

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fourth Assembly
Second Session

Parliamentary Record

Tuesday 26 February 1985
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NORTHERN TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Fourth Assembly
Second Session

Speaker	Roger Michael Steele
Chief Minister and Treasurer	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Opposition Leader	Bob Collins
Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Industry, Small Business and Tourism	Nicholas Manuel Dondas
Attorney-General and Minister for Mines and Energy	Marshall Bruce Perron
Minister for Health and Minister for Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs	James Murray Robertson
Minister for Education	Tom Harris
Minister for Transport and Works and Housing	Daryl William Manzie
Minister for Lands, Minister for Primary Production, Minister for Ports and Fisheries and Minister for Conservation	Stephen Paul Hatton
Minister for Community Development and Minister for Correctional Services	Barry Francis Coulter

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Arafura	Bob Collins
Araluen	James Murray Robertson
Arnhem	Wesley Wagner Lanhupuy
Barkly	Ian Lindsay Tuxworth
Berrimah	Barry Francis Coulter
Braitling	Roger William Stanley Vale
Casuarina	Nicholas Manuel Dondas
Elsy	Roger Michael Steele
Fannie Bay	Marshall Bruce Perron
Flynn	Raymond Allan Hanrahan
Jingili	Richard Alfred Setter
Koolpinyah	Cecilia Noel Padgham-Purich
Leanyer	Michael James Palmer
Ludmilla	Colin Charles Firmin
MacDonnell	Neil Randal Bell
Millner	Terence Edward Smith
Nhulunbuy	Daniel Murray Leo
Nightcliff	Stephen Paul Hatton
Port Darwin	Tom Harris
Sadadeen	Denis Wilfred Collins
Sanderson	Daryl William Manzie
Stuart	Brian Richard Ede
Victoria River	Terence Robert McCarthy
Wagaman	Frederick Arthur Finch
Wanguri	Donald Francis Dale

Chairman of Committees — Mr Vale
Deputy Chairman of Committees —

Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Finch
Mr Leo
Mr McCarthy
Mr Palmer

House Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr Bell
Mr Lanhupuy
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Setter

Standing Orders Committee

Mr Speaker
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Hanrahan
Mr McCarthy
Mr Robertson

Publications Committee

Mr Bell
Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Setter

Privileges Committee

Mr B. Collins
Mr Firmin
Mr Leo
Mr Perron
Mr Setter

Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee

Mr B. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Finch
Mr Palmer
Mr Smith

Sessional Committee — Environment

Mr D. W. Collins
Mr Dale
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mrs Padgham-Purich

Sessional Committee — New Parliament House

Mr Speaker
Mr Finch
Mr Leo
Mr Smith
Mr Tuxworth

Select Committee — Communications Technology

Mr Dale
Mr Ede
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Lanhupuy

PART I

DEBATES

FOURTH ASSEMBLY - SECOND SESSION

Tuesday 26 February 1985

On Tuesday 16 October 1984, the Assembly adjourned. The Assembly was prorogued by His Honour the Administrator under the provisions of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act on 15 February 1985 until 26 February 1985.

The Assembly met at 11 am pursuant to the notice of prorogation and appointment made by His Honour the Administrator.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair.

The Clerk read the notice of prorogation.

ATTENDANCE OF ADMINISTRATOR

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, His Honour the Administrator desires me to inform you that, after a new member present shall have been sworn, the causes of His Honour calling this Assembly together will be declared by him in person at this place.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

Hon P.A.E. Everingham

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the Table a letter from the Hon P.A.E. Everingham addressed to His Honour the Administrator resigning his seat as the member for Jingili in order that he could contest the Northern Territory seat in the House of Representatives at the federal election. His Honour received the letter on 22 October 1984.

RETURN TO WRIT

Jingili Division

The Clerk laid on the Table the return to the writ issued by His Honour the Administrator on 13 November 1984 for the election of a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral division of Jingili, certifying the election of Richard Alfred Setter.

The new member for Jingili, Richard Alfred Setter, made and subscribed oaths of allegiance and of service, and was conducted to his place.

MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the Table a letter from the Acting Official Secretary to His Honour the Administrator advising that the following message has been received from the Assistant Private Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen through the Official Secretary to His Excellency the Governor-General. The message reads:

I have been commanded by the Queen to ask you to convey an expression of sincere thanks to all members of the Legislative Assembly for their kind message of loyalty sent on the occasion of the opening of the First Session of the Fourth Assembly.

Her Majesty greatly appreciated this message and sends them all her best wishes.

ADDRESS BY HIS HONOUR THE ADMINISTRATOR

His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber and took the Chair with the Speaker on his right hand.

The ADMINISTRATOR: Mr Speaker, honourable members, I have called you together at this time for the dispatch of business and to outline my government's legislative program for the ensuing period. Since self-government, the Northern Territory has been working to establish the economic and social infrastructure necessary for us to continue as the fastest growing region in Australia. My government will maintain its commitment to growth and the well-being of the Territory community in order to consolidate those past achievements.

Mr Speaker, the record of achievement in the Northern Territory since self-government has been well documented. The scope and pace of that achievement are confirmed by the continuing high rate of population increase, steady growth in Territory employment and significant developments in tourism, mining and our other major industries. Major tourist developments which were under construction or projected 2 years ago are now completed or nearing completion, and still others are planned for the future. Yulara is now capable of accommodating 5000 persons and the prospect of significantly increasing that capacity is under consideration. The 250-room Sheraton in Alice Springs will be completed shortly and the Territory's third Sheraton in Darwin will be completed in 1986. The Beaufort Hotel and integrated performing arts centre in Darwin is also nearing completion.

My government has developed a 3-pronged strategy for the development of tourism throughout the Northern Territory: additional accommodation in major centres and resort locations; improved access for visitors, especially additional airline flights for both international and domestic tourists; and the development of additional attractions, services and facilities. Tourist projects in train include resort developments at Kings Canyon with Aboriginal participation and on land purchased from Stapleton Station. Efforts will be made to secure adequate accommodation for visitors to Kakadu through the establishment of high-class tourist accommodation at Jabiru, again involving Aboriginal equity. Consideration has also been given to tourist development in areas such as Cobourg Peninsula, Borroloola, Carpentaria Highway and Daly River.

My government has continued to foster primary industry through the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority, and through the Crop Contract Scheme administered by the Northern Territory Development Corporation. During the 3 years of its operation, the scheme has successfully encouraged a number of small-scale farmers to strive to achieve commercial levels of grain production. These are important first steps towards what must be a major goal over the next decade: growing self-sufficiency in those areas of agricultural production which can be sustained in the Territory. The closer links which now exist between the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority and the Department of Primary Production will help promote this objective.

My government has continued to place a high priority, in cooperation with the federal government, on the eradication of brucellosis and tuberculosis from the Territory's cattle and buffalo herds. Cattle producers have been assisted to upgrade their herds and, with this objective, my government recently introduced a bull purchase incentive scheme as a means of encouraging pastoralists to acquire high-quality bulls. Further development in animal industry and major developments in aquaculture will be set in place in the coming years.

Manufacturing industry continues to expand in line with population increases and the developing Territory infrastructure. My government is continuing efforts to attract the establishment of industries to service the local market. The Northern Cement clinker grinding and fully-integrated cement plant, which was foreshadowed 2 years ago, is now operational. Considerable effort is also being directed towards developing export markets in South-east Asia. Markets are opening up for Territory products. Northbrick Industries recently dispatched its first consignment to a Singapore market. Similarly, overseas export markets have opened up for a Darwin-based aluminium window and door manufacturer. My government's role has been to develop opportunities for business enterprises. These efforts will continue. Small businesses will benefit particularly from the establishment of a portfolio specifically to cater for their needs.

Mr Speaker, over the course of this Assembly, the consolidation of the Territory's financial relations with the Commonwealth and with local government will be important goals. New revenue-sharing arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states are to be put in place from the commencement of the next financial year. My government will work to ensure that ongoing progress to achieve its social and economic objectives can be secured through proper financial arrangements with the Commonwealth. These arrangements continue to be vital to the Territory's infrastructure development which is itself critical to strong investment and development activity in the private sector.

The Northern Territory has opportunities for expansion in many industries, including tourism, fishing, agriculture and offshore gas developments. My government's active support for such ventures, particularly through the further development of Territory infrastructure, will provide the economic growth and jobs the Territory needs as well as providing a fair return to the Territory on its investments. One important infrastructure initiative being pursued by my government is the establishment of a gas pipeline between Palm Valley and Darwin. This project represents a clear example of the Territory's initiative to achieve resource development in an economically responsible way to the benefit of all Australians.

Mr Speaker, honourable members are well aware of my government's continuing efforts to secure the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. These efforts will continue and the government will seek, in cooperation with the Commonwealth and private enterprise, to establish a basis for an early start to this essential project.

My government has had continuing discussions with both the Commonwealth government, the governments of the various states and the relevant Aboriginal organisations to overcome what we believe are serious deficiencies in the current Commonwealth Aboriginal land rights legislation. This process will continue. Progress can be achieved with understanding and goodwill. With this in mind, my government has decided that certain bills which were presented to the previous Legislative Assembly relating to Aboriginal land will not be proceeded with. These bills are: Aboriginal Sacred Sites Amendment, Aboriginal Community Living Areas, Northern Territory Development Land Corporation (Vesting of Land), Aboriginal Land Amendment, Bushfires Amendment, Fences Amendment, Stock Diseases Amendment and Summary Offences Amendment. It is our intention to seek to resolve issues outstanding by discussion and consultation.

In April 1981, my government established a working party to review and report on the Northern Territory Local Government Act. That working group has produced 4 discussion papers which have been tabled in this Assembly. In November 1984, my government endorsed the report of the working party and

approved the drafting of a new local government act. A draft of the new Local Government Act has been prepared and circulated to local government councils and the Northern Territory Local Government Association for consideration prior to the introduction of the bill into the Legislative Assembly. It is my government's intention to proceed as expeditiously as possible with the introduction of this new legislation.

Mr Speaker, honourable members will be aware that the National Crime Authority Act of 1984 was enacted by the Commonwealth parliament during June 1984. The legislation establishes the National Crime Authority to monitor and investigate organised crime in Australia. All states and the Territory have now agreed to participate in the National Crime Authority. It is necessary for participants to enact underpinning legislation to grant to the authority powers in the states and the Northern Territory similar to those available under the Commonwealth act for Commonwealth matters. A model bill has been agreed to by the states and the Northern Territory. My government supports this legislation and intends to introduce into this Assembly a National Crime Authority (Territory Provisions) Bill for consideration by this Assembly.

My government progressively will make access to electricity supply available to more Territorians outside Darwin and regional centres under a new extension scheme. The new scheme is designed to meet increasing demand and will assist the Northern Territory Electricity Commission to achieve its long-term goal of providing electricity services throughout the Territory. The scheme is an addition to the rural distribution funding scheme which applies to rural blocks in the Darwin area approved prior to the Town Planning Act of 1979.

My government has examined the requirements for approval of exploration and mining in national parks. At present, both the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act and the Mining Act have stringent statutory requirements that must be met prior to the granting of any exploration or mining titles within a park or reserve. Meeting these requirements has caused considerable delays in declaration of some proposed parks and finalisation of a number of applications under the Mining Act.

In order to simplify legislative controls with respect to the determination of terms and conditions to be applied to future exploration and mining within parks and reserves, my government intends to advance legislation incorporating the following principles. First, the regulation and control of exploration and resource development should be administered under the provisions of the Mining, Coal or Petroleum (Prospecting and Mining) Acts and not duplicated under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act. Further, the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act and the Mining Act will be amended to exclude the requirement for exploration and resource development to be in accordance with a plan of management. Procedures will be adopted to acknowledge a consultative role between the Conservation Commission and the Department of Mines and Energy in relation to exploration. In addition, the use of procedures under the Environment Assessment Act will determine the terms and conditions of resource development proposals. My government intends to introduce the appropriate legislative amendments to the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, the Coal Act and the Petroleum (Prospecting and Mining) Act.

In 1984, my government announced its decision to introduce an offcourse totalisator betting system from 1 July 1985. The introduction of enabling legislation in the form of a totalisator administration and betting act is planned for this session of the Assembly. The new legislation will provide for the establishment of a totalisator administration board and set the parameters for the introduction of TAB betting to the Territory.

Mr Speaker, my government will bring before this session of the Legislative Assembly those matters necessary to give effect to the wide-ranging administrative initiatives announced on 21 December 1984. The intention is to provide simple effective structures which are responsive to the community, to avoid duplication and to delegate responsibilities as close as possible to the day-to-day decision makers in those areas.

To formally provide the structure for these initiatives, 4 new departments have been created. The former Office of Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs has become a department in recognition of the emphasis my government places on the needs of the young people in the community, the special problems of employment, the need to assist youth in the meaningful use of leisure time and the need to focus positively on youth in order to address emerging problems. The Department of Industry and Small Business will combine public and private sector industrial relations functions, apprenticeship supervision and manpower forecasting and a small business advisory service. The Department of Ports and Fisheries emphasises my government's commitment to the development of fishing as a major industry in the Northern Territory. The importance of correctional services has been recognised by making it a department in its own right.

As members will be aware, my government recently set in train action to enhance the delivery of post-school education in the Northern Territory. The changes are to set the course for the future and to meet the demands of higher education, including medicine, nursing and teaching and an expansion of technical and further education services in all Territory centres. My government will be introducing a bill to amend the Education Act to effect these administrative changes.

In the technical and further education area, my government is planning to provide greater assistance to industry, especially in the area of tourism. Technical and further education functions will be rationalised, with the Department of Education becoming the TAFE authority for the Northern Territory. The department's expanded role will include responsibility for a number of functions transferred from the Vocational Training Commission. These include coordinating, planning and providing training for the employment of Aboriginal people.

At the school level, it is a matter of concern to my government that some children are missing out on the benefits of an education, due to very poor or irregular attendance. Accordingly, the government will be mounting a campaign to combat truancy, and thereby help to ensure that all students attend school on a regular basis.

In response to community concerns regarding the extent of house breaking and drug and alcohol abuse amongst young people, particularly in the Darwin area, my government has established a task force on juvenile crime. The task force will examine the incidence of juvenile crime, the relationship of drug and alcohol abuse to juvenile crime and recommend approaches to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime. The task force will focus primarily on juvenile crime in the Darwin area but will liaise with the Juvenile Justice Review Committee and the Advisory Committee on Uncontrolled Children as necessary.

Other matters that my government intends to bring before this Assembly include the Report on the Inquiry into Workers' Compensation in the Northern Territory. This will be tabled during this session of the Assembly to encourage wide-ranging discussion and comment by honourable members and the public.

My government will use its term of office to continue the economic, social and constitutional advancement of the Northern Territory. It will act to

provide an appropriate legal, administrative and infrastructural environment for the fostering of growth through individual initiative and enterprise.

Mr Speaker, honourable members, I will now leave you to your important deliberations.

His Honour the Administrator withdrew.

MINISTRY AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, on 24 December 1984, His Honour the Administrator made the following appointment of ministers of the Northern Territory: myself as Chief Minister and Treasurer; Nicholas Manuel Dondas as the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Tourism; Marshall Bruce Perron as Attorney-General and Minister for Mines and Energy; James Murray Robertson as Minister for Health and Minister for Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs; Tom Harris as Minister for Education; Daryl William Manzie as Minister for Transport and Works and Housing; Stephen Paul Hatton as Minister for Lands, Minister for Primary Production, Minister for Ports and Fisheries and Minister for Conservation; and Barry Francis Coulter as Minister for Community Development and Minister for Correctional Services.

Mr Speaker, on the same day, His Honour made an Administrative Arrangements Order allotting to these ministers the administration of departments and provisions of acts and the responsibility for areas of government specified in that order. For the information of honourable members, Mr Speaker, I lay on the Table a copy of the Administrative Arrangements Order.

Mr Speaker, Mr Dondas is Deputy Chief Minister, the honourable member for Flynn has been appointed as Secretary to Cabinet and Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Assembly and the honourable member for Sadadeen is the Government Whip.

OPPOSITION OFFICE HOLDERS

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the shadow ministry and opposition office holders are as follows: as Leader of the Opposition, I have the portfolios of education, Legislative Assembly, Attorney-General and women's affairs; Terry Smith, Deputy Opposition Leader, has the portfolios of treasury, industry and small business, tourism, youth, sport and recreation; Dan Leo, Opposition Whip, has the portfolios of police and fire services, ports and fisheries, racing and gaming, primary production and community development; Neil Bell has special responsibility for central Australia and the portfolios of lands and housing and transport and works; Wes Lanhupuy has the portfolios of health and conservation; and Brian Ede has the portfolios of mines and energy and Aboriginal affairs.

HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 97)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the second reading of the bill be made an order of the day for a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SPEECH

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

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the following address in reply be agreed to:

May it please Your Honour that we, the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Honour for the speech which you have been pleased to address to the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I second the motion and reserve my right to speak on the motion later in debate.

Debate adjourned.

The sitting was suspended between 11.27 am and 2.30 pm.

Mr Speaker Steele resumed the Chair at 2.30 pm.

SESSIONAL ORDER Leader of Government Business

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered, during the present session of the Assembly:

- (i) any motion connected with the conduct of the business of the Assembly may be moved at any time without notice by a minister or the member nominated to the Assembly by the Chief Minister to be the Leader of Government Business; and
- (ii) for the purposes of standing orders 38 and 39, a minister shall be taken to include the member nominated as Leader of Government Business.

Motion agreed to.

SESSIONAL ORDER Adjournment of Assembly

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly, Mr Speaker may, at his discretion and notwithstanding any previous resolution of the Assembly, appoint a time for holding a sitting of the Assembly, which time shall be notified to each member in writing.

Motion agreed to.

SESSIONAL ORDER

Leave of Absence

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, if on any occasion during this session of the Assembly, the interval between the termination of one sitting day and the commencement of the next sitting day is 2 months or more, all members shall be deemed to have been granted leave of absence for such interval between the sitting days.

Motion agreed to.

BROADCASTING, TELEVISIONING AND FILMING OF PROCEEDINGS

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly, unless otherwise ordered, for the purposes of section 24 of the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act:

(1) authorises -

(a) the direct public broadcasting and or televising;

(b) the recording and rebroadcasting and or repeat televising; and

(c) the filming and screening, of the whole or part of the proceedings of the Assembly or its committees on such occasions and under such rules as the Speaker may, from time to time, determine; and

(2) as soon as possible after each such determination has been made, the Speaker report his action to the Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

BROADCASTING TO OFFICES IN DARWIN

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, unless otherwise ordered, notwithstanding any previous resolution of the Assembly:

(1) this Assembly authorises the broadcasting of its proceedings directly to Legislative Assembly offices, offices in Darwin occupied by opposition leaders, ministerial staff and, with the approval of the Speaker, employees in government departments and authorities directly involved in activities associated with the business of the Assembly;

(2) this authority does not extend to the mechanical, electronic or other recording of the proceedings broadcast other than for the purpose of the production of the Assembly Hansard; and

(3) the control of the service be exercised by the Speaker who may, at his discretion, withdraw any such authorisation at any time and who shall as soon as practicable report to the Assembly his reasons for so doing.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that:

- (a) Mrs Padgham-Purich and Mr Setter be appointed to the House Committee in the places of Mr Coulter and Mr Hanrahan;
- (b) notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders, Mr Hanrahan be appointed to the Standing Orders Committee;
- (c) Mr Perron and Mr Setter be appointed to the Privileges Committee in the places of Mr Hatton and Mr Manzie;
- (d) Mr Setter be appointed to the Publications Committee in the place of Mr Palmer; and
- (e) Mr Dale and Mr Palmer be appointed to the Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers Committee in the places of Mr Coulter and Mr Hatton.

