRC thought fit to rebuild the old Brown's Mart and have done so very quickly and everyone can congratulate them on that. However, in the building of it, they forgot to

build in accordance with standards and regulations, particularly fire regulations. As I understand it this organisation has just about come to a standstill because there is no illumination for exits nor is there provision for easy egress in case of fire.

But that is not the only thing, the biggest thing is there is a lot of activity going on there and there are paid officers there trying to work out all sorts of things to boost the community and it upsets programs when these things occur. There is no doubt they will use that facility and it can be used practically every day of the week because there are volunteers from all walks of life to help out in the various activities that they run there for school children and adults. They try to cover most of the arts: dancing, singing, music and all the things that go with that.

I am just bringing this to the notice of the Assembly so that we can give our support. I only hope that they get a bit of money to help them out at this time. I see they have an allocation of \$29,000 to run their administration costs; this is probably for salaries and usual office equipment and probably to pay someone to do office work for them. The biggest thing is that these people act in an amateur capacity; they are doing it for the benefit of the community and a lot of people think that they are not doing their job when there is no activity because of this holdup.

I would also like to express my disappointment that the Arts Council are not being supported. They had an appropriation of some \$40,000 last year, \$20,000 from the previous year, and I see that this year they have got nothing. They act in a way perhaps that is bigger than Brown's Mart in that they have to bring in people from other parts of the world in some cases; they bring in dancing groups and there is a lot of work involved in doing that. They need perhaps some reserve funds for themselves. They are acting as a purely non-profit making organisation to bring some sort of culture into the Territory and I am a little disappointed that we did not see that

in the budget appropriation. I like to give my support to those people and branches operating in the Territory; they are doing a mighty job to bring culture to various centres. I think you might remember, Mr Speaker, that they have gone down to Katherine. They try to get to Alice Springs and Tennant Creek and bring people from outside that we do not get the opportunity to see otherwise. There are also paintings and exhibitions and things of that sort. That is the main theme of my speech. I would like to give support to all the music societies, arts groups, amateur theatre groups in the Territory who are doing a very good job to bring some sort of cultural activity to those centres.

I have spoken about this before, and you are probably sick of hearing me say it, but there is a great need for a police boat in Nhulunbuy. There have been incidents just recently where the police have had trouble with a boat that they had to hire. If it continues in this way, there is going to be a fatality one day and it will be because there is no emergency boat that has been regularly maintained and run by the police force. They could work in conjunction with the Customs Department and it could be used in all sorts of work there. It would not just sit there.

There are a number of craft coming to Nhulunbuy and Melville Bay. There are fishing craft, container ships and ships carrying bauxite. There could be a case where a boat would be needed in an emergency. There was a case recently where a person disappeared off a boat that came into port. They could not find him. If that man had been left behind, they would have had to find some way of getting him back to his own country. If the boat had gone without him, a police boat could have taken him out to the ship.

There are people who go out fishing. They go onto the small islands; they go to start their motor in the afternoon and they find that they are stuck on a sandbar and they cannot move until the tide rises. Those people are lost, in some cases for a number of hours. There is no police boat there to go and get

them. It just so happens that other people passing by might see them. On one occasion, a policeman hired a boat and a couple of policemen went out in it. They got out in the bay and the boat's engine failed. They did not have an auxiliary motor so they too had to be towed back in by another boat. Someone else had to go to rescue these people. I am very disappointed and I only hope that the Police Commissioner and the Minister for the Northern Territory can see fit to look into the supply of boats where they are most needed.

Mr EVERINGHAM: I wish to speak today about 2 crises that I can see approaching the people of Darwin over the next few years. The first one is in relation to the generation of electricity to Darwin and the second relates to access by motor traffic to and from the city by people living in the northern suburbs.

I understand that by 1980, Darwin's present power station will have reached its generating capacity and I understand that there are vague plans in the wind for a coal-powered station to be established at East Arm. It seems, however, from recent research I have done, that there is going to be a period of perhaps 3 or even more years when power rationing will have to be introduced in Darwin unless steps are taken very shortly to plan and design a new station and call tenders for its construction, if necessary by stages, so that the first stage could be perhaps got into operation very quickly. It is very likely that Darwin will not be able to develop significantly until the new power station is in fact built and operating.

It seems to me also that it is a shame that a study cannot be done - and I believe it is feasible - with a view to perhaps installing a nuclear powered station in Darwin. It perhaps could be one of the smaller type at the present time but it could be expanded over the years. It would have the advantage of being able to use uranium which would be produced in the Territory itself and obviate the need to transport huge quantities of coal to the Territory from either New South Wales or Queens-

land. It would also then give us an industrial capacity up our sleeve for the generation of the huge amounts of power that are needed to attract and to enable the development of industry at any scale in this Territory. At the present time, it would be pointless even looking for industry to come to the Territory because it would be impossible to supply it with the power, let alone supply the extra workers perhaps who would come with power for their own domestic use.