Motion agreed to.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that during the present session of the Assembly:

- (1) a committee to be known as the Sessional Committee on the Environment comprising Mr D.W. Collins, Mr Dale, Mr Ede, Mr Lanhupuy and Mrs Padgham-Purich be appointed;
- (2) the committee be empowered to inquire into and from time to time report upon and make recommendations on all matters relating to uranium mining and processing activities and their effects on the environment within the Alligator Rivers region;
- (3) the committee be empowered to send for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place, and have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and make such interim recommendations as it may deem fit, and to publish information pertaining to its activities from time to time;
- (4) the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public;
- (5) the committee be empowered to consider the minutes of proceedings, evidence taken and records of similar committees appointed in previous sessions and Assemblies; and
- (6) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE COMMITTEE

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that, during the present session of the Assembly:

- (1) a committee to be known as the New Parliament House Committee, comprising Mr Speaker, Mr Finch, Mr Leo, Mr Smith and Mr Tuxworth, be appointed;
- (2) the committee be appointed to act for and represent the Legislative Assembly, as the client for the new parliament house, in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of the new parliament house and all matters incidental thereto;
- (3) the committee reconsider and, as necessary, amend the Parliament House Competition Brief which, when revised, shall be used as the basis for the design and construction of the new parliament house, unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly or unless the committee resolves to reconsider any section of the revised brief;
- (4) the committee also consider and report on any matter relating to the planning, design and construction of the new parliament house and matters incidental thereto as may be referred to it by -
 - (a) the Minister for Transport and Works and Housing or
 - (b) resolution of the Legislative Assembly;
- (5) the committee be empowered, with the approval of the Speaker, to employ necessary staff and be provided with such facilities and resources as it may from time to time require;
- (6) the committee report and make recommendations to the Assembly on these matters from time to time;
- (7) the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place, and have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations as it may deem fit;
- (8) the committee be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public;
- (9) the committee be empowered to consider the minutes of proceedings, evidence taken and records of similar committees established in previous sessions and Assemblies; and
- (10) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, obviously the opposition will support the reintroduction of this committee, but I want to express our concern that, since we last met, very little has happened on the question of the new parliament house.

My understanding of the situation is that we are operating under a fairly tight timetable. The new parliament house is supposed to be constructed by 1988. During the last few months, there should have been some meetings of the New Parliament House Committee. These meetings have not taken place. I have heard only rumours concerning the government's attitude towards the project. There is a rumour that the government intends to proceed full steam ahead but there is also a rumour that the government has cooled on the idea. It is important that the government make a clear statement in this sittings, at least to the members of the New Parliament House Committee, as to exactly what is going on so that the committee can get on with its job instead of being left in the dark as it is at present.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, the honourable member is genuine in raising that point. I was not a member of the former New Parliament House Committee. It is proposed that I go on it now. I am not sure that there was ever a deliberate completion date for the parliament house. It is our intention, however, to do the job as fast as we can. The only constraining influence on us is the availability of finance. Given that that does not become an impediment to us, we will be proceeding down the track as fast as we can go. I say to the honourable member that my contribution on the committee will be positive and we can proceed on that basis.

Motion agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that:

- (1) a select committee to be known as the Select Committee on Communications Technology be appointed to inquire into and report upon new developments in communications technology and the appropriateness of their utilisation in the Northern Territory;
- (2) the committee consist of Mr Dale, Mr Ede, Mr Firmin, Mr Hanrahan and Mr Lanhupuy;
- (3) the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to sit in public or in private session notwithstanding any adjournment of the Assembly, to adjourn from place to place, and have leave to report from time to time its proceedings and the evidence taken and such interim recommendations it may deem fit;
- (4) the committee be empowered to consider the minutes of proceedings, evidence taken and records of the Select Committee on Communications Technology appointed by the Assembly on 1 March 1984;
- (5) the committee report to the Assembly as soon as possible;
- (6) the committee be empowered to publish from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it, and a daily

Hansard be published of such proceedings as take place in public; and

- (7) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Motion agreed to.

REVOCATION OF NOMINATION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES
Mr Hanrahan

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the Table my warrant revoking the nomination of Mr Hanrahan as a Deputy Chairman of Committees. Mr Hanrahan has been appointed Leader of Government Business in the Assembly and his duties in that position may be hampered by his taking the Chair as Deputy Chairman of Committees.

MOTION

Restoration of Bills to Notice Paper

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the following bills be restored to the Notice Paper and consideration of each resumed at the stage it had reached in the last session: Police Administration Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 36); Control of Waters Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 58); Public Health Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 59); Film Classification Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 62); Lotteries and Gaming Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 65); Justices Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 66); Agricultural Development and Marketing Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 67); Sources of the Law Bill 1984 (Serial 69); Administration and Probate Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 71); and Classification of Publications Bill 1984 (Serial 72).

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Restoration of Bill to Notice Paper

Mr BELL (MacDonnell)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the Electoral Amendment Bill 1984 (Serial 51) be restored to the Notice Paper and consideration resumed at the stage it had reached in the last session.

Motion agreed to.

PETITION

Classification of Certain Video Material

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 52 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to the classification of certain video material. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read.

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully sheweth our belief that, because it causes serious harm to the community, the Legislative Assembly should make illegal and should not legalise,

regardless of how the material is classified, the possession, sale, hire or supply of any publication or video tape, video disc, slide or any other recording which consists of or contains a pornographic visual image or from which a pornographic visual image can be produced being an image which displays: (a) a degradation of any man, woman, child or animal; (b) scenes of explicit sexual relations or showing genitalia detail or unduly emphasising, prolonging, repeating or dwelling upon real or simulated sexual activity; (c) sodomy, bestiality, sadism, masochism, mutilation or any other form of sexual perversion; (d) the use and effect of illicit drug taking; (e) blasphemy, indecency or obscenity; (f) unnecessary, excessive or unduly prolonged or repeated violence, horror, crime, crudeness or coarseness; or (g) matters that are likely to cause offence, distress or harm to any reasonable mature person. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Classification of Certain Video Material

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 148 citizens relating to the classification of certain video material. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly, the petition of the undersigned respectfully sheweth that: (1) governments have a responsibility to maintain standards acceptable to society's wishes; (2) it cannot be guaranteed that X-rated video material will not be viewed by children. Your petitioners most humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly members should not adopt the X classification for films and video tapes nor category 2 for printed material. Further, that tighter restrictions be applied to R-rated films and video tapes and category 1 printed material, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Housing Commission Houses and Rents

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 45 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to Housing Commission houses and rents. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read:

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully sheweth that: (1) we do not believe that people living in older houses with less facilities should be expected to pay the same rents as those in newer houses with more facilities; (2) the Housing Commission, in determining rents for its dwellings, should give proper consideration to the age, state, and repair of facilities in houses; and (3) we call on the Housing Commission to start a program to upgrade older houses to the standard of the newer houses. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the

honourable members of the Legislative Assembly give due consideration to the above, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent me moving a motion without notice to disapprove those parts of Renumeration Tribunal Determination No. 3 of 1984 relating to basic salary, additional salaries and special expenses of office allowances for members of the Legislative Assembly which was tabled in the Assembly on 16 October 1984.

Mr Speaker, the reason for wanting to move this suspension of standing orders is that the opposition has given plenty of notice to the government ever since this matter was first raised that we intended to pursue it on the first opportunity that we had in the Legislative Assembly. But for the prorogation of this Assembly, we should have been able to pursue this matter on a general business day at this sittings. Because of the prorogation, that is not possible. We seek the leave of this Assembly to debate the matter now.

The proposal not being supported by the required number of members, Mr Speaker called on business of the day.

STATEMENT

Conduct of Business in the Assembly

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I would like to reflect constructively for a moment on the proposition raised by the member for Millner. I would like to say that, so far as its content is concerned, I do not have a problem. However, there are 3 points that I would like to make concerning the honourable member's motion. The first is that I was advised, wrongly or rightly, that today's activities are ceremonial and that government and opposition business are not normally conducted on such an occasion. For that reason, our side of the Assembly does not propose to raise any business today. That is fine.

The second point is that, if the Leader of the Opposition has a different perception of how we conduct ceremonial openings in parliament, that is fine. I am not arguing that point.

Mr Speaker, my third point is that the principle of the opposition suspending standing orders is something that I have seen happen once in 10 years. While I am not against it, it is a matter of common decency and good manners. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to seek the cooperation of this side of the Assembly on such matters, that is fine. It would not be outside the bounds of reason for him to raise the matter with the Leader of Government Business or myself or any other minister whose responsibility is related to the business at hand.

I make the point that it is my intention to work constructively and productively with the Leader of the Opposition. If he would like to consider the matter tomorrow or another day, that is fine but I do not think it appropriate for the matter to be debated today.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader)(by leave): Mr Speaker, there is an old Westminster tradition relating to how parliament operates called 'thinking on your feet'. As the former honourable member for Sanderson used to say, 'parliament is not a sheltered workshop'. If the government finds that it has

provided itself with a Leader of Government Business who is incapable of making decisions in the way the former Leader of Government Business did on numerous occasions, then the government should provide itself with a better one. In my opinion, as I said to the press at the time, it had a better one and decided to dispense with him.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of Government Business should be capable of handling something as routine as what we witnessed just now in the Legislative Assembly without the Chief Minister needing to give an extraordinary interpretation of standing orders. The procedures under which the opposition will operate in this Assembly will be the same procedures under which we have always operated. The standing orders of the Assembly regulate its business.

The Chief Minister's memory is sadly deficient in respect of opposition moves to seek suspension of standing orders. I do not know how many times the opposition has moved a suspension of standing orders but I remember doing it myself at least half a dozen times in the time that I have been here. It is not an unusual procedure. It is not the kind of diabolical, devious, underhanded procedure that the Chief Minister would have us believe. It certainly is not a lack of courtesy on the part of the opposition. It is quite amazing to hear that kind of remark from somebody who has spent 10 years or more not just in parliament but in this parliament. Those procedures have operated without a hitch for the time that I have been here.

Mr Speaker, a motion to suspend standing orders is about as normal and non-controversial a use of the standing orders that there is. It is entirely irrelevant whether the government moves it or the opposition moves it. I assure the Chief Minister and his Leader of Government Business that the government does not have a monopoly on moving such motions. It is perfectly proper for the government to deal with it in whichever way it wishes. If it does not want to debate it today, then it has the option to decline to debate it. However, it is ridiculous to offer some nonsensical interpretation of traditional parliamentary behaviour that does not exist and to suggest that the opposition has never done such a thing in the past. That is arrant nonsense. I have done it 6 times that I can remember. It is ridiculous of the new Chief Minister to suggest such a thing.

What I suggest we do is very simple. We all know where we stand on this issue. It has been around for 6 months. I know that it takes a minute or 2 for the penny to drop for the Chief Minister but I have been here for 10 minutes now. The Leader of Government Business has had plenty of time to think it over. We both know our respective positions on this issue. We do not need to seek advice on it. I would suggest that, when I resume my seat, the Leader of Government Business stand up and seek leave of the Assembly for the debate to proceed now.

MOTIONS

Publications Committee Report on Parliamentary Papers Series

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, I present a report from the Publications Committee relating to a proposed Parliamentary Papers Series. I move that the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, I move that the report be adopted and seek leave to continue my remarks at a later hour.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

TABLED PAPER

Instrument of Appointment of Ombudsman

Mr COULTER (Correctional Services): Mr Speaker, I table His Honour the Administrator's instrument of appointment of Kenneth Whitwam Rhodes as Ombudsman for the period 9 December 1984 to 12 June 1989.

TABLED PAPER

Report of the Northern Territory Ombudsman

Mr COULTER (Correctional Services): Mr Speaker, I table the Northern Territory Ombudsman's sixth annual report for the year ended 30 June 1984.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

STATEMENT
Purchase of Casino Properties

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly on certain matters relating to the purchase and operation of the Territory's 2 casino properties. The government previously undertook to report comprehensively on these matters and to table relevant documents. I do that now.

Let me remind honourable members of certain historical facts. In April 1984, an agreement was reached between the government and Federal Hotels for the sale and purchase of the Darwin and Alice Springs casino properties. The TAL-Ipec group, of which Federal Hotels was part, was experiencing financial difficulties generally, and with the properties, and had expressed its wish to sell. Reports available to the government confirmed the government's concern about the future of the casinos. Federal Hotels had been attempting widely to sell part or all of the 2 properties. Notwithstanding the agreement to sell to the Northern Territory government, a dispute arose as to price. This occurred because of differing interpretations of the clauses in the heads of agreement relating to valuation. Attempts to resolve the impasse failed. The government then, in accordance with the intention and opportunity conferred on it by the original Casino Licence and Control Act, passed the Federal Hotels (Compensation) Act. This enabled the price to be determined by fresh valuations and, failing further agreement, by an independent judicial tribunal. This legislation also allowed for the parties to effect settlement at any time. The original sale agreement provided for a minimum sale price of \$47.1m and a maximum of \$55m. Government valuers determined the value at \$44.3m and the government thus offered \$47.1m. Federal Hotels' valuers determined \$44.58m using the same valuation method as had the government: fair market value. This was within \$200 000 of the government valuation. Federal Hotels chose what it considered was an available interpretation of the sale agreement and produced a valuation of \$73.4m. Federal Hotels then demanded the upper figure of \$55m.

Honourable members would recall that, when I became Chief Minister, my colleague, the Deputy Chief Minister, and I had discussions with Mr Greg Farrell, the Chairman of Federal Hotels, and his colleagues. In negotiations with Federal Hotels, we agreed on a price for the properties of \$49.5m plus consumables for which the operator paid. The settlement received endorsement from Cabinet and the Board of Federal Hotels. This settlement was \$23.9m below Federal Hotels' valuation claim and \$5.5m below the maximum it claimed under the original sale and purchase agreement. I table for the information of honourable members the joint statement issued by Mr Farrell and myself on the conclusion of this arrangement.

Mr Speaker, the government has been criticised for spending \$2.5m of taxpayers' money. Again, the government had a hard financial decision to make. It could have allowed the valuation processes under the legislation to run their course but, as the processes involved determination of a fair value by a Supreme Court judge, the government faced lengthy delays involving the prospect of a very expensive court case, substantial legal fees and accumulated interest.

It was also likely that Federal Hotels might have sought recourse to other litigation. We faced the possible loss of the new operators and the further possibility of no FIRB approval. On this latter point, honourable members will

recall that the Foreign Investment Review Board approval for the new operators to lease the premises was then being withheld by the federal Treasurer, despite what the Northern Territory government believed was a recommendation from the board for approval. This obviously caused severe difficulties for the new operators as well as delaying the subscription of equity capital and loans to the Territory Property Trust, the details of which I will return to later.

The Commonwealth's action was also damaging the Territory in the perception of national and international financial markets, so jeopardising our long-term development prospects. I table attachment B: the decision of the federal Treasury to block the takeover by the new management. At the time, I also expressed in writing to the federal Treasurer my concern about this delay, and I table my telex which is attachment C. As part of the settlement, Federal Hotels agreed to advise the Foreign Investment Review Board of the satisfactory nature of the final settlement and that the company would hold no further interest in the ownership or operation of the casinos.

It was not coincidental that, within days of the agreement to settle with Federal Hotels for \$49.4m, and without the provision by the Territory or the new operators of additional information, FIRB approval was forthcoming. Mr Speaker, I table attachment D which is the approval of the federal Treasurer which confirms to honourable members that the approval was in fact dependent on the Northern Territory government settling with Federal Hotels.

The government's judgment to settle with Federal Hotels was commercially wise and realistic. The government knew that, if anything was paid over \$47m, it would not be directly recoverable under the casino operators agreement or the lease of the casino properties by the operators from the Territory Property Trust. On this point, I table a telex, attachment E, from the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation to the then Chief Minister.

I need to explain the reasons for the transmission of the telex. When disputation arose over price, the prospective operators were informed that it might be necessary to proceed to legislation to determine a fair market value for the casinos. The operators said that they did not wish to enter into arrangements which were open ended as far as the final price was concerned. They expressed concerns about the extent to which their operations could fund the rental payments which were determined from the purchase price. Based on the trading record of Federal Hotels, the operators believed that the fair market valuation of \$45m was the limit for a viable operation. The government pointed out that, under agreements entered into, the absolute minimum to be paid for the transaction was \$47.1m. Accordingly, to accommodate the operators' concern over viability, arrangements were made for the differences between the \$45m valuation and the \$47m minimum price. As stated in the telex, the operators would not pay any amount over \$47m for the casinos. The details of these special arrangements are included in the tabled telex.

I believe that, based on valuation information available to the government at the time, my predecessor believed no commitment of taxpayers' money would be required. I felt it appropriate to make a decision based on a very careful assessment of the circumstances in which I was placed some months later. Some of these factors included the high costs involved in the tribunal or other prolonged legal hearings and interest costs accruing to the government pending the valuation being completed, which were in the order of \$0.5m per month. As it was, this interest expense was \$0.77m from 1 October to the date of settlement. The possible loss of the new operators was also a concern as were the effects of the dispute on Federal Hotels company operations.

Mr Speaker, criticism of the government's action in settling for \$49.5m and the consequent \$2.5m financial involvement fails to recognise the fullness of the arrangements. The casino purchase agreement states: the excess will be recouped from tax revenue from the casinos over the 15-year period of the licence. I remind honourable members that the purchase of the casinos is only a part of a major long-term development which will bring substantial benefits to the Territory. It is futile and misleading to look at costs and benefits as if this project was fully effective over a matter of days or months. I would observe that, as a guiding principle, all of the agreements are structured with long-term benefits in mind.

Mr Speaker, I expand my comments about casino taxation. The agreement with the operators provides for a completely different tax regime than that applied by the government to the previous Federal Hotels' operation. Honourable members will recall that the tax applying to Federal Hotels was a flat rate tax on gross gaming win of the casino, set at 20% for Darwin and 15% for Alice Springs, a weighted average of say 18%. The early talks on an agreement between the Northern Territory government and the new casino operators gave the government 8% of the casinos' gross gaming win. As the full dimensions of the agreement were formulated, the government negotiated new provisions for additional taxation which, after the fifth year, requires the payment to the government of an overrider casino corporation tax equivalent to one-third of operating surpluses.

In order that the alternative taxation regimes can be compared, I have had projections done on common assumptions. These show that the tax payable on the Federal Hotels rate would be \$166.8m over the 15 years and \$196.72m under the new regime for the same period; that is, an increase in return to the government of approximately \$30m. This data, which is commercially confidential, will not be tabled but I am prepared to make it available to the Leader of the Opposition on a confidential basis. Clearly, there is a disadvantage to the government in earlier years under the new taxation system. Also, because of the relevant disadvantage of the new tax system in the earlier years, the value of the stream of taxation paid under the alternative systems is different when one takes account of the declining value of money over time. In order that the 2 taxation systems could be properly compared in real terms, I asked that the tax figures be discounted each year in a net present value comparison. The result of that further analysis is that all discount figures between 6% and 12% show that there is a significant benefit to the Territory from the new tax system. The incentives are built into this agreement for the operators to make money for themselves, for the investors in the trust and for the government by way of basetax and overrider casino corporation tax. With the application of available marketing expertise by the new operators, the gains could be very substantial indeed.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to the details of the Territory Property Trust and the operation and funding of the casino properties. On 28 December 1984, the trust deed setting up the Territory Property Trust was entered into between the trustee, Fernbank Pty Ltd, and the trust managers, Abington Pty Ltd. The government accepted expert advice that the trust should be unlisted initially, although there is provision to review the status of the trust from time to time. We have received advice recently from S.V.B. Day Porter and Co, a leading South Australian firm of stock, share and investment brokers and the Australian Bank. They indicated that it would be possible to raise substantial public subscriptions to the property trust and offer investors an attractive return, particularly once a period of improved trading by the new operators had been achieved. The initial equity holders in the Territory Property Trust are: Henry and Walker \$16m; Aspinall and Greate Bay Casinos \$3m; Kumagai Gumi \$4m; and

options for Aspinall and Greate Bay, together with units set aside for Territory and other Australian interests, \$5m. That makes a total of \$28m.

Initial unit holders in the Territory Property Trust are guaranteed an annual 10% return with CPI after 2 years. Apart from Aspinall and Greate Bay, all unit holders may redeem their units at par value after 5 years which may be extended to 8 years at the option of the government. This return will come from rental paid to the trust by the operators and will be calculated from the date of subscription; that is, with no backdating of entitlement. Provision exists for the government to waive the gambling tax of 8%, if necessary, and to provide make-up payments by way of loans.

Mr Speaker, the trust has entered into an agreement with the Australian Bank for \$30.35m which includes the warehousing of the \$5m on behalf of Aspinall/Greate Bay and Territory/Australian interests mentioned above. It also includes \$3m in funds necessary for the renovation and refurbishing of the casinos and for other expenses. Funds were also used for the initial purchase of gambling plant and equipment which, together with the consumables, have now been paid for by the operators.

Mr Speaker, much play has been made about the use of government funds for the initial purchase. The Federal Hotels Casinos (Compensation) Act required the government to pay Federals. The trust then reimbursed the government. I will return to this issue later. Initial security for the agreement was a guarantee from the government. This guarantee is being extinguished now that the trust subscriptions are in place and replaced by new mortgages in favour of the bank over the properties, together with an NTDC indemnity. The government mortgage, taken to secure the purchase price in the first instance and the short-term loans of the NTDC in the second, will be released as there are no moneys now owing to the government.

It has been alleged that officers of the government and private individuals who are members of, or unit holders in, Fernbank and Abington have been beneficiaries of the casino transactions. This is not true. It is important that everybody understands operations of this nature. As is usual with trusts throughout Australia, there are 2 primary entities: one is a passive trust company whose sole responsibilities are as trustee for the unit holders and the other is a management company. Fernbank Pty Ltd is the trustee for the properties. It is totally owned by Territory interests, the shareholders being Henry and Walker and the NTDC. Let me be perfectly clear that those shareholders in that capacity have no proprietary interest in the casino properties. The trust owns the casino properties and the unit holders own the trust. Abington Pty Ltd is the trust management company. It has active responsibility for the day-to-day conduct of the affairs of the trust. The shareholders of that company are officers of the government. Its costs are met by the trust. That company is controlled by the government through the NTDC and this mechanism allows the government to maintain a close watch over the affairs of the trust and, more particularly, through the lease arrangement, over the operations of the casino operators. Subject to the introduction of alternative controls, Abington will be handed over to private enterprise operation. Again, let me be perfectly clear that Abington's shareholders have no proprietary interest in the casino properties and in no way are beneficiaries.

Though the nature of the responsibilities of management companies may vary from place to place, in the Territory situation, the management responsibility for the operation of the day-to-day affairs of the casino rests with the operators and not with the trust or the management company. This limits the overall expenses of the trust. It is absolutely imperative that people

understand that no individuals have had or can in any way benefit from the transaction other than as unit holders.

On 1 October 1984, pursuant to the Federal Hotels Casinos (Compensation) Act, the government took over the casino properties and, in accordance with the casino purchase agreement, vested title to the properties in Fernbank Pty Ltd as trustee of the Territory Property Trust. Simultaneously, Diamond Leisure Pty Ltd, a Northern Territory incorporated and registered company, commenced operation of the properties. It was intended from that point in time that this company be beneficially owned 50% each by Aspinall Holdings Pty Ltd of London and Greate Bay Casino Corporation of Atlantic City USA. However, because FIRB approval was withheld by the Commonwealth Treasurer for Aspinalls and Greate Bay to operate in properties owned by the Territory Property Trust, it was decided that Diamond Leisure would remain under local control and ownership on an interim basis pending FIRB approval.

For the benefit of honourable members, I table: the casino operators agreement dated 1 October 1984 (attachment F); a memorandum of understanding dated 28 September 1984 (attachment G); an agreement amending the casino operators agreement dated 10 October 1984 (attachment H); an extension agreement dated 31 October 1984 (attachment I); a casino purchase agreement dated 30 September 1984 (attachment J); and the trust deed for the Territory Property Trust (attachment K).

Prior to 1 October 1984, the government had appointed Mr F.X. Dennehy as its representative under section 32(c) of the Federal Hotels Casinos (Compensation) Act to protect its interest as prescribed. Mr Dennehy also arranged and coordinated the takeover of operations of the casino properties on 1 October 1984. His term of engagement has been completed. By virtue of the casino purchase agreement, Fernbank Pty Ltd became the owner of the casino properties on 1 October 1984. Under the memorandum of understanding, Diamond Leisure was granted a licence to occupy the properties for the purposes of carrying on the casino and hotel businesses. Both in the interim period and for the 15-year term of the casino operators agreement, Aspinalls and Greate Bay provided, and will continue to provide, consulting and management services to Diamond Leisure for a fee payable of \$600 000 per annum. I mentioned earlier that the trust has an arrangement which limits its administrative expenses. All management functions pertaining to the operation of the casinos, including the management, training and appointment of staff, the operation of accounting records and controls, repairs and maintenance activities and other administrative matters, for both the casinos and the hotels, are the responsibility of the operators. It is for these purposes that they are paid a fee. Other casino trusts have an arrangement whereby these management responsibilities are vested in the trust itself.

I refer honourable members to the casino operators agreement. The schedule to this agreement is an outline of a computer model which is the financial illustration for interpreting this agreement. It is not a budget nor necessarily a guide to an expected operating result. It is merely a model to aid interpretation of the financial arrangements. Details of the assumptions used are included in the commentary attached to the model.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to some of the major points in the agreement. Aspinalls and Greate Bay each take up - and have done - 1.5 million \$1 units in the trust and have options to take up a further \$1.3m worth each. If requested, the original units will be redeemed at the end of 15 years. The term of the lease is 15 years with an option to renew for a further 10 years. A minimum of \$1m is to be spent in each of the first 2 years on advertising and promotion. After that, the minimum amount will be the lesser of \$1m or 5% of gross gaming

wins per annum. In addition to the \$600 000 management services fee payable annually to A & P Management, Diamond Leisure will, for the first 5 years, retain 50% of cash surpluses remaining after all expenses, including rental and the management expenses of the trust and the casino tax have been paid. The other 50% of those annual surpluses will accrue to the trust by way of increased rental during that period.

After 5 years, the government will receive one-third of operating surplus as overrider casino corporation tax. The balance will be divided equally between Diamond Leisure and the trust. The base gaming tax to the Territory is 8% of gross gaming wins. If, after payment of rental to the trust and all other expenses, the operator has insufficient funds to meet its base casino tax requirements, the Territory will waive some or all of that tax. If there is an operating loss, the NTDC will lend to Diamond Leisure the amount of such loss to enable it to meet its rental commitments. These are called make-up payments. These loans will be secured, attract a commercial interest rate and will be repaid according to an agreed formula in subsequent years when the company moves into profitability according to an agreed formula.

Mr Speaker, although the casino operators agreement was signed on 1 October 1984, it did not have operative effect. Among other things, it was necessary to obtain FIRB approval for Diamond Leisure to enter into a lease of the casino properties with Fernbank Pty Ltd, as trustee of the Territory Property Trust. There was a deadline of 31 October 1984 for compliance with this and the other conditions precedent to the operative date. But the parties agreed to extend this date to 31 January 1985 in the hope of obtaining FIRB approval by then. Following the settlement with Federal Hotels on price, FIRB approval was granted on 16 November 1984.

All other preconditions were satisfied and completed on 19 December 1984. On that date, firstly, the ownership and control of Diamond Leisure was transferred to Aspinalls and Greate Bay. Secondly, Diamond Leisure entered into a lease of the properties with Fernbank Pty Ltd. Thus, on 19 December 1984, the casino operators agreement commenced and the memorandum of understanding ceased. On that date, Aspinalls and Greate Bay assumed full ownership and control of Diamond Leisure, although that company had operated the casino and hotel businesses since 1 October 1984. Mr Speaker, I table the lease as attachment L.

For the information of honourable members, the paid-up capital of Diamond Leisure is \$50 000. Its shareholdings are divided equally between Aspinalls and Greate Bay. A & P Management Limited is a United Kingdom registered company and is similarly owned equally by Aspinalls and Greate Bay. I table an information sheet, attachment M, which contains details of shareholders and directors of Fernbank, Abington, Diamond Leisure, and A & P Management Limited.

I believe that the Territory is fortunate to have the services of Aspinalls and Greate Bay, which are recognised worldwide as having expertise and resources in the management and operation of hotels and casinos, a sentiment which no less than the Leader of the Opposition himself has publicly and repeatedly expressed. Aspinalls and Greate Bay have recruited for Diamond Leisure the services of an Australian, Mr Roger de Lima, as General Manager of Diamond Leisure. Mr de Lima was General Manager of the Society des Baines de Mer Casino Hotel in Monte Carlo for 6 years. This casino is recognised as among the world's best. Through A & P Management, Diamond Leisure will have the services of, among others, Christopher Raphael, a Director of Diamond Leisure and A & P Management Ltd, who is internationally recognised for his expertise in casino operation and marketing. Mr Raphael, is the only individual in the world to hold gaming licences in the United Kingdom and New Jersey, USA, which have, I am told, the strictest gaming

regulations anywhere. The government has every confidence that the new operator, Diamond Leisure, has the marketing and managerial expertise to enable the Darwin and Alice Springs hotel casinos to reach their full potential.

Mr Speaker, the government had proposed financing the \$49.5m due to Federal Hotels after the purchase had been agreed with funds from the following sources: NTDC \$2.5m and trust \$47m. The trust was to fund its \$47m as follows: equity \$23m and borrowings from the Australian Bank \$24m. After the federal government had interfered through FIRB powers and it was obvious that these arrangements could not be maintained, the trust arranged interim funding in the following way: a loan from the NTDC \$21m and borrowings from the Australian Bank \$26m. Funds to allow the NTDC to make this loan to the trust were obtained in turn through a loan from the Treasury at the same rate the Treasury would have earned in the market. An available alternative to the trust in seeking these funds was to extend the Australian Bank loan but this provided a more expensive route to all the parties to the agreement. The transactions were both legal and proper and I have written to the Leader of the Opposition on this point.

Mr Speaker, in addition to the equity in the trust, I can confirm that the trust is now fully subscribed. The trust has repaid the NTDC with interest and the NTDC has similarly reimbursed the government. This loan was, therefore, an interim arrangement through which the government is not out of pocket. To 31 January 1985, the government had spent \$1.38m in directly attributable costs on the casinos procedures. That was made up of: legal fees - \$83 017.61; valuation costs - \$204 361.59; travel and accommodation for ministers and officials - \$157 675.74; consultants fees and costs, including travel and accommodation - \$146 066.25; administration and general costs - \$190.60; and Federal Hotels' mortgages leases plus interest - \$788 774.47. That gives a total of \$1 380 086.26.

Mr Speaker, I turn to Myilly Point and Alice Springs. As they peruse the documents that have been tabled today, honourable members will notice that there is a requirement by the government to encourage the establishment of additional tourist infrastructure in Darwin and Alice Springs to complement the casinos' activities. There is also a requirement in the agreement between the operators and the government for the operators to take up additional gambling space in the new development on the old Darwin hospital site which will provide additional hotel infrastructure for visitors. The operators must pay rent on the space as soon as it is constructed.

As the first steps in this direction, the government instructed the NTDC to arrange for preliminary developmental studies to be instigated. In tandem with this, the NTDC or the government has commenced the acquisition of land in both Darwin and Alice Springs to enable these developments to proceed. Whilst the original concepts that have been proposed may not necessarily represent the final developments in both Darwin and Alice Springs, there is no doubt that major developments in both Darwin and Alice Springs will take place on the old hospital site and Myilly Point and the golf course estate in Alice Springs. The government believes that these developments together will ultimately be larger than Yulara in both development and financial terms.

To 31 January 1985, the government had met directly attributable costs on the projects, including payments to consultants etc as follows: legal fees - \$99 292.48; travel and accommodation for ministers and officials - \$2555.28; consultants fees and costs including travel and accommodation - \$696 739.62 and administration and general costs \$2763.85. That totals \$801 351.23. Land acquisition costs were: in Alice Springs - \$1.417m plus legal expenses and interest; in Darwin - \$0.4m which has been paid; and a further \$0.53m which is committed in Darwin but has not been paid. That totals \$2.347m. We believe

this amount of money will be capitalised in the total projects when they move into the development phase. I am able to advise that discussions have commenced between the government and interested parties for developments at both Myilly Point and the Alice Springs golf course estate.

Honourable members will be aware that prominent among the parties is the Territory's only public company, Henry and Walker. Henry and Walker expressed interest in the development of the old hospital site when expressions of interest were first sought. The government has developed arrangements with Henry and Walker to secure its continued involvement in this project. At this stage, the nature of these arrangements must be confidential and I will report to the Legislative Assembly further on this and other features when contracts have been finalised.

I must emphasise the need for the government to proceed with its negotiations confidentially. I can only point to the problems which have occurred on other studies with overall development when people have insisted that we conduct our studies, decision-making processes and negotiations in open forum. No one will do business on that basis.

Finally, all of these arrangements have been concluded to enable the casinos to be a focal point and a catalyst for the further development of the tourist industry in the Northern Territory. This will mean thousands and thousands of jobs, particularly for our young people, and a thriving and growing Territory economy.

Mr Speaker, in determining the most appropriate arrangements all round, the government had to bear in mind the interests of all parties to the various agreements. It consulted widely and sought expert legal advice and financial and other opinions. The government believes that the arrangements which have been set in place are appropriate given the range of interests to be served and having regard to the long-term future of the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I commend this statement to honourable members and I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Debate adjourned.

NOTICE OF MOTION Censure of Chief Minister

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I give notice that, on the next sitting day, I will move that this Assembly censures the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for: (1) his deliberate deception of all Territorians in that he denied, in a public statement on 28 November 1984, that the Northern Territory had diverted funds from its budget to purchase the casinos formerly belonging to Federal Hotels when he had personally directed that those public funds be so diverted at least 2 weeks prior to issuing that statement; and (2) his ineptitude during the negotiations of financial arrangements for the new operators of the casinos and the ultimate owners of the casinos which has and will continue to disadvantage the government of the Northern Territory in its collection of revenues in the form of casino charges and taxes; and this Assembly calls on the Chief Minister to resign as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory immediately.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr Hanrahan (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, in conformity with practice, the government will not proceed with further business until the notice of motion of the Leader of Opposition has been disposed of. The government asks that all questions be placed on notice.

Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition moving without notice his motion of censure.

Proposal supported by required number of members.

MOTION

Censure of Chief Minister

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly censures the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for: (1) his deliberate deception of all Territorians in that he denied, in a public statement on 28 November 1984, that the Northern Territory had diverted funds from its budget to purchase the casinos formerly belonging to Federal Hotels when he had personally directed that those public funds be so diverted at least 2 weeks prior to making his statement; and (2) his ineptitude during the negotiations of financial arrangements for the new operators of the casinos and the ultimate owners of the casinos which has and will continue to disadvantage the government of the Northern Territory in its collection of revenues in the form of casino charges and taxes; and this Assembly calls on the Chief Minister to resign as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory immediately.

Mr Speaker, I can assure the Chief Minister that, during this debate, he will not need his advisers in the advisers' box because this censure motion deals entirely with the Chief Minister himself and his actions. The most important part of this debate is the unconscionable fraud of the Chief Minister and Treasurer in that, in November last year, he deliberately led Territorians into believing that public money had not been involved in the acquisition of the assets of Federal Pacific Hotels and on behalf of a private consortium to its enormous financial advantage to acquire the casino assets. The honourable member for Barkly, almost immediately after assuming his new position as Chief Minister, treated Territorians to an act of deliberate deception and fraud. He did this in a statement to the media on 28 November 1984. I use the word 'fraud' carefully and deliberately and I will quote its definition in the Oxford Dictionary: 'The use of false representations to gain an unjust advantage'. This press statement said: 'The Chief Minister, Mr Ian Tuxworth, today refuted claims made by Mr John Reeves that the Northern Territory government had diverted funds from its budget to purchase the casinos'. He then went on to say many other things which I will deal with shortly but that is the statement made by the Chief Minister last November.

Mr Speaker, considering the timing of this press statement, a better word than 'fraud' could hardly be used. The statement was issued by the Chief Minister and Treasurer 2 weeks after the writs had been issued for the Jingili by-election and 3 days before polling day in the federal election. It was issued 2 weeks after \$51.2m had been paid out of the Northern Territory Treasury, \$23m of which belonged to the Treasury and \$23m of which had been raised with a Northern Territory government guarantee. Despite the fact that the Northern Territory government had said again and again that public funds would not be used in this transaction - and the former Treasurer, who is sitting

grinning across there, had told us here and outside the Assembly that guarantees would not be given on this deal - we at last have the facts in front of us, or some of them at least. We will deal with those later.