Secondly, it seems to me - although I cannot rely on official figures for this - that the traffic density of Bagot Road has reached pretty much the level it was pre-cyclone and as far as I can see no positive plans have come forward for alleviation of the problem. I know there would be a great deal of opposition to the Palmerston arterial road running through Fannie Bay as was previously planned. We know that we have opposition to that proposal but we do not have any constructive alternative proposal. Darwin Airport is the big reason why there is this bottle-neck in relation to traffic flow and obviously that is a huge and worthwhile investment both for defence and civil purposes and I would not like to see money wasted by it being closed down. I do not think there is much likelihood of that in my lifetime but it has been proposed by planners. I would not like to see the money wasted by it being closed down and that relatively small area of land in development purposes used for residential accommodation and the airport relocated somewhere out Koolpinyah way.

However, considering the huge amount that is involved just sitting there in bitumen and concrete on the runway and the RAAF establishment round about, it could be a worthwhile proposition to drive a tunnel under the main runway, perhaps entering the ground somewhere to the east of the Stuart Highway to the south of the present airport entrance, round about where the water tower is, going under the surface of the runway, emerging a short distance on the other side and connecting with Rothdale Road, McMillans Road and Lee Point Road. This is just an uneducated suggestion and I put it forward for

what it is worth. It seems to me that the cost of tunnelling would be less than the cost of relocating the airport and that is the reason I make the suggestion because I believe the plans should be taken in hand very soon.

Mr WITHNALL: When I leave for the city every morning from the salubrious heights of Larrakeyah, I have a magnificent view across the Darwin harbour and a slightly less magnificent view of some thousands of acres of raw sewage streaming away, if the tide is going out, to around the army establishment and towards Mindil Beach and Kahlil Beach. If the tide is coming in it is streaming away up the harbour and around the wharf here and into the various arms of the harbour.

The situation was serious enough before December 1974 but, since December 1974, the outfall of the raw sewage which goes into Doctors Gully is not at a distance from the shore and in deep water where the tide runs fairly swiftly, but is right on the low water mark so that, when the tide is low, raw sewage is literally pumped out almost at surface level of the water in the harbour. You can see it quite clearly; it has some sort of capacity for calming the water because, whereas the other part of the harbour has considerable waves and wavelets on it, where the raw sewage is streaming out, the water is comparatively calm and indeed probably could best be described as oily, in appearance at least.

I asked the Executive Member for Social Affairs if he could give us some figures showing the faecal coli and other coliforms which had been counted by the Health Department at Doctors Gully during the last 12 months. The Health Department has provided them and they are in fact incorporated in Hansard. I would like to let honourable members know just exactly what is going on at their doorsteps. In the notes to the schedule which were handed to me, it is said that a figure of faecal coliforms of 2,000 per 100 millilitres is described as heavily polluted and the water objectionable. Between 200 and 2,000 is said to be a distinct pollution; 50 to 200 is said to be a slight pollution. During that 12

months, there were 2 occasions at least when the faecal coli were in excess of 2,000. For 17 March 1976, there is no figure given at all but it is described as being too many to count. There were occasions when the count went up to 500, 250, 1,400, 760, 2,000 and on a very few occasions was the count under 50.

If the persons taking the samples of water for counting took them at a particular time of the tide and a particular place in Doctors Gully, every day would show in excess of 2,000 because the stream does not really enter Doctors Gully except as an eddy. The main stream runs up the harbour and down the harbour. If the Health Department people who take the samples would kindly go out into the main stream, I would suggest that they would get even more serious counts.

In answer to a question which I asked at this sittings, I was told that, some 18 months after the cyclone, the sewerage outfall will be repaired some time in the coming year. Surely a matter so

vital to health as the repair of a sewerage line, which is in such a disgraceful condition, ought to have been tackled a long time ago and not tackled "some time in the coming year". Even when it is tackled, we will still have the raw sewage polluting the harbour. It will be discharged into deeper and more swiftly flowing water and will therefore be spread much more quickly.

Why should any city put up with the discharge of raw sewage inside its own harbour? I suggest that the original decision to put the outfall there was completely wrong. If anybody had any common sense, he would be taking immediate steps to cease the use of Doctors Gully as a sewage outfall and to connect the sewage of the city into the general sewage scheme where at least it is treated and is discharged in a way which is much more conducive to health.

Motion agreed to the Assembly adjourned.

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