Mr Speaker, I might add this, and I am quite happy to give the Leader of Government Business 24 hours notice of this one. In respect of the unbelievable deal revealed in these papers and the disgraceful loss of public money involved, the government may well have another censure motion wrapped around its ears tomorrow morning. We now know that the full extent of the government's involvement in this whole deal is almost beyond belief. Certainly, it goes some way beyond my worst fears.

Let there be no doubt that there were 2 very precise and clearly-defined goals in the Chief Minister's deceit and those goals were achieved. No doubt, it is in line with new-age thinking. The first goal was to ensure the victory of Paul Everingham at the federal election and the second was to ensure the CLP victory in the Jingili by-election. In the case of the federal election, a mere 700 votes changed out of 70 000 would have altered the result and a mere 90 votes changed in the Jingili by-election would have altered that result.

This statement was issued deliberately, and in a panic, in order to save those 2 campaigns. The panic was generated because, at the time, the heat was really on the government. The ALP was publicly making what have now proven to be entirely accurate statements that taxpayers' money had been involved in the takeover deal and guarantees had been given by the Northern Territory government. Evidence was given to support those statements. In order to save those campaigns that were in dire trouble, those statements had to be flatly refuted and there was only one person with the authority to do that: the honourable Chief Minister. The honourable Chief Minister, embarrassed by his personal knowledge of the truth of the claims we were making, deliberately issued a press statement which created entirely the opposite impression. By sleight of hand, he deliberately sought to refute those charges. The words 'sleight of hand' are not my words but the words of a Northern Territory editorial writer. It is now a matter of public record, verified by the February Northern Territory Government Gazette, that \$51.2m was transferred from a Treasury operational trust account - part of the Northern Territory's budget - to the former casino owners. \$23m of that money came from Treasury funds when all of the information given to this Assembly indicated that such a thing would never happen.

I would ask anyone who wants to examine whether the Chief Minister's whole deception and behaviour warrant this censure to consider a very simple proposition. What if the Chief Minister and Treasurer, instead of issuing this utterly false statement on 28 November, had simply told Territorians the truth of what he had personally ordered to be done 2 weeks earlier - that the Territory Treasury had been used to pay out money largely on behalf of Henry and Walker, that \$23m of it belonged to the Treasury and that \$23m of it had been obtained with a Northern Territory government guarantee? Mr Speaker, simply reconstruct the press release, substitute the truth for the untruths and then put it in the context of the day that release was issued. There would be very few people who would question that, if that had happened, Mr Paul Everingham would not be sitting in the federal parliament today and the new honourable member for Jingili would not be here today either. Both those honourable members are indeed sitting in their places as a direct result of the deception and fraud perpetrated by the Northern Territory's Chief Minister. Nothing committed by the juvenile offenders so constantly talked about by the new honourable member for Jingili would even come close to the level of dishonesty that put him into this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I expected to hear and expect to hear a great deal during the debate about money being paid back, interest being paid back and Myilly Point-type fantasies relating to thousands and thousands of jobs. We have heard it all before but I fail to see how the Chief Minister, skilled though he is at fabrication and manipulation, even with a shyster's interpretation of that press statement, can make it say anything other than what it says. On 25 January, the Chief Minister conducted a briefing for the Territory media after the elections and revealed much of the government's actual involvement in financing the purchase of the casinos - actions that he had been responsible for personally as Chief Minister and Treasurer - and those statements completely refuted the evasions and false position created by his statement in November.

What happened between those 2 dates that enabled the Chief Minister to say in January what he denied had happened in November? The answer, of course, is that 2 elections took place. In January 1985, 2 pressures were mounting on the Chief Minister. We knew where the money had come from. From mortgage documents, company searches and other sources, we knew that guarantees had been given by the government - the government that said those guarantees would not be given - and we said so constantly. By that stage, many senior Northern Territory public servants knew it as well and they did not enjoy it very much.

The Chief Minister deceived us all in November. He went into hiding for the whole of the month of December but, by January, he had to come out and tell us what was happening. He was forced into that position, not only by political pressure that was building on him but by the requirements of the Northern Territory Financial Administration and Audit Act. The Chief Minister knew that, by the end of January, 2 very significant statistics would be published in the Northern Territory Government Gazette, as required by the act: casino tax collections of \$245 and, under the Treasury listing, Casino Properties Trust payments of \$51.2m. Be in no doubt, Mr Speaker, that the disclosures he was forced into making in January were merely another attempt to mislead and confuse Territorians. As we all know, the Chief Minister played a very minor role in that press conference. I imagine he hid behind senior public servants of the Northern Territory Treasury and the NTDC because he wanted to use people who had at least a little credibility and it was their job, not his, to disclose the 'arrangements'.

Mr Speaker, the performance at that conference is illustrated in a transcript I have here. Journalists at the press conference asked, among other things, 3 simple but important questions: 'What is the net increase to the Northern Territory Development Corporation's loan guarantees; what is the interest bill on the loans to the trust; and what is the net tax loss resulting from the new tax arrangements?' The answers were: 'Don't quote me; I can't answer that, I'm sorry; and I can't give you that figure'.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister and Treasurer said on 25 January: 'The government makes no apology for the manner in which the casino deal is being managed'. He should be censured for that if nothing else, but I will accept that position. We do not expect apologies and we do not want them. What we want from this government are explanations which have still not been forthcoming.

The Northern Territory's new Chief Minister, before he even announced that he had appointed himself as Treasurer, already had his fingers in the till. In fact, he did what many a rogue before him had done. He had taken money that was not his, put it on a long shot and prayed that the horse would come home. Fortunately for the government, that horse came in last Friday but, as we now know, it was on 3 legs. This allowed the Chief Minister to put the money back in the till before he was caught red-handed here in the Assembly. After personally

diverting these funds, he issued a statement designed to fool everybody into thinking that everything that he had ordered had not happened, in direct response to our allegations that it had. Of course, the deception succeeded. We now know that the money that was removed from the Northern Territory's Treasury by its Chief Minister and Treasurer, the maximum benefit of which went to Henry and Walker, has now been returned by the property trust.

Mr Speaker, the major point of this censure motion, rather than a debate on the casino affair itself, and we will get into that, is that it is unanswerable, inexplicable and inexcusable. In addition, the government has to provide justification for its actions on a number of other fundamental questions. Can the government now successfully demonstrate to this Assembly that the forcible ousting of Federal Hotels from the Northern Territory's casinos which it owned - a company which is still successfully operating 2 casinos in Tasmania, not to mention 3 hotels in the Northern Territory - was done, as stated, to make way for a \$200m or \$300m development at Myilly Point, depending on which government publication you read, and to create 1600 or 2000 permanent jobs, depending again on which government publication you read? Can the government now demonstrate that the gross misuse of taxes was designed to open the floodgates to plane loads of Asian and American gamblers and tourists, as was stated?

Mr Speaker, we already have on record the statement made by John Aspinall in Darwin that it would take 'a miracle' for that to happen. That has since been supported with some interesting comment by the new casino manager, Mr de Lima, and I will come to that in another debate. Mr Aspinall was prepared to be much more forthcoming and honest than our own government. I do not think that Territorians will be able to accept that all of this was done for the sake of the \$3m upgrading of the existing facilities that was announced last week, especially when all the details are explained to them.

Mr Speaker, can the government provide justification for the massive level of direct government assistance it has given during this affair to a private consortium, the lion's share of which went to Henry and Walker and the rest to 3 overseas companies? The Northern Territory government has a very heavy responsibility to provide at some stage evidence of a prodigious level of public benefit in the economic projections given for the operations of these casinos in order even partly to justify the way in which the Northern Territory's Treasury has been used as a personal bank by the Chief Minister and Treasurer on behalf of this private consortium. In fact, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will demonstrate that there will be beneficiaries from this deal but the people who have made it possible, the taxpayers of the Northern Territory, are unlikely to be among them. I expect to be hearing a bit more about that throughout Australia. The Adelaide Advertiser was interested this morning.

Mr Speaker, in this censure motion, I originally wanted to give at least a precis of the unbelievable shambles that has unfolded over the last 6 months. I am afraid that I do not have time in this debate to do so. It has been canvassed widely in the media but I would like to have had it recorded in Hansard because I know that it will be raised in every budget session of this Assembly and will haunt this government.

To compound all of this, we now have in front of us a pile of documents in which the Chief Minister has attempted - and I will point this out in a later debate - to extricate himself from most of the responsibility in this affair and to lay the blame entirely at the feet of the former Chief Minister. He said: 'The position I was put in'. We know that the former Chief Minister certainly does not have clean hands in this affair but the issue in this debate

is in fact the honesty and the credibility of the current Chief Minister. Constantly, we are having to point out basic kindergarten parliamentary conventions to this government. I will just point out this one. It is like going back to pre-school. I quote from page 97 of Pettifer: 'Convention requires that ministers accept collective responsibility for the policies and performance of the government'. Everyone who is sitting here now was sitting here then.

Mr Speaker, I do not want the focus of this censure motion to range too widely. There are 2 issues at the heart of this censure motion. The first is honesty. The Chief Minister, through deceit and fraud, deliberately misled Territorians for the political advantage of the Country Liberal Party. At the beginning of this debate, by way of interjection, the former Treasurer was happy to confirm that. No amount of paper can paper over that. The Chief Minister has a clear and direct obligation in this Assembly to explain to the people of the Northern Territory how on 28 November he was able to say that he had not diverted funds from the Northern Territory's budget to purchase the casinos 2 weeks after he had personally ordered that to be done. Indeed, he was kind enough to inform me he had done it in a letter he sent me yesterday. He was even kind enough to identify the budget appropriation from which some of the money had been taken from. That is the single glaring issue that has to be addressed by the honourable Chief Minister in this debate. I have copies of 2 relevant documents for all members of the Assembly.

The letter I received yesterday from the Chief Minister was in response to a letter I wrote to him a month ago asking for details of the money that had been spent on the purchase of the casinos. I am distributing the document so there is no fear of this being taken out of context. I will quote from the letter. The opening paragraph says:

In your letter of 25 January, you have sought explanations and assurances on matters associated with the purchase of the casinos. As you would be aware, the government has at all times a balance of funds comprising the balances in the consolidated fund and the trust fund.

That is the Northern Territory's budget. I would like the honourable Chief Minister to tell the Assembly that a government under the Westminster system is able to have one cent of money anywhere that is not accounted for in consolidated revenue statements. He completely gave the lie to the statement that was issued in November. In the final paragraph, he says: 'The second part of your letter deals with the \$2.5m paid by the development corporation'. That is the \$2.5m that was used by the government to purchase the casinos. Indeed, that is the \$2.5m gift that we are not even going to get back. Where did it come from? I quote the Chief Minister from his letter yesterday: 'The source of these funds was part of the appropriation made to the corporation in the Appropriation Act 1984-85'. That is the Territory's budget.

Will the Chief Minister now try to tell me that his signature is a fake and the letter is a fraud? No, he will not. He has identified specifically that the \$2.5m, which was handed over as a gift for the purchase of the casinos, did not even come from a trust account. It came from the appropriation to the Northern Territory Development Corporation. He went on to say: 'If this payment means the corporation may require additional funds in 1984-85 to finance other commitments, then the matter will be reviewed'. So if the hole that has now been created in its appropriations causes difficulties, we will have another appropriation of public money in here to fill that hole and pay for the money it gave, money that will not be redeemed by the Northern Territory government. Mr Speaker, I suggest that you simply place this letter of the Chief Minister,

with his details of the budget appropriation from which that money was taken, next to his statement of November last year.

There is another issue that must be debated today. In all that has been done in terms of cheap finance, gifts, tax concessions, redemption clauses and underwriting commitments, what has been gained for the Northern Territory? Where are the \$300m development at Myilly Point, the 1600 jobs and the new casinos?

The second question the Chief Minister must answer today is: when do we call a halt? When will courage enable a leader of government to stop the rot? The simple conclusive issue is that our government has given away far too much for far too little. That must be addressed by the Chief Minister.

We have seen in this mountain of paperwork new plans for Myilly Point which talk about thousands and thousands of jobs. I do not think that this Assembly and the community of the Northern Territory will be distracted again quite so soon by those kinds of tricks. There will be no more promises, no more rabbits out of hats. If nothing else comes out of this deal, I think what will come out of it is far more rigorous testing of anything else the government proposes before it will be accepted by this community.

Mr Speaker, in a period coinciding with the 1984-85 fiscal year, the Northern Territory has come to a watershed. Under the leadership of this deceitful and inept Chief Minister, the Territory is ill-prepared to meet the challenges that face it. I give notice to members opposite that the Labor Party is aware of its obligations, but today the responsibility lies with those opposite. Some of them have gained dramatically by riding in on the coat-tails of this deception. Some of them have trumpeted their belief in private enterprise and small government and yet have gone along with this whole sorry mess. Some of them have found it very easy on this issue to criticise privately while lacking the courage to do it publicly. Those men and women know the description that suits them.

Mr Speaker, modern government is complex. It involves large sums of other people's money. It requires the advice of people who are skilled in technical sophistry. Any politician, and certainly a Chief Minister, must bring to that situation at least some honesty and integrity. He must also have the courage to know when enough is enough, and some ability to control events. Our present Chief Minister lacks all of those virtues. Rather, he brings a capacity to the job of political manipulation, mismanagement, dishonesty and deceit. In Australia's parliamentary system alone, there have been many forced resignations of ministers. Sometimes, in censure motions calling for a minister's resignation, particularly a leader of government's resignation, there are grey areas. On such occasions, the ministers may have misled the parliament or the electorate but doubt has existed perhaps because of wrong information given to them by a public servant. Indeed, even on those occasions, ministers have resigned.

We are not faced with that problem this morning. We are faced with a censure motion against a Chief Minister for issuing a statement, at a politically crucial time, which deliberately denied actions had been taken that he had personally ordered to be taken 2 weeks before the statement was issued. It was a statement to which the Chief Minister's own letter to me yesterday gives the lie. If the Chief Minister cannot give a credible and believable explanation in this Assembly this morning as to why he did that, he should resign.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is a past master of taking a quote from here and a paragraph from there, leaving out the substance of messages, press releases or letters, comparing the 2 paragraphs or sentences that suit him and making the allegation that somebody has done something dishonest or deceitful or unsatisfactory. The Leader of the Opposition has been pulled up in this Assembly a dozen times by ministers for that practice and today is another day for it to happen.

Mr Speaker, I would just like to step back for a moment to the election atmosphere to which the Leader of the Opposition referred and put into perspective the press release that I issued on 28 November. At that stage, the government was negotiating and getting its finances into order for the casino arrangements. The federal candidate for the Labor Party, the former member for the Northern Territory, came out with suggestions that the government had diverted funds from its budget to purchase the casinos and that the Territory owned them. Clearly, the object of the exercise was to cause doubts and confusion, alarm and concern, and frighten people generally about something that need not have been a matter for concern. Mr Speaker, I would like to read into Hansard the details of the 2 documents so that we are not dealing with the odd sentence here and there as the Leader of the Opposition did for the purposes of his case.

Mr B. Collins: I provided all members with copies as a matter of fact.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the press release of 28 November reads as follows:

The Chief Minister, Mr Ian Tuxworth, today refuted claims made by Mr John Reeves that the Northern Territory government had diverted funds from its budget to purchase the casinos and that the Northern Territory now owned them. 'The blatant scaremongering used by Mr Reeves to frighten and confuse Territorians is outrageous Mr Tuxworth said. The Chief Minister said the facts were simple: (1) No department funds allocated for projects or wages and salaries had been diverted to purchase the casinos; (2) the casinos are owned by a private trust, not the government; and (3) the finalisation of the casino purchase had been set back by Federal Treasurer Mr Keating's political interference using the Foreign Investment Review Board, with the support and collusion of Mr Reeves. 'In line with proper commercial practice, the government must maintain its stance of not releasing full details of the transaction until the arrangements are complete,' Mr Tuxworth said.

Mr Speaker, the letter that I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday reads:

Dear Mr Collins,

In your letter of 25 January 1985, you have sought explanations and assurances on matters associated with the purchase of casinos.

As you would be aware, the government has at all times a balance of funds comprising the balances in the Consolidated Fund and the Trust Fund. This balance of funds is invested by Treasury in various securities in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The act specifically provides that appropriation for investment purposes is not required and this recognises that a government must have the ability to

manage its cash flow to advantage and to invest funds temporarily surplus to immediate needs. All governments have this power and the revenue from the investment of cash is substantial.

In the financing of the casino purchase, the government has used part of its cash reserves to invest with the development corporation. This is an investment authorised by the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The funds were invested at rates of interest which were identical to alternative investments available to the Treasury. The actual interest rate charged was the 180-day bank bill rate which reflects the rate which could have been earned by Treasury had it not placed the funds with the development corporation. I can assure you that there is no loss of revenue to the Consolidated Fund.

The second part of your letter deals with the \$2.5m paid by the development corporation. The source of these funds was part of the Appropriation Act 1984-85. If the payment means that the corporation may require additional funds in 1984-85 to finance other commitments, then the matter will be reviewed in the normal budget process of the government and, if necessary, parliamentary approval will be sought for additional funds.

Mr Speaker, the reason that I took the trouble to read both of those documents is as follows. The former member of the House of Representatives said quite specifically that the government was diverting money for wages and capital projects out of the budget and into the casino financing affairs. The point of all of that is that the government has at all times reserves available for investment. Those moneys are not for long-term investment; they must be accounted for before the end of the financial year. Those moneys were used. If they had not been lent to the NTDC, they would have been lent to some bank or institution that gave us the same rate of return that the NTDC ultimately gave us. That is an appropriate use of the Northern Territory budget reserves held by Treasury. That will always be the case. It is not peculiar to the Northern Territory government.

I move on to another point which it is absolutely important for us to get straight. The government of the Northern Territory acquired the casinos. Under the acquisition act, the government of the Northern Territory was required to pay for them. The act required the government to pay for them and the government intended, as everybody knows, to resell the casinos to the trust. The government is acquiring from day to day, and has done so right through the course of its history. This government or any other government will be acquiring land or whatever. The fact is that the government uses government funds and generally seeks to be reimbursed for any acquisition in some form or another.

Mr Speaker, I just made the point a moment ago that it is not uncommon for governments to do this. On the subject of government investments during elections, could I raise for the Leader of the Opposition's consideration the activities of the federal ALP government during the campaign period when it forked out \$50m of the Australian taxpayers' money to buy a shipment of yellowcake which was committed to France? It was on the wharf ready to go. It did that for the political expediency of saving any embarrassment within its party about selling uranium to France.

Mr B. Collins: Did it lie about it?

Mr TUXWORTH: Did it lie about it? Did it tell you that that was why it did it? Was there any need to lie about it? How could it lie about it? The whole country knew what the story was. In my view, that is a totally appropriate method for Treasury and the government to invest funds - to buy something and to resell and dispose of it later. We are not the first government to do it. Governments will always do that sort of thing. I can refer to the days when governments used funds to buy the wool clip or the wheat stack. Again, they were interim funding arrangements from within the government's investable resources.

Mr Speaker, I must reject outright and disclaim totally the proposition that the Leader of the Opposition has put forward that the government has diverted funds from the Treasury and from the budget for the purchase of the casinos. I would accept that, if on 30 June this year the funds were not repaid, the Leader of the Opposition could then reasonably claim that funds had been taken out of the budget and used. Let me reaffirm that, in the circumstances that have prevailed, if those funds that the government used under the act to purchase the casinos had never been repaid to the government for any reason at all, the honourable Leader of the Opposition's proposition would have some substance. As it happens, it has no substance. All accounts are settled. As far as I am concerned, the Leader of the Opposition's motion this morning is a charade and just a means for him to get himself onto the front page.

Mr B. Collins: I am glad you think it is that unimportant.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the substance of the debate so far is so erroneous and the propositions have so little to support them that what else could one believe? Let me just conclude by saying something about the government's proposed developments. The government has been and will be involved in the encouragement and establishment of infrastructure right throughout the Northern Territory for a range of reasons, all designed to promote development in the Northern Territory and create jobs for our kids. Projects such as Myilly Point and the Alice Springs golf course development will go ahead; there is no doubt about that. There has never been a time limit on the exact commencement and completion of such developments. As far as I am concerned, they will go ahead.

The other thing the Leader of the Opposition alluded to was that the \$2.5m that has been outlaid as a part of the settlement will not be redeemed. So far as I am concerned, the tax provisions that we now have are sufficiently attractive to ensure that, over a period, the government will be reimbursed.

Mr Speaker, there is very little to say on the Leader of the Opposition's proposition because it does not have any substance. I repeat again that he is an expert at taking a line from here, a quote from there, something out of the bottom drawer and trying to marry them. Because they do not marry, he will call somebody a thief and a crook or a whatever. I am not impressed by the allegation that I am fraudulent, dishonest or deceitful. I am not that thin-skinned and I have no intention of responding to that sort of tripe from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, the major problem with the Chief Minister is that he is half-smart or, put another way, he is probably half-dumb. The half-smart aspect showed in the press release he issued on 28 November 1984. In his normal half-smart way, and in the midst of 2 election campaigns, he put out a carefully-worded press release which gave the average citizen of the Northern Territory a very clear understanding that no government money, no taxpayer's money, was being used to purchase the casinos. That is the

essence of our motion today. Through that press release, which was carefully designed and worded, the honourable Chief Minister gave a very clear impression to everybody in the Northern Territory that no public money was being spent on the casinos. Of course, that was what the press release was designed to do. It succeeded but only until after the election campaign when, on 25 January, because of forthcoming government publications, the Chief Minister had to come clean to some extent.

Secondly, he ran the terrific line that the government has reserves available for investment in the Northern Territory and, if it uses them properly and receives the proper return, it does not matter where it puts those reserves. We have no objection to that. However, we do object to giving \$2.5m with no prospect of return. It is a gift. Where is the return on the investment of that \$2.5m to the taxpayer of the Northern Territory? As well as that, we have another \$2m that the government has given away and it expects, some time in the next 15 years, to have that money repaid with interest. Even now, after the Chief Minister says he has come clean, we still do not have details of that. As well as that, we have a figure of \$800 000 which was used to pay the interest bill for Federal Hotels. Where is the return on the taxpayers' investment there? There are many unanswered questions.

Mr Speaker, the second part of our censure motion, and the part I want to concentrate on first, is the ineptness of the Chief Minister in carrying out these negotiations with the new casino operators. I want to start by looking at the assistance that this government has given to the casino operators, the trust and everybody else to get them off the ground. Let us look at the loan of \$21m. This \$21m quite clearly represents nothing more than bridging finance. It was taxpayers' money which was provided from at least 14 November 1984 until 22 February 1985. That is more than 3 months. That it is bridging finance is demonstrated in 2 statements by Mr Jim Moore of the NTDC. On 25 January, at that now infamous press conference, in response to a question on the delays being experienced by Henry and Walker in getting its contributions, he said: 'Henry and Walker, of course, has shopped around to try and get the best deal it could on its money'. Secondly, he said: 'For this process, which admittedly has taken us a while longer than we wished, there have been a number of reasons mainly to do with Henry and Walker negotiating its money and getting its money on the best possible terms'.

Later, Mr Moore gave us an even clearer idea of the process undertaken by Henry and Walker. He claimed at the press conference that it did not seriously begin to look for its \$16m until after 16 November and only then did it enter into negotiations with several banks to refine rates and obtain competitive quotes. Of course, that is good business but what is not good business is waiting 6 months after it was formally told that it would be an important partner in the whole project before trying to get its money together. It is quite clear that it was not bothered by normal commercial practice relating to bridging finance because it had the Northern Territory Treasury as its banker. It knew the Northern Territory government would tide it over with bridging finance while it bumbled along at the last moment trying to raise the money.

In this context, it is obvious that the government has used the FIRB argument as a red herring. Mr Moore, again on behalf of the government, argued that Henry and Walker was hampered in its fund-raising because the FIRB interim order was not revoked until mid-December and, at Christmas, he subsequently intervened in its negotiations with the 2 banks. On behalf of the government or on behalf of the Chief Minister probably, Mr Moore is simply

having us on. The FIRB approval was given on 16 November 1984 - not mid-December - and Henry and Walker had a full month longer to raise the money than the government has chosen deliberately to hide behind the FIRB decision to cover Henry and Walker's lethargy in attempting to raise money. From this lethargy, it is obvious that it was made very clear from the start by the government that taxpayers' money would be available as bridging finance to get the deal started. Mr Moore also reveals the high regard Henry and Walker was held in by its partners. Mr Moore assures us that Kumagai Gumi, which had no problem with its money, was not prepared to put its money up until Henry and Walker put up.

I am pleased to say that we have been advised in the last week that this money was paid back last Thursday. The point is that Henry and Walker had the benefit of taxpayers' money from the date of payment to Federal Hotels in November until last Thursday - over 3 months. Most importantly, this money was made available to Henry and Walker before the assurance from the Chief Minister on 28 November that no money was diverted from the budget. Quite clearly, in this instance, the Chief Minister deceived the people of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, we turn to the question of the \$2.5m direct gift, the taxpayers' contribution to the purchase price. This represents a second outrageous part of the scheme. \$2.5m was paid for what? For equity? We could have accepted that. Many people have suggested that that is what should have happened. The \$2.5m of taxpayers' money effectively was given to the trust for nothing. In other words, it was a gift. This amount arose because Federal Hotels would not settle for less than \$49.5m.

By November last year, the Chief Minister, as the Leader of the Opposition clearly demonstrated, was desperate to establish his government and to calm the electorate on the eve of the Jingili by-election and the federal election. The price we paid for deceiving the electorate was \$2.5m which we have no hope of getting back. The great negotiators had been backed into a corner by the trust. What they had done was to enter into an agreement with the purchasers, guaranteeing a purchase price of \$47m without first securing a selling price from the reluctant sellers. It is no good blaming FIRB. Anyone who has been involved in business in the last decade would know that FIRB is part of the business geography of Australia; you can ignore it but only at your own peril. The \$2.5m reveals how much had been conceded to the trust and the operators and just how incompetent the Northern Territory government and its advisers are in dealing with taxpayers' money.

Mr Speaker, this \$2.5m represents money that should have been available to the government to spend on services for Territorians. It should not have been given to wealthy gamblers. The \$2.5m would have earned the Northern Territory some \$5.6m in the next 10 years or \$12.1m in 15 years. Mr Speaker, that sum of money could have been earning Territorians more than \$1m interest per annum.

Mr Robertson: If you do not spend anything by the end of the decade, we will all go ...

Mr SMITH: Well, give it away. That is what you have been doing.

Mr Robertson: What a brilliant idea.

Mr SMITH: Buy a few votes.

Mr Speaker, we have established that the Northern Territory government was acting as a very benevolent banker to the major equity holders of these assets yet, despite the generous nature of these banking arrangements in terms of loans and outright gifts, the Northern Territory government failed to secure any equity in this project or return for its money. Its incompetence cost the Territory \$2.5m.

That is not the end of the story of gifts and loans. We now come to the case of the \$2m open-ended loan which, if one follows the explanation given by the government, the Territory was instructed to give to the new operators by the new operators themselves. We have already seen that, regardless of the purchase price, the Northern Territory government had agreed that the trust would pay no more than \$47m for the properties and, further, that it could only service a purchase price of \$45m. Let us remember Mr Moore's words on this: 'Aspinalls and GreateBay were quite firm that the profits that the casinos could generate would only service the purchase at around \$45m'. It appears that those clever fellows from London and Atlantic City were a bit too fast for the local lads. Of course, the saving grace for the government - or so it says - is that the \$2m is only a loan and it will be repaid as will the \$250 000 a year interest when and if the trust can repay it. Following the release of the documents by the Chief Minister, we know now that this loan and the interest will be repaid by the trust over 15 years, but these repayments will come not out of its funds but out of ours. In other words, it will come out of the much-vaunted one-third share in the profits that are supposed to accrue to the Northern Territory - that magic \$30m that I will speak about in a minute.

For precisely the same reason as the outright gift of \$2.5m and the other loan of \$21m, this raises the same questions. The Chief Minister and Treasurer chose to use taxpayers' money to solve party-political problems and, in so doing, neglected his higher responsibilities to the people of the Northern Territory as Chief Minister. Furthermore, in so doing, he chose to deceive the people of the Northern Territory about what he was doing.

Mr Speaker, I move on to the question of \$800 000 paid to Federal Hotels in interest on the value of its assets between the time of the takeover and the final settlement. It is \$800 000 which we will not get back; it has been lost to the taxpayer because of this government's inability to negotiate properly. It is \$800 000 which again was committed well before the Chief Minister made his statement that no funds had been diverted from the budget to purchase the casinos. These figures and the casino operators' agreement reveal that the Northern Territory government has distributed largess to the new operators in a way that was not available to Federal Hotels. For Federal Hotels, the calculation of gaming tax was simple: it was 20% of the turnover less the winnings in Darwin and 15% in Alice Springs. The new operators were allowed to take out from their guaranteed rate of return to the property trust, the cost of direct labour and associated costs and the total overhead costs of the 2 casinos. In other words, in the first few years, the new operators have been allowed a set of deductions so generous that they eliminate almost the entire tax base. Hence, on the turnover of about \$4m in the September quarter, they paid \$245 compared with Federal Hotels' previous quarterly payment of \$775 000.

Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition indicated, there are 2 separate and essential issues that the Chief Minister should have addressed in his speech. He should have informed the Assembly why he intentionally misled the Northern Territory public in his press statement of 28 November. Further, he should have explained to this Assembly the reasons why government

money has been used as loans and outright gifts to enable one set of private operators to purchase casinos from another set. At his press conference on 25 January, the Chief Minister gave what he considered to be a full and frank briefing and invited the press, if it had further questions, to contact him. When it took up that opportunity, he stated that nothing more could be said at that stage but a full disclosure would be made in the Assembly. Mr Speaker, we have had what the Chief Minister calls a full disclosure.

However, on the key question of returns from gaming taxes, we still do not have any real figures. It is on this question that the success of the intervention in the casinos and the expenditure of public moneys in their purchase ultimately rests. Despite the real importance of these figures, the only numbers we have come from the September and December quarterly accounts. As I said, they reveal a stark difference in the amount of gaming tax paid to consolidated revenue. This is a staggering difference. It beggars the imagination and demands some explanation.

In his statement today, the Chief Minister justified this by saying that, over a 15-year period, given certain common assumptions, Federal Hotels would have paid \$166m in gaming tax and the new operators \$196m in gaming tax. We are not told what these common assumptions are. We are supposed to take them on trust. What the Chief Minister is in fact saying is that, in the year 2000, the Northern Territory government will be \$30m better off under this new arrangement. Do not forget that out of that \$30m must come the \$2m loan repayment and interest repayments on that.

Then, in the very next paragraph, the Chief Minister conceded that \$30m is not a true figure and that the figure in real terms will be much less because of the need to discount the value of gaming taxes received over the 15 years. Then we get back to a situation which has plagued this debate all the way along. The government makes bald assertions yet no evidence or means of checking is provided. The Chief Minister's speech refers to a schedule containing a computer analysis of financial returns which may throw light on this matter. However, this analysis was not provided to the opposition in the documents given to it yesterday. If the numbers are there and worked out at each of the discount rates between 6% and 12%, why were they not supplied to this Assembly. There can only be one reason: they reveal an embarrassingly small difference in real terms between Federal Hotels' projections and the new operator's projections for gaming tax. At a discount rate of 12%, our conservative figure is that the real value to the Northern Territory is not \$30m but around \$7m; that is, \$7m extra over 15 years and fully realisable in the year 2000. That is not taking into consideration the \$8m-\$9m the government has spent setting this deal up or the money the Northern Territory has forgone through the loss of confidence in the Northern Territory caused by the government's behaviour in this matter.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, we believe that the whole casino affair reveals a set of decisions and agreements, made or entered into by this Chief Minister, which involves significant financial disadvantage to the Territory. The government has seen fit this morning to offer a set of explanations to most of those decisions and arrangements. We do not accept those explanations. I have outlined in the last few minutes a set of explanations which I believe are the real reasons for this litany of cheap loans and gifts of public money. It is a glaring case of mismanagement, and most of it is attributable to the partypolitical decisions made by the honourable Chief Minister in October and November.

Mr Speaker, for just one moment let us accept that all the decisions were

the unfortunate result of factors far outside the control of the government. This is certainly the argument being put forward in the document released today. If this Assembly accepts that argument, it only brings us back to the central issue of this censure motion. These loans and these gifts were all made prior to 28 November 1984. They were made after the Chief Minister was elevated to the position. They were the decision of the Chief Minister yet he felt justified on 28 November in denying that funds were diverted from the budget. This leaves the Chief Minister with one simple question to answer: why on 28 November did he deny the diversion of government funds? The answer is obvious. The Chief Minister deserves the strongest possible censure of this Assembly.

Mr DONDAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in speaking to this censure motion, there is quite a lot that one could say. Time will be the defeating factor.

Mr Bell: We will give you an extension, Nick.

Mr DONDAS: Well, that is good. I will take it.

Mr Speaker, I would like to start with a particular document which I believe is one of the most important aspects of this debate. Right from the outset, I would say that the censure motion which states that the Chief Minister has deliberately deceived and fraudulently cheated the people of the Northern Territory is absolutely a lie and a mischievous statement made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Just let us reflect on where this trouble first started. It first started on 18 October 1984. For the benefit of honourable members, I have a copy of the Commonwealth Gazette dated that day. I will read out the whole Gazette notice. It was an interim order. The last paragraph says:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PAUL JOHN KEATING, the Treasurer aforesaid, pursuant to section 22 of the FOREIGN TAKEOVERS ACT 1975, for the purpose of enabling due consideration to be given to the question of whether an order should be made under subsection 21(2) of the said Act, by this order prohibit the entering into of the proposed arrangement by Nandakot and Fernbank for a period of ninety days after this order comes into operation.

Dated 18 October 1984 and signed, Paul Keating, Treasurer.

Mr Speaker, I would like now to refer to a statement made by the former Chief Minister of this Assembly. It is in the last Parliamentary Record and fills 9 pages. In probably his last speech in this Assembly as the former Chief Minister, he offered answers and tabled papers in relation to the financial affairs of the Federal Hotels group. Prior to the Chief Minister tabling those documents, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked a series of questions. In fact, I went to the trouble of counting those questions. I think they totalled about 21 or 22 questions. He was demanding from the former Chief Minister answers to those questions.

At that time, the Leader of the Opposition supported some of what I had said about the former Chief Minister's departure from this Assembly. He also said that he hoped that, before the Chief Minister departed from this place, some evidence supporting the original claims regarding Federal Hotels' financial affairs would be tabled. The Chief Minister tabled those documents and, now that the Leader of the Opposition has returned, I will remind him of

the 8 or 9 pages of documents. The opposition spoke about collusion, Mr Speaker. We can only assume that the collusion that took place was between the Leader of the Opposition, the Managing Director of Federal Hotels and the federal Treasurer to stop an application to the FIRB involving an operator - not an owner. At approximately the same time, FIRB approval was given to the Queensland casino's owners and for South Australian casino operations. Here, we are talking about a mere operator, not an owner. The federal Treasurer intervened, probably at the request of the Leader of the Opposition because, at that particular time, he was acting like a schoolboy. He had a torch to carry for Federal Hotels and he could see that he would go down the gurgler in a federal election and a by-election. Of course, history speaks for itself. The Leader of the Opposition ran his campaign on that issue. He ran it on the basis that the former Chief Minister had diddled the people of the Northern Territory of millions of dollars.

After the federal election, in connection with the by-election, he stood outside this Assembly for a television advertisement. He said: 'People of Darwin, questions need to be answered. Don't vote for the CLP on Saturday because they haven't done the right thing. They have taken all this money from you'. On that date, the people of Jingili told the Leader of the Opposition that they were fed up with him.

Let us talk about other things, Mr Speaker. I think I have made my point in regard to those 2 elections. There has been talk of ineffective negotiations by the Chief Minister. I think one must really consider the climate in which those negotiations were held. I would like to read out part of a press release that pertains to what I am talking about. It is from the Sydney Morning Herald of 24 April 1984. I will give it to the Leader of the Opposition later.

Mr B. Collins: It is a newspaper cutting, not a press release?

Mr DONDAS: It is a newspaper cutting.

Mr B. Collins: Fine.

Mr DONDAS: And you can have it. It reads:

Federal Hotels Chairman, Mr Greg Farrell, said: 'It is not my company's policy to sell casino assets but I was persuaded by the logic of incorporating the 2 properties in the overall development scheme'. But the logic of disposing of the expense of investment must also have figured.

One of Ipec's directors and holders of 6% of the company's capital, Mr Stanley Ho, told Business Review Weekly last week: 'Let us be honest. The casinos in Alice Springs and Darwin ... haven't been doing too well'.

Mr Haddad conceded that, although the 2 casinos were making an operating profit, they were not spinning enough money to pay themselves off. They were not servicing their capital. Federal interest charges of \$3.64m for the first half of the year to 30 September 1983 helped keep the company in the red. The casinos in Darwin, Alice Springs and Launceston were identified as the main culprits.

In 1983, Federal Hotels cost its parent IPEC a loss of \$3.8m. By selling the northern casinos, the company will not only get rid of its two biggest cash drains, it will make a profit on the sale.

Mr Farrell said that the sale will yield a premium on book value and that the funds raised would reduce group debt.

Mr Haddad said that Federal Hotels were tremendously pleased with the proposed sale and that, in the long term, it was probably in the best interests of the company.

He said that, 'in the long term, it was probably in the best interests of the company'. There was a negotiated price of \$49.5m but where did that \$49.5m start from? It began at about \$70m, if the original valuations were to be taken seriously. Then Federal Hotels came down to \$55m. The government's valuation was \$44m and later \$47.1m. The Chief Minister, in a situation where Federal Hotels would not move from \$55m, was able to conclude an arrangement that bought the casinos on an interim basis for \$49.5m.

We must remember that, at that particular time, there were obvious advantages in an early settlement: the additional interest on the settlement price which was accruing under the legislation from 1 October 1984. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition a few months ago complained about the \$800 000 that had been paid to Federal Hotels in the acquisition and the interest charges that accrued. If the arrangements and the negotiations could not have been finalised at that particular date, there was no guarantee that they would have been finalised by the end of January, the end of February or the end of March.

Mr B. Collins: You wrote the rules.

Mr DONDAS: Only if settlement could not be obtained. There was the possible escalation of costs because of a prolonged legal action. In some particular quarters, it was thought that legal fees could be as high as \$1m per party. A point of contention was whether the \$49.5m plus interest should have been met in the interim by the way of government funds. Let us just talk about the government funds for a moment. It was, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition just pointed out, an act of parliament that said that the Northern Territory government had to acquire the casinos and not anybody else. Therefore, it was the Northern Territory government that had to pay the cheque. That was when the honourable Leader of the Opposition was racing around outside about a month ago and saying: 'Oh, it was a Northern Territory government cheque; Northern Territory taxpayers' money'. People outside thought that maybe there was something in what the Leader of the Opposition was saying: a cheque from the Northern Territory Treasury to Federal Hotels for \$49.5m. But what he did not say was that part of that \$49.5m was from a trust from the Australian Bank and the other money had to be put in place by Kumagai Gumi and by Henry and Walker.

Mr B. Collins: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr DONDAS: Mr Speaker, I sit here quietly and listen to the Leader of the Opposition and his diatribe. I would hope that he would sit here and do the same, even though he considers that he knows more than I do.

The point is that the government had to pay its cheque. But at the same time, statements were made that the moneys were to be recovered from the Australian Bank and from the trustees. We know that from the papers that have tabled this morning.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made a statement this morning about the tabled documents which detailed some \$30m extra to be made under the new

tax regime over a 15-year period. The Chief Minister said that, whilst he would not table those documents, he was prepared to let the Leader of the Opposition see them on a confidential basis. Let him see the papers first, then worry about the discounting factor later; fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

The Leader of the Opposition and his deputy spoke about a lack of business confidence since the casino acquisition debate began several months ago. The only thing that I can say is that, if there had not have been an early settlement of the \$49.5m and an additional \$2.5m paid over the agreed arrangement, there may have been a lack of investor confidence in this area. That was one of the things that we took into consideration. We had to pay \$49.5m because Federal Hotels would not move below \$55m. I really blame the Leader of the Opposition for the Northern Territory government having to pay the extra \$2.5m. When the acquisition legislation was being processed, he was running around like a schoolboy yelling foul play and asking how the CLP free enterprise government could be doing this to a private enterprise company. What the Leader of the Opposition did not take into consideration at that time is that the licence given to a casino operator is very different from the type of licence given to people who might drive a taxi or operate a hire car. The member for Millner's remarks about ineffective negotiations are a load of rubbish.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the decision to settle was made at a politically crucial time. It was made at the time so that the operators who were standing in the wings could take over the operations as quickly as possible. Let us talk about other political statements that are made at crucial times. For example, the Prime Minister, in the March 1983 election campaign, made a statement that we would get a railway and a new airport. I understand a tender for a new airport has been accepted but there will not be any construction this year. Shame. They talk about political expediency! What is good for the goose must be good for the gander.

Mr B. Collins: Is that your justification?

Mr DONDAS: No, it is not my justification but it is my justification for your interjection.

The opposition said that Kumagai Gumi had not put up its money until last Thursday. According to the rules of the FIRB - and I am very surprised that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not know this - Kumagai Gumi could not put its money into the trust until such time as Henry and Walker's money was in place. I can assure members that Henry and Walker's money was to go into the trust before 18 October. If it were not for the interference of the FIRB accepting the recommendation from its minister not to proceed, maybe we would not be in this particular mess today. The Kumagai Gumi money is in place and the trust has paid back to the Northern Territory government \$21m plus an interest rate equal to what it would have been getting on a 180-day bull market.

Mr Speaker, I turn to a couple of the questions asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is important that this be raised in the context of this debate. He asked whether there are any changes to be made to the NT gaming laws and, if so, what those changes are. He is frowning; he does not remember asking these questions but he did, and Hansard will prove it. The answer to that is no. The controls to be exercised over the operators flow through the operators' agreement.

Mr Speaker, I am unable to go through the 21 questions that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised but there was one very important one: 'In the event of a corporate raid on Henry and Walker, are there written assurances as to the future of the casinos and the proposed development?' My answer to him is really in 2 parts. I would tell him to investigate the company shareholdings. At the same time, Henry and Walker is such a very closely knit company that it would probably be very difficult for anybody to take it over.

The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to debate a statement by the Chief Minister this morning regarding the casino acquisitions. He chose to proceed with this censure motion. His reason for doing so was purely to protect his own political future because, as we understand it, the Leader of the Opposition is having problems within his own political party infrastructure and is trying to divert attention from himself.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, it has been a pretty depressing morning - the first day in here without Everingham. I was thinking about it the other day and it really came home to me hard this morning. I said the other day that we have had 50 years of continuous and progressive political development in the Northern Territory - 50 years of development with a parade of distinguished men and women like Jock Nelson, Tiger Brennan, Dawn Lawrie, Pam O'Neil, Goff Letts and Paul Everingham. After all that, we end up with this lot, the new Northern Territory government - Captain Rabbit and the new-age thinkers. What a bunch! Mr Speaker, the problem with this lot is this: they are so crooked they could not lie straight in bed.

Every time the Chief Minister opens his mouth on this casino deal, we hear another whopper. I did not intend to introduce this into my final summing up because the basis of the censure motion stands firmly. But, during his response this morning, he gave us another whopper on the casino deal and proved himself, once again, to be deliberately misleading people, inside and outside of this Assembly. He said: 'No time limit on Myilly Point. Who talks about time limits on Myilly Point? It is all going to happen in the fullness of time'. Mr Speaker, I refer here to 9.1 of the agreement that he tabled himself in the Legislative Assembly which indicated that Aspinall and Greate Bay each acknowledge that the tourist resort complex of which the new casino will form a part is to be developed in accordance with the terms of the heads of agreement: 'In the event a contract for such development is not executed within 5 years, which contract must provide for the expeditious development ... Aspinall may terminate the agreement to the provisions with forgiveness of any and all amounts which may then be due to the Northern Territory Development Corporation'.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister again told us there was no time limit on Myilly Point. Not only is there a time limit, if it is not done within 5 years, the private equity participants walk out and, once again, we pay the bill. One thing we have been saying is in fact incorrect. A new piece of information came from Treasury this morning. I suggest that people who are interested in this should look at the facts as outlined in the papers tabled by the Chief Minister. Look at my press statements over the last 6 months, put them next to the Chief Minister's press statements on the same set of facts and see who comes out of it with any credibility.

We intend to cover some of the detail in this agreement, probably in a censure motion tomorrow morning because it is that bad. We have calculated that the figure mentioned in the Northern Territory News yesterday, an immediate loss of \$7m in this deal, is correct. However, what that did not

take into consideration was the \$2.5m which has been lost in the last 12 months in gaming taxes that Federal Hotels paid in its last operating year. It did not take into account the \$2m that is to be paid back over the next 15-odd years which is to come out of our own profits. When you add all that together, the total sum is \$11.5m down the gurgler so far. Mr Speaker, what a deal! I will cover that in a later debate.

As I said, the Chief Minister cannot open his mouth on this issue without confusing and further deceiving the people of the Northern Territory as to what kind of a deal he has created. It is an absolute disgrace. I will tell you where we were wrong, Mr Speaker. The one thing that we have had wrong over the last 6 months is that we have been saying that \$245 has been paid in the last quarter by the new operators as compared with almost \$800 000 by Federal Hotels. This morning, the Northern Territory Treasury revealed that the \$245 is, in fact, a carry-over sum from Federal Hotels' taxes and that, to this time, the new operators have not paid a cent. That is the only fact we had wrong. Compare the track records of the new Chief Minister and myself over the last 6 months on this issue.

Mr Speaker, we spent all last night looking through these documents and, on every page, I saw an opposition press release over the last 6 months. Have a look at the conditions. Have a look at the reasons why the government said it was forced to fork out this extra money as a gift. The second last reason was that, if it had not, the new operators might have walked out on the deal. That is precisely what I speculated - and it was only speculation - happened last year. It had the government well and truly over a barrel. It was not its fault; it had been led into this deal. It was not Federal Hotels' fault.

Mr Speaker, I could cop this nonsense about compulsory acquisition if the 2 casinos in Tasmania had fallen down around the ears of Federal Hotels in the last 12 months and if the 3 hotels it operated in the Northern Territory had collapsed overnight. But the fact is that those casinos are continuing to pay the Tasmanian government a substantial sum of money in gaming taxes and Federal Hotels is continuing to operate successfully. The one scenario that the government never covers in any of these debates is the option of letting them run their own place, and paying \$2.5m a year which we then collect. That does not even come into the thinking of these people any more. It really is cloud cuckoo land stuff taken to ridiculous extremes. Do not tell me that John Haddad came into this Assembly with a loaded gun and pointed it at the head of the former Chief Minister and said: 'I force you to pass this compulsory act of acquisition which means you then have to pay us'. The boot was on the other foot. The government wrote the rules. It passed the act of parliament and used the conditions of its own act as a reason for trying to create the ridiculous impression that the new Chief Minister obtained some kind of marvellous bargain. He really does live in Walter Mitty land. If that is the result of new-age thinking, I do not want a bar of it.

Mr Speaker, I will conclude on the relevant point in this debate. The Chief Minister's statement was indeed issued at a crucial time last year. Because he was not making any secret of it, we know that the CLP candidate in the federal election knew he had a hard job in front of him. 700 votes placed differently in 70 000 would have changed that result. Some people very close to the CLP have said to me, quite specifically: 'If any of this had come out before the election, it would have been goodbye to Everingham'. There is not a single person in the Northern Territory who doubts that. The Deputy Chief Minister carried on at length this morning about how terrible our accusations were. In fact, he highlighted the issues. Those accusations were refuted by

a statement we now know to be false and refuted for no other reason than that the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory put the partisan advantage of his own party before his responsibility to account honestly to the people who put him here as Chief Minister for how he looked after their affairs and their money. Mr Speaker, have a look in Hansard at the explanation that he put on this document.

Mr Speaker, the carefully crafted parts of this press release from the Chief Minister are all the paragraphs apart from the first. The careful references to departmental funds etc were deliberately created to cement in place the absolute falsehood contained in the opening paragraph, and he cannot get around it. The Chief Minister refuted claims that the Northern Territory government had diverted funds from its budget to purchase the casinos. That stands there.

I did not take the trouble to send across to my office for a copy of the letter for every member of this Assembly for nothing. It was so that it would not be taken out of context. The only relevance of the letter received from the Chief Minister yesterday is that it simply identifies - and it was not taken from a trust account - the appropriation in the budget from which came the \$2.5m cash payment which was given away by the Northern Territory government. Not a single explanation in all of the nonsense we heard this morning affects that in the slightest. It stands.

Mr Speaker, we are faced with a Chief Minister who, on his first day on the job, has indicated that he simply cannot be believed. It is as simple as that. He is on the record as saying it. We saw the usual performance from the people opposite this morning when I mentioned the fact that they had successfully deceived people. The trouble is that there is still that lingering feeling in the electorate that, if a person is the head of government and he puts out that categorical statement, until it is proven otherwise, you have to give him the benefit of the doubt. It is not a question of people being foolish or people being duped because they are stupid. It is because the Northern Territory people were prepared to give the new Chief Minister the benefit of the doubt when he assured them, in the face of our statements to the contrary, that no funds had been diverted from the budget for the purchase of the casinos. They believed him. Mr Speaker, we now know that he has been exposed for what he is: a person who not only deliberately and knowingly tells people that something has not happened that he personally ordered be done 2 weeks earlier but one is perfectly happy to sit here with a grin on his face and say: 'I got away with it. What's wrong with you? You are going to go down 19 to 6'. That is all it amounts to.

Mr Speaker, I will tell you the result of this. We are going to be able to nail the government on the rotten deal it has handed the Northern Territory at every budget session from now on. No one is going to take the statements of this new Chief Minister seriously in his first term. The basic point of the censure motion has not been answered. In fact, it has been affirmed by this debate this morning. Nothing has changed. He made a false statement. He admits the facts now. He simply said that it was done to save an election. Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister stands condemned by his own words and he should resign.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6

Mr Bell
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith

Noes 19

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Hatton
Mr Manzie
Mr McCarthy
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Setter
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Motion negatived.

MOTION

Report of the Northern Territory Ombudsman 1983-84

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I move that the Sixth Annual Report of the Northern Territory Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 1984, tabled in the Assembly on the 26 February 1985, be printed.

Motion agreed to.

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 95)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill proposes a number of amendments to the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act. That act is part of a package of uniform legislation developed and implemented jointly by the Commonwealth, the states and the Territory to control and regulate offshore exploration and production of petroleum. In essence, Commonwealth legislation covers blue water exploration and complementary state or territory legislation covers activity up to the 3-nautical-mile limit. The agreement under the offshore constitutional settlement is that the states and the territories shall act to keep their legislation as uniform as is practicable with that of the Commonwealth.

Mr Speaker, the Commonwealth and the various state and territory authorities responsible for administering offshore petroleum legislation found it necessary to amend their acts. As a result, the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Amendment Act 1984 became law in October 1984. The Commonwealth has now requested the Territory and the states to enact amending legislation in line with that act. The bill now before the Assembly is the positive response of the Territory to the request of the Commonwealth. Apart from some minor

drafting amendments, the bill provides for the establishment of revenue considerations as a factor the government may take into account in issuing directions to control the rate of production from a particular petroleum field. Additionally, it enhances the right of the government to establish and enforce safety zones around offshore rigs and installations.

Mr Speaker, the Commonwealth legislation was settled in consultation with, and agreed upon by, all the states and the Territory and, at the federal level, by all political parties. This bill embodies the necessary amendments and, accordingly, I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

FISH AND FISHERIES AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 87)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr HATTON (Ports and Fisheries): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill will provide legislation for the Northern Territory fisheries and will allow the minister administering the Fish and Fisheries Act to make declarations which will control various activities in the fishing industry. By notice in the Gazette, the minister will be able to declare variations in boundaries of fisheries to reflect the industry's need to be allowed to fish where the resource is available. This will greatly assist fishermen who are precluded at present from many areas where known stocks of fish are available.

The bill will also delete the necessity for assistant fishermen to be licensed independently of their employers. The Commonwealth amended the Fisheries Act of 1952 in June 1984 deleting the requirement to license the assistants in Commonwealth waters. To maintain parity, the Northern Territory intends to follow suit. The necessity to license assistants has been a cumbersome arrangement to manage and a severe impost on the industry. The responsibility for recording assistants will now rest with the licensed fisherman who must maintain a record of his employees.

A matter of prime importance in this bill is the increase in penalties for offences against the fish resources of the Northern Territory. The bill provides a fine of \$3000 for such things as fishing in closed waters or taking of fish out of season. Second offences carry a maximum fine of \$5000 and subsequent offences carry fines of up to \$10 000 or imprisonment for 2 years. Until now, there has not been a progression of fine levels and this amendment will provide a guide for members of the judiciary when handing out sentences relative to the seriousness of the offence. Under the present act, the maximum fine that the Administrator may set for an offence against the regulations is \$1000. This has not changed since the Fish and Fisheries Act came into effect in 1980. The fisheries legislation is structured in such a manner that the major powers are embodied in the Fish and Fisheries Act and the specific provisions relating to fisheries, including many offences, are covered by the regulations. It is for this reason that the maximum fine that the Administrator may set for offences against the regulations has been increased to \$10 000. The increase in fine levels is not simply a matter of updating. The new levels should be seen as severe or more appropriate because they reflect the serious nature of fisheries offences.

Mr Speaker, this bill proposes to make it an offence for a person, other than the holder of a fishing licence, to have in his possession a gill-net, which is not a new provision under the Fish and Fisheries Act. However, this amendment aims at omitting a defence available under the existing act. Under the present provisions of the act, it is almost impossible to obtain a conviction for the illegal possession of a gill-net as the defence provision is too broad and, at the very least, makes it difficult to establish that a person was intending to commit an offence.

The proposed amendment is specific in its provisions. Sellers, makers and repairers of gill-nets registered with the Fisheries Division will be exempt from this provision. The Director of Fisheries may, in writing, grant exemptions for persons required to have a gill-net in his possession. Such requests may be made in writing or by radio or telephone message and approval given at the time followed by written approval. Such provision will be useful in cases of urgency where a licensed fisherman may arrange the immediate delivery of a gill-net to replace one lost or damaged at sea. It has become obvious that unlicensed persons are purchasing gill-nets and it can only be assumed that such gill-nets are destined for illegal use. This amendment will greatly assist in stopping this practice.

Generally, the bill is designed to improve the management and protection of the Northern Territory fisheries resources and I commend it to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

FLAG AND EMBLEM BILL

(Serial 96)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The primary intention of this bill is to set out comprehensively, both by description and reproduction, the official arms and flag of the Northern Territory. The legislation will provide for public information, an authority for written description and an exact reproduction of the arms and the flag. In this respect, I draw particular attention to schedules 1 to 4 which set out, both by description and reproduction, the arms and the flag of the Territory. Although the reproductions in the bill are in black and white, it is intended that the arms and flag will be shown in colour when the act is promulgated. This Assembly will be aware that there is widespread reproduction of the Territory flag for advertising, tourist sales and wearing apparel. Mr Speaker, I expect that these uses will continue. Indeed, the flag and various Territory emblems are of great promotional value to the Territory, particularly in the tourist industry. My government actively encourages the extension of their use. For this reason, the bill contains no restrictions on the use of the Territory flag.

Mr Speaker, clause 6 provides that the only purposes for which the arms of the Territory may be used are for Territory government purposes or bona fide educational purposes within the Territory. I am sure that honourable members will agree that the use of the Territory arms for non-official purposes, with all the attendant dangers of unauthorised persons insinuating that they officially represent the Territory in some way, should not be permitted.

Clause 8 empowers His Honour the Administrator to declare an emblem to be a Territory badge or an official emblem of the Territory. Emblems to be so declared will be a matter for consideration by the government in due course.

Clause 9 provides that no use may be made of declared emblems except with the prior written authorisation of the minister and in accordance with the conditions of that authorisation. An example of the use to which these provisions may be put could be to declare an official Territory badge for the use of sportsmen and women representing the Territory.

Clause 12 requires the Attorney-General's written consent to initiate proceedings for an offence against the proposed act and unnecessary prosecutions for minor breaches will therefore be avoided. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 26 February 1985.

Mr DONDAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in rising to support the address in reply, I would like to talk about the things that are specifically related to my portfolio responsibilities.

One of the important things that will take place in the next 12-18 months is the trade development zone and the need for the Northern Territory government to attract new industry into that zone. The high cost of imports impedes any large expansion in the manufacturing industry and a small work force in the absence of a local mass market also has detrimental effects on expansion. Penetration of export markets is essential if NT manufacturers are to gain access to a larger consumer base.

Customs privileges are available under existing Commonwealth laws which exempt from duty imports that will be used in manufacturing a commodity for export. Other exemptions are also available and they will be canvassed more thoroughly later this year. It is my intention to present to the Assembly a trade development zone bill.

Mr Speaker, in the past we have had trade missions participating at the various seminars and expos in the immediate Asian vicinity. The Northern Territory government must maintain an aggressive approach if it is to encourage our exporters to ply their wares in those foreign parts. Of course, the more that we manufacture here for export, the more impact we will have at the Darwin level.

Prior to cyclone Tracy, we had a population of 45 000 and very little was being done by way of manufacturing. In the last 10 years, and with the population increase in Darwin, the manufacturing industry, especially light industry, has become self-generating. The next step is to manufacture as much as we can to export to other markets.

Last year, we attended the Brunei trade fair. In a radio interview during the week, I was asked whether I thought that overseas trade missions were junkets. I said that I did not support that particular statement because, in the past 12 to 18 months, Northern Territory exporters have been able to penetrate some of these Asian markets. One good example is QUF, a Territory company. For a number of years it has been exporting milk and dairy products

to Brunei. Horticultural products have been exported to Singapore. Until such time as we are able to upgrade products, it is going to be very difficult for us to penetrate those markets. Territory exporters have been working very closely with government instrumentalities such as ADMA and the Northern Territory Development Corporation to enable them to upgrade their products and then to secure markets.

Another success on the overseas trade mission was Mr Bob Neate of Neata Glass. He designed some glass French doors which won an Australian Design Award. Mr Neate has secured some very good orders for his door products in some of the more exclusive apartments in Singapore.

Unless we send trade missions, there is very little hope of increasing our manufacturing and exporting base. This year, there will be further trade missions to Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Following on from that, the Northern Territory Development Corporation is conducting a survey to try to establish strategies to upgrade both air and sea freight services.

Another important development has been the conception and completion of Yulara. One must not forget the Sheraton Hotels under construction in Alice Springs and Darwin. They will be very important in developing our tourism infrastructure. Sir Frederick Sutton has made an announcement to complete a hotel on his old car yard site. Just recently, another gentleman by the name of Skonis announced that he will construct a hotel as well.

The other exciting proposal is the Kakadu infrastructure at Jabiru. Discussions are taking place with the Gagadju Association for the construction of a hotel resort facility in that region. I am pleased to say that the Chief Minister has had correspondence with Mr Clyde Holding, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. He has also sent copies of correspondence to the Prime Minister and to the minister responsible for the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Mr Cohen. Hopefully, in the next 2 months, some decision may come forward from those good gentlemen on the size of the Jabiru infrastructure. At the moment, as the Leader of the Opposition would be aware, approval has been granted for at least a 50-unit resort in that area. With the tourism boom that we are expecting, we are hoping to be able to increase the size of that particular infrastructure.

Mr B. Collins: Did you manage to catch John Brown at the airport?

Mr DONDAS: I can talk about John Brown later. He is not a friend of the Territory, but who is down there.

Kings Canyon is another exciting proposal. Just recently, Cabinet and some of our parliamentary colleagues were able to have a look at some of the proposed development of the Kings Canyon area. I am happy to say that some of the proposals range from about \$10m to about \$45m. Hopefully, in the next 2 or 3 months, decisions on that particular facility will be finalised. The important thing is that we are talking about Aboriginal equity participation. Hopefully, that will become a reality.

Another area that we have taken time out to examine is Stapleton Station. I have not had the opportunity of seeing the country myself but I believe it is only an hour and a half drive from Darwin and contains some tremendous country and tremendous sights. I certainly hope that we would be able to develop that in the future.

Many things have been said about the old Darwin Hospital site and Myilly Terrace. As members would be aware from discussions this morning, there is a commitment to commence construction there to provide additional casino and hotel resort infrastructure within 5 years. I think enough has been said about that.

There are many other smaller development proposals for tourism in mind. Hopefully, the Northern Territory Development Corporation will be able to provide some financial assistance to ensure that those particular facilities do come on line. The important thing is that we must take into consideration the South Road's completion by 1986. The South Road will be completed between Port Augusta and Kulgera. I think there is an immediate necessity to try to provide infrastructure to satisfy tourist needs after 1986. I am happy to say that the honourable member for Braithling will represent me in an exercise between the Northern Territory Development Corporation, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and the South Australian Roads Division. They will make a trip up the South Road to examine the feasibility of further infrastructure in that area. Hopefully, that trip will take place some time after these Assembly sittings. I would like to be able to do the trip. There are plans for the Chief Minister, myself and some of the mayors of the Territory regional centres to make a trip either up the track or down the track. Hopefully, we will be in a position to advise the Assembly on our future developments.

Everybody would be aware of the administrative arrangements order made on 21 December which combined industry and small business, tourism, the NTDC, the Liquor Commission, the Public Service Commissioner's Office, industrial relations and workers' compensation under one portfolio. In regard to the Workers' Compensation Inquiry, I will be making a very short statement to the Assembly in the next couple of days and I will table the report. That report will be available to the community. Once we have received submissions from the various interested groups, such as the unions, the insurance industry, members opposite and members within my own parliamentary wing, the government will be in a position to decide what course of action to take.

The Vocational Training Commission has played a very important role in the Territory. It now comes under the Department of Industry and Small Business which is evaluating recommendations from the recent Kirby Report. My colleague, the Minister for Education, must make some amendments to his Education Act because certain portions of the VTC have been transferred to the Department of Education, such as Aboriginal training, liaison and also some of the TAFE services. It is my intention to try to maintain the VTC in its present form with some minor amendments until such time as we have had a complete chance to evaluate the Kirby Report's recommendations. I foreshadow that there will be amendments in the very near future. It is the intention of the government to maintain the purpose of the previous VTC but in a different form.

The Small Business Advisory Service is preparing to launch a number of new initiatives to enable small businesses to function and presumably to make a better contribution in the Northern Territory. One must remember that some 80% of Australia's economy is dependent on small business. Some of the initiatives that we are going to take relate to financial assistance and the promotion of business, industry and product. Some might think that that is duplicating the role of the NTDC. We do not see it as a duplicating role. We see it as a supplementary role.

It has an expanded counselling service. Just recently, we announced that business people in those Territory centres without a small business advisory facility will be able to obtain tapes to assist them.

Another important initiative is financial assistance to market professionally. If we are going to break into competitive markets, then our people must have a more professional approach.

We will be carrying out a review of the Public Service Act. There will be equal opportunity initiatives and the development of strategies to combat repetitive strain injuries, termed RSI. Some members may have heard this morning that there is a task force from Canberra in the Territory at the moment. It is holding discussions with various sectors of the public service and other interested groups. I would like to inform the Assembly that, at the request of the Prime Minister, the Northern Territory government is cooperating with that task force in providing as much assistance and evidence as possible. At this stage, as I understand it, some 30 definite cases of repetitive strain injury have been reported. There could be another 13 or 14 in the melting pot. It is something that we are concerned about. Hopefully, the public service will be in a position to provide some answers. I understand that the Public Service Commissioner has written to the various departments advising them of the procedures that those people who are at risk from RSI can follow.

The Public Service Commissioner's Office will maintain finance and administration scholarships. I understand that, for the 1985 year at the Darwin Institute of Technology, the Public Service Commissioner's Office has so far approved 32 scholarships. At the same time, we must take into consideration the School Leavers Employment Program for base grade clerks. In the last couple of years, the Northern Territory Public Service has been able to reserve its base grade positions for Territory school leavers. I understand that some 300 positions could be made available in various government departments at the base grade level. The Public Service Commissioner's Office is in its final interviewing stage of the selection process. It does not think that there will be any problem filling those 300 positions.

In relation to the review of the Public Service Act, it is proposed to streamline current provisions in respect of disciplinary procedures, appeal provisions, establishment procedures, delegation of powers, provisions for dealing with incompetent or non-productive people, discrimination in employment and the introduction of an independent appeal grievance body. It will be a very busy year for the Public Service Commissioner's Office. The review of various sections of the act has been proceeding for some time and, hopefully, we will be able to introduce some of those amendments into the Assembly towards the middle of this year.

Most members would be aware that, prior to 1978, there was very little support for the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau, as it was known in those days. If my memory serves me right, some \$250 000 was made available to the bureau which operated in Darwin and Alice Springs with a very small staff. It was not until self-government that increased funds were made available to the newly-established Northern Territory Tourist Commission. I am happy to say that the 1984-85 Tourist Commission budget is in excess of \$13m with some \$6m or \$7m being spent on information. Those figures will be firmer as we arrive at our supplementary estimates and final budget for the 1984-85 year.

Mr Speaker, as a former Minister for Tourism, you were primarily responsible for the initiative of setting up offices in the various Australian

capital cities, I am pleased to say that all capital cities, with the exception of Hobart, now have a Northern Territory tourist bureau and a Hobart office is expected to open later. An office has been established in Canberra and recently I had the good fortune to open a Northern Territory tourist bureau in Parramatta which is to complement the King Street office. Later this year, we will open another tourist office in Victoria at a place called Dandenong.

The important thing is that the initiative to open and extend these offices is certainly starting to pay off because the tourism sales and turnover in those bureaus have been increasing steadily over the last 12 months. The airline strikes in December certainly had an impact on the ratio of turnover but I understand that, for the first 6 months of the financial year, the figures are beyond the expected target. We can expect another increase on the figures that we achieved last year.

I would like to place on record that there is a lady named Meg Hale who runs one of the largest tourist operations in the top part of northern Queensland. She returned from the United States and gave the Queensland government a bit of a serve because she had found that, on the west coast of the United States, the Northern Territory was better known than Queensland. She thought that the Queensland government had to lift its game. The point that I am trying to make is that we are opening offices in many parts of the world, such as Los Angeles, Frankfurt, London, Singapore and Tokyo. If we are to maintain a place in the market, we will have to get out and sell because it is a very competitive market.

I attended a seminar on tourism which was conducted in Sydney last Friday by the Japanese Consul. The seminar was attended by about 300 people involved in various aspects of the travel industry. We were shown by way of circles on the map that the greatest number of Japanese tourists to Australia went to Sydney. The next largest group went to Melbourne and the third to the Gold Coast. I was happy to see that the Northern Territory picked up 2 circles: 1 for Alice Springs and 1 for Ayers Rock. The important fact is that Darwin was not a destination for Japanese tourists and neither was Adelaide nor Perth. However, with the placing of our representatives in the Tokyo region, I think that will change. The airline discussions that have taken place between the government, the federal minister and the operators will be very important in maintaining a level of service. Hopefully, the Chief Minister and I will be visiting Japan later next month to have discussions with Japan Airlines and one of its subsidiaries, All Nippon Airways. Perhaps some benefit may be derived from that because, at the moment, the government is seriously considering the provision of back-to-back chartering. I will go into that when more details come to hand. At the moment, our visitation runs to about 350 000 people a year and it is the Northern Territory government's aim to try to reach the 1 million target by the early 1990s.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, I endorse the comments made by His Honour the Administrator. Certainly, I look forward to the challenge of trying to stimulate interest in and the development of the Northern Territory.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I rise to address a few comments some of which the Minister for Industry and Small Business has touched on. It seems that I follow him around in his portfolio areas.

From our point of view, the Administrator's address to this Assembly was disappointing. There were very few new initiatives mentioned. The government appears to some extent to be resting on its record and I think that is a matter for some concern. There are some worrying signs starting to appear in the

Territory economy. Unemployment is and has been a problem in the Northern Territory for the last 18 months. It is not as severe as in other parts of Australia but the feature that distinguishes unemployment here is that it has remained rather steady while, in the rest of Australia, it has been steadily dropping.

The Administrator referred to the high rate of population increase. My information is that, in the last 12 months, the projected rate of population increase of 3.9% fell short by about 1%. In fact, our rate of population increase was somewhere around the 2.9% to 3% mark, the lowest it has been for a number of years.

We again had a reference to the steady growth in Territory employment. I know that there are contradictory statistics but I would ask everyone to have a look at the labour force statistics. As my friend, the new minister, knows, the labour force statistics reveal that there has not been a growth in the labour force in the Northern Territory over the last 12 to 18 months. The figures have remained reasonably constant around 57 000 to 58 000. I cannot explain that because it goes against other trends but it is happening and we ought to be aware of it and we ought to examine it. It is in that general context that I wish to comment about employment opportunities in particular but first I would like to take up a couple of things that the honourable minister said.

The opposition has been a consistent supporter of the trade development zone and will continue to be so. I would like to express my concern that today the minister did not seize the opportunity to provide us with a more detailed point of view on where he thought the government was going in relation to this. He started off very impressively and I thought we would get some firm guidelines and directions from the government on this issue. What we heard was general waffle and a promise of legislation later in the year. It would appear that nothing significant has happened on the trade development zone concept since we met in August last year. I hope that that appearance is wrong and that things are happening behind the scenes. I invite the minister, perhaps later in this sittings or in the April sittings at least, to make a statement on the broad directions the government is heading in relation to the trade development zone. I am not asking for legislation to be introduced if it is not ready because I realise that it is a fairly complicated job.

I too would reject the notion that trade missions are junkets. I have spoken to some of the people who have been on them and they assure me that they have not been junketing. Their main comment is that it has been very difficult to follow through with the contacts that they have made in the South-east Asian area. If there is one lesson we need to learn from dealing with the people to our near north, it is that we must follow through and that we are not going to win contracts on a one-day stop-over in Brunei or a one-day stop-over elsewhere. There must be a mechanism by which the contacts that are made on those visits can be followed through and pursued. I hope that the NTDC can pick that up and come up with some constructive ideas on how the small businessman, who really does not have the time or the resources to commit himself to that follow through, can be assisted in making the most of the market opportunities that are obviously available in the near north.

Mr Speaker, I wanted to share with you a couple of stories that I have heard about the Beaufort Hotel and the integrated performing arts centre complex which I hope will be finished before long. As I understand it, what has happened is that the architect, who I believe is an Australian based in Singapore, made mistakes on the minimum requirements between the floor and the

ceiling in many of the areas. Instead of there being room to install false ceilings so that all the services can go between the false ceilings and the actual ceilings, a gang of cement gougers have been employed to gouge out parts of the concrete floor to get the services in. That is a fairly strange story but it is not quite as strange as what happened in the restaurant area of the hotel, where the ceiling is very low indeed. Most of us here would probably bump our heads. The hotel owners or the restaurant manager decided to solve this difficulty by turning it into a Japanese restaurant which means that you go in and out on your hands and knees. I am assured that that is true. I look forward to seeing that when it is opened.

I was somewhat surprised when the minister addressed himself to the tourist area. He spoke well about the development of facilities in that area. This government has a very good record in relation to the development of tourist facilities. However, I am constantly amazed that the government does not address itself at any length to the question of the creation of employment opportunities in the tourist industry, particularly for Territorians as distinct from other people coming to the Northern Territory to take up jobs. As a measure of my concern, I would ask for example, how many jobs at Yulara are held by Territory residents, in the sense of people who were residing in the Territory before they went to Yulara. For example, how many croupiers at the casino are Territory residents in that sense? Without knowing the answer, I would be very surprised if it is very many, and that is of concern to me.

Mr Speaker, in a very real sense, at this stage in our development, we seem to have a colonialist approach to outside Territory investment. A typical colonialist pattern of investment is that money comes from outside. The profits largely go back outside and the management staff basically come from outside. The locals are given all the poorer-paid jobs and there is very little training of locals to take over the better-paid jobs. If you think that through carefully, I would submit that it is a pretty good summation of where we are in many of our tourist industry projects.

Of course, there is one additional factor in the Northern Territory: the government has offered a number of investors, particularly the bigger investors, a guaranteed rate of return or some other incentive to come here. Consider, for example, the casinos. In the last 12 months, the government has spent an enormous amount of time and energy arranging the transfer of the casinos from one operator to another yet, as far as I am aware, not once has the government addressed employment opportunities for Territory residents in that context. With all the money that we mentioned this morning, with which the government has assisted the new operators, one would think that the government would have been in an excellent position to insist on training programs for locals right through the structure of the casino. By training programs, I mean particularly those at the management level. I accept that the casino probably employs a large number of people as housemaids, janitors, cleaners and that sort of thing but I am concerned that the casino and other big projects are not taking up the opportunities that should be there for our young people to get involved in what is a worldwide industry that offers enormous potential.

What we should be looking at is, in 10 to 15 years time, some Darwin people - kids now but young adults then - being very high up in the Sheraton empire. There might be an assistant manager in New York or an assistant manager in Majorca or wherever.

Mr Palmer: What are the kids from New York going to do?

Mr SMITH: Any international hotel in Australia is full of American accents and people who are part of that worldwide empire. They have been trained there.

They have been given the opportunity there. I think it is time the government addressed that question to ensure that our kids are given the same opportunity. It is the biggest employment area in the Northern Territory at present and I do not think we are making enough of it. We have the clout, particularly through the generous government assistance that has been extended to these operators, to make more of it and give our kids a better chance.

Mr Perron: They like importing labour.

Mr SMITH: It is easier and cheaper.

Mr Speaker, a number of references have been made, particularly in the press, about the lack of hospitality and training school facilities in Darwin. I cannot understand why the government will not commit the necessary resources to establish some sort of facility in Darwin. It does not have to be a spanking new building but, in my view, it should provide some place that is suitable for training courses to be run for the hospitality and tourist areas.

Mr Harris: It is being done.

Mr SMITH: Well, thank you very much. I have not been made aware of it. There has not been any public comment on it as far as I am aware.

Also, I ask the Minister for Education to provide us with an update on what is happening with the position of director at Gillen House. That is a high-powered position which was advertised some months ago at a salary of \$40 000 to \$41 000. It indicated that the government had had a change in attitude to Gillen House. The government indicated at the time that it wanted to move on it quickly. Again, I have not seen any appointment made to that position and I would like to know what is happening.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister may be able to help me with my next concern which is in relation to restrictions on employment. I refer to the matter of payroll tax. I noted with some interest that he intends to introduce a bill tomorrow to amend the Pay-roll Tax Act. Perhaps it will address my concern. Everybody agrees that payroll tax is an iniquitous tax. In fact, what it does is tax employers for employing people. I think that, in a perfect world, everybody would like to get rid of it. Unfortunately, we do not have a perfect world and I commend the government on the initiative that it took 3 or 4 years ago to reduce the rate from 5% to 4.5%, the lowest in Australia. But what has happened is that our exemption threshold - the amount below which the tax does not apply - is also the lowest in Australia: \$150 000. In the states, their exemption threshold ranges from \$170 000 to \$420 000. The end effect of that is that, for annual payrolls up to \$300 000, Territory businesses pay more payroll tax than similar businesses in any state. In the Northern Territory, an employer with a payroll of \$300 000 would pay \$11 250 compared to \$10 833 in New South Wales and \$4166 in Victoria.

Mr Speaker, an annual payroll of \$300 000 would pay between 15 to 20 workers. There are not many businesses in the Northern Territory that employ more than 15 to 20 people. What we have at present is a payroll tax system that is structured so that it hits the majority of Territory businesses harder than they would be hit anywhere else in Australia. When you consider that we have the second highest weekly earnings in the whole of Australia, and that district allowance is included in payroll tax calculations, Northern Territory employers are hit very hard indeed. When you consider that the Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that, between 1974 and 1981, payroll tax increased from 1.5% of the total hourly cost of employing labour to 4.2% of the total

hourly cost of employing labour, you will see that payroll tax in the Northern Territory is a significant cost to employers.

I would urge the government, if it is not intending to do this tomorrow, to look at raising the exemption level so that we are not the highest taxed place in Australia for small businesses. It should also look at the prospect of indexing a new exemption level so that we do not face this problem again.

Mr Speaker, I wish to make a brief comment on workers' compensation. In terms of percentage of the total hourly cost of employing labour, workers' compensation in 1974 was 0.9% to 1%. It is now 4.1%. It is a significant cost that everybody now accepts we need to do something about. Along with most other people who have an interest in the area, I am looking forward with some interest to the report of the Workers' Compensation Inquiry. I hope that the report will mean significant changes to the legislation which will result in a significant reduction in costs to employers whilst preserving benefits for employees.

Mr Speaker, when we talk about costs, manufacturers in particular in the Darwin area have been most concerned about the recent significant increase in electricity costs. There is no doubt that the proposed 18% increase in electricity costs by the end of this year will mean a significant disadvantage to our growing secondary industry. In fact, that 18% increase takes it up to a 70% increase in the cost of electricity in the last 5 years. We are all aware that secondary industry faces significant disadvantages in terms of competition from outside the Territory. That is a result of isolation, the increased cost of raw material and other factors as well. I welcome the announcement by the Minister for Mines and Energy that he is considering restructuring electricity rates for manufacturers. I would hope that it is more than words and that, in the very near future, we will see proposals from the minister that may well have the prospect of reducing the costs of electricity to these people.

Mr Speaker, I want now to get back to one of my hobby horses: the tendering practices that this government continues to practise. I have referred many times in this Assembly of the disadvantage to everybody of the government policy of taking the lowest tender almost without exception. There are 2 areas where this policy is a real problem: school maintenance and Housing Commission maintenance. The Minister for Education will probably be very aware that a significant number of school maintenance contracts, particularly the grass cutting contracts, have been renewed recently because the existing tenderer was not able to perform at the price that he put in. The same thing has happened at the Housing Commission level. It is not the first time that the Housing Commission and the Department of Education have been caught. There must be a better way than opening up tenders, inviting everyone to come in and then taking the lowest tender.

It is quite clear that many people think that anybody can mow lawns and put in a ridiculously low quote. It is clear to everybody except the person who puts in a quote, and obviously some departmental people, that he cannot fulfil the tender. I hope that the Minister for Education and the Minister for Housing will address that problem because it does cause considerable inconvenience to schools and to people who live in Housing Commission flats. They are getting sick and tired of it and so am I.

The other example is more important. It concerns an electrical firm that came to the Territory in a big way. I will mention its name because I think it has gone out of business: McNiece Electrical. As I understand it, McNiece Electrical has ceased operation in the Northern Territory. It stopped work

midway through a number of very important contracts. One of the reasons why the police complex is so late is because McNiece was the electrical contractor and there were significant problems in obtaining a replacement. Again, it is an example of this lowest-price syndrome. My understanding is that, when McNiece tendered for the police complex, which was its first job in the Northern Territory, the relevant department did the right thing and called in a group of consultants. The consultants recommended that this particular firm not be invited to the Northern Territory. For some reason, the consultants were overridden and the tender was awarded to the firm. Now we have the result that many people were caught and considerable hardship was caused both to government departments and to private individuals. For example, one of my constituents who worked as a subcontractor to this company lost about \$80 000 and that is a loss that not many subcontractors can afford to carry.

Mr Speaker, as my time has almost run out, I will conclude by saying that we were somewhat disappointed that there was not more in the Administrator's speech. We hope that the government will address itself to what is rapidly becoming a very clear issue: the creation of employment opportunities in the Northern Territory for Territory residents.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I draw to the attention of the Assembly that this is the honourable member for Jingili's maiden speech and I ask that he be afforded due decorum.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, as I rise before you for the first time today, I feel very proud, proud to represent the electorate of Jingili and proud to be a Territorian. A lot of my pride, though, is due to the efforts of my predecessor, the Hon Paul Everingham, who held the seat for 10 years. During that period, Paul rose from a lowly backbencher to become our Chief Minister. He led us into self-government and was responsible for guiding us through the first 7 years of infancy as a self-governing territory. Whilst Paul was a very active Chief Minister, he did not neglect his electorate. He always found time to address his electorate responsibilities and attend to the problems of his constituents. He continues to take an active interest in the area and now, as one of my constituents, will doubtless keep me on my toes.

When Paul was first elected in 1974, the suburbs of Jingili and Moil, which now make up the Jingili electorate, were considered outer northern suburbs. Ten years later, due to the growth of Darwin, they have become inner northern suburbs. Generally, the population has changed from one of families with young children, and with a high turnover due to the transient nature of Darwin's population in those days, to one of more mature people with teenage or adult children. People have purchased their houses, settled down and made Darwin their home. Our community has largely stabilised and this in great part is due to Paul Everingham and the foresight of his successive CLP governments. I pay tribute to his efforts.

During my by-election campaign, I was most encouraged by the assistance received not only from party members but from supporters within the electorate. To these people, I owe a great debt because, through their efforts, their sweat, and their shoe leather, we were able to conduct a positive and active campaign. To these people who formed my campaign committee, I express my heartfelt thanks. To the people of the Jingili electorate, who showed their confidence in and support for the CLP, and for me as its candidate, I give my solemn undertaking to continue the good work already done by my predecessor. I will be untiring in my efforts to represent them effectively in the years ahead.

Mr Speaker, I was accused by some during the Jingili by-election of having a low political profile. I would suggest this is subject to interpretation. My

political history in the Northern Territory goes back to 1976 when I joined the Country Liberal Party as a member of the Darwin Branch and I subsequently assisted in the establishment of the North Darwin Branch. I can claim to be an inaugural member of that branch. Since that time, I have held various positions within the branch and I am its retiring chairman. I am pleased to relate that the North Darwin Branch continues to grow in numbers and plays an active role in the development of party policy and planning.

In August 1984, I was elected a vice-president of the Country Liberal Party, a position which I currently hold. This means that I am a member of the party's management committee and a delegate to its central council and annual conference. The point I am making is that I have a wide experience of the development of politics in the Northern Territory and will take the opportunity to put this to good use in my electorate and in this Assembly.

It is my intention to put my experience in small business and my involvement in sport to good use. I have therefore accepted offers to understudy the Minister for Industry and Small Business in that portfolio and the Minister for Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs in his portfolio.

The welfare of our youth is of concern to me and I will be taking a keen interest in the work being done by the Task Force on Juvenile Crime and youth support groups.

Some 8 years ago we fought an election on the issue of self-government and the Country Liberal Party supported that concept. History tells us the foresight and pioneering spirit of the Territory electors prevailed. They accepted the challenge and the CLP won that election. Those of us who were resident at the time can now look around and compare the bureaucratic bungling of pre-self-government days to the positive progressive government of today. We have come a long way in these short years of self-government. We have seen tremendous development right throughout the Territory and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of millions of dollars invested by private enterprise and by government. We have seen our population grow from 110 000 just prior to self-government in 1978 to an estimated 140 000 at 30 June 1984. This represents an increase of 21.4% in 6 years. That is quite a dramatic increase.

We have witnessed developments like Yulara, the casinos, the performing arts centre, Raffles, Marrakai, the museum, Palmerston etc. I could go on and on when I talk about such developments. What we have in fact observed is a government at work with policies of progressive development. These have resulted in continuing growth and the creation of permanent jobs for Territorians. We would have come a lot further had it not been for the lack of understanding of our goals and non-cooperation by successive federal governments. Unfortunately, we still have this problem. But having learned to live with it, we continue to press our cause with great vigour.

The day will come, and perhaps it is not too far distant, when we will achieve statehood. This will give us the independence and the control over our own destiny that we so earnestly desire - control over such matters as mining, national parks and Aboriginal affairs. Statehood must be approached with caution, however, as there are many pitfalls. We must seek statehood only when the people of the Northern Territory indicate a strong desire for their independence from Commonwealth control. We must accept it only when we have been able to negotiate the sort of financial arrangement that allows the continued growth and stability we currently experience.

The picture I have painted looks rosy and exciting. Of course, it is on the surface. What I have not mentioned so far are the social problems that are

inherent in a community with such rapid growth as ours. We have probably the youngest population in Australia. In fact, the average age of Territorians is somewhere between 25 and 30 years. The majority of our population would be below that age. We have as many people aged between birth and 4 years as we have aged between 20 and 24 years. This indicates a significant stabilising of the community since self-government. No longer is the majority being transferred here for a couple of years purgatory in this tropical hell. Our population has put down roots and purchased homes. People are having children, raising families and loving life in what we recognise as a tropical paradise and a land of opportunity. At least, that is what most of us are doing.

Regrettably, there are those for whom it does not work out this way. I am referring to some of our young people who choose to destroy their lives through the use of drugs or perhaps turning to crime. During my recent door-knocking campaign in my electorate, I received one message loud and clear. The message was that juvenile break and enters had reached epidemic proportions. This problem was immediately drawn to the notice of the Chief Minister, and His Honour the Administrator confirmed in his opening address that the Task Force on Juvenile Crime had been established. Together with other committees investigating allied problems, I am confident that its reports will allow us to develop a broad response which will successfully address the problem.

Whilst juvenile crime is a considerable problem, I hasten to add that delinquents are a small minority of our youth. The majority of our young people conduct themselves in a responsible manner and in their own way make a considerable contribution to the well-being of our community. I believe that we can be justly proud of our youth and of their parents and other adults who devote so much of their time to supporting young people through the numerous sporting bodies and youth groups that abound in our community. It is the efforts of these dedicated people, who are moulding the adult Territorians of tomorrow, that we should applaud. Our community has stabilised. No longer do children of today disappear south tomorrow. These young people will be our leaders of the future. I have every confidence in their ability to carry out that task.

Mr Speaker, there are numerous other issues that I could address today. However, I believe they are best left to another time. Let me assure you, Sir, that you will find me an active member of this Assembly, one who will not hesitate to participate and to contribute. May I close, Sir, with this quote from Benjamin Disraeli: 'No government can be long secure without a formidable opposition'. This government finds itself in such a position. I believe it is therefore incumbent on this backbench to monitor closely the actions of our government and, where necessary, to act as an opposition. Sir, I intend to actively participate in this exercise.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, it gives me pleasure to join in this address in reply to his Honour the Administrator. Northern Territory growth has been very rapid. When I came to this Assembly, the population was about 113 000. Today, we have more than 140 000 which is a very big increase. It is in the order of 21% since self-government, as the previous speaker said.

It is vital for the Territory that we grow because, if we have any hope of becoming economically independent to at least the level of the state, then we need that extra population. This government has promised that it will continue to promote economic and social infrastructure to help maintain our rate of growth, to create jobs, to create opportunities for people to show their entrepreneurial skills and to create the social environment which helps people stay here. My hope is that the government will know when to step back and encourage

people to take an independent role in the development of our Territory. I compare it to a parent-child relationship. As a child grows, it must achieve independence and parents must release control. I think the government should look at this and know when it should bow out to let people test the water for themselves. Let them sink or swim. It should resist the cries for help so that those people who are viable and strongly independent will contribute to the wealth of the Territory and no longer be a burden upon the taxpayer.

Much was said in His Honour's speech about tourism. We know the achievements which have occurred already. There is continuing progress. New developments are coming on stream almost daily and are proceeding to completion.

One area that does concern me is Kakadu. You will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, that during the 1983 election there was much talk about many millions being poured into Kakadu, an area where tourism should grow. In hindsight, it was nothing more than a prop for the opposition at election time to try to divert attention from its crazy uranium policy which stops 2 mines from operating in the Territory but allows one to operate in South Australia. It is a matter of clear deceit. It appalls me that it could make all these promises. Once it had lost, we heard very little from it.

In the area of primary production, I would draw members' attention to page 3 where it says that the aim of the government is to help the growing self-sufficiency in agricultural production where it can be sustained. Every area of agriculture is a risky business. You are not really safe until you have your money in the bank. You could have an excellent crop which is ready to pick, reap or whatever, and then storms could hit it and you could lose the lot. You could have an excellent crop. It goes off to market but, because there are excellent crops elsewhere, the profits are far below what they could have been.

There should be a decision on what is sustainable in this Territory of ours. I know we must try before we know what we can sustain. ADMA has been doing that down on the Douglas-Daly with grain marketing. We know that economies of scale often make things viable. Small amounts may not be economic. We must try. We must try to find out whether we can sustain that particular venture and get it on a level where we can hold our own in grain production.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I prefer the encouragement of private judgment so that individual people use their own money and skills to try to do it with a limited amount of government help. That way, there is less risk to taxpayers' money.

I note that the BTB campaign will continue. I bring to the attention of the Assembly a problem faced by certain station people in the southern region over destocking their stations. Some of these stations are being sent to the wall or very close to it because they do not have the cattle to turn off to cover their interest bills and they are getting deeper and deeper into debt. It is pleasing to note that not just for the Northern Territory but for much of northern Australia the economic effects of the campaign will be taken into account so that we do not drive people to the wall or send them broke. As one fellow said to a group of us at Alice Springs, we have suffered 7 years of drought and we have suffered X years of low prices but it has taken a couple of years of the BTB program of destocking to ruin us. That is not good. It is pleasing to note that the economic effects on these stations will be taken into account in the program.

I was pleased to hear mention of manufacturing and growth in manufacturing. Northern Cement in Darwin is producing cement, much of which is used in the Territory. I was absolutely delighted to hear that Northbrick is exporting bricks to Singapore. As you will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, a year or 2 ago our then Chief Minister was delivering a speech on exports. He mentioned the possibility of exporting bricks and there were great chortles of merriment from the opposition, particularly from the Leader of the Opposition who threw bricks at the Chief Minister from then on. I think even the Chief Minister muttered a couple of words under his breath about why that was put in his speech. He probably wanted to drop a brick on the speechwriter's toe. But it has happened. We are actually exporting bricks to Singapore and that is great for the Territory. It is great to see the same bricks coming down to Alice Springs in very large numbers. There are pallets all through my electorate and out on the golf course. Northbrick is spreading out over the Territory. That is great for business here and great for the Territory.

Small business is an interest of mine. We have a new portfolio which is very pleasing. I would offer some advice on the way the government could best help small business. One is to reduce the costs and problems of employment. Certain things were mentioned by the member for Millner. Most of us would agree with him. I am pleased to hear that he is concerned about this particular area. There are certain union people who seem to have the attitude that, as long as their union members have a job, they do not give a damn if others have one or not.

The government also, wherever possible, should reduce the red tape that destroys incentives to small business. Hours of paperwork each week kill the incentive. I praise the skills training that the Small Business Advisory Service has made available to small businesses. I believe that has helped. When you go into small business, you have to be an expert in many different fields. The work of these people is greatly appreciated by those who have attended their seminars.

The other one is the reduction of costs and charges. The Territory government has a pretty good record of trying to keep these down even though Canberra has forced it to try to raise as much money as it can within the Territory. Our attitude has been that, if we encourage people to come here, we will end up with more revenue-raising capacity than if we tried to kill their incentive. Taxation in the main is a federal concern. But I believe that small business is indeed the goose that lays the golden egg and I fear that it is strangled. In what other field of work are there people who work not just 40 hours a week but 60, 80, 100 or even more hours a week? If you include their families, the total hours worked are far in excess of the normal 40 or 37½ hours worked by people generally. Many of these people are saying: 'What are we doing it for? For what purpose? It is a drain on our family life. We do not get a chance to be with the kids. We will give up and get a government job'. The only problem is that, when they have all found government jobs, there will not be any government jobs because there will be nobody raising the wealth to pay for them.

If government were wise and treated small businesses correctly, I believe that we could take up the slack in employment and reduce the social charges which are paid by these people who are labouring under the heavy load we put upon them. If there were ever a union that I would like to see, it would be a union of small businesses who organised themselves to lobby government as some of the bigger industries and the labour unions do.

Given the deficit we have in this country and our poor trading position, I am concerned at mention of revenue-sharing with states and the federal government. Indications are that we have tougher times ahead but I believe that the Territory will be able to take any crunch as well as any other part of Australia. In one sense, if we have a tough time, I believe it will contribute to our character building. A situation where a government does less and individuals do more for themselves will be a good thing.

The central Australian gas pipeline through to Darwin and, hopefully, to Gove is indeed an exciting project. In the long term, the hope is that we will be able to make the Northern Territory independent of federal subsidies for the generation of electricity and, in time, we might be able to produce relatively cheap power which will be a boon for the manufacturing industry. That situation was totally unthinkable before, Mr Deputy Speaker. If this is a result of new-age thinking, let us have more of it. It is also pleasing to note that the government, knowing that the federal government had reneged on its promise to build the Alice to Darwin railway, is prepared to look at new approaches and to bring in private enterprise to explore all avenues in order to have this railway built.

Again, I am pleased to note that the land rights area seems to be showing very encouraging signs. We may end up with legislation with which we can all live and which will be to the mutual benefit of all in the Territory.

I was talking to the Mayor of Katherine last night about the proposed amendments to the Local Government Act and it seems that most people are very happy with the draft bill that has been circulated. I hope this will put local governments on a very firm footing with a degree of independence that they are looking for. I am sure that will be welcomed throughout the Territory.

We are participating in the National Crimes Authority and I think that we would all agree that criminals should not be protected by borders and the authorities should be able to reach them. I am concerned about the weak powers that this authority has been given under the federal act. Time will tell but certainly we should watch and kick at it if we feel that it is not doing the job that needs to be done.

The policy to extend electricity further into rural areas is welcomed. It will encourage growth and make things possible which are impossible at the moment. The alternatives that people have of generating electricity with diesel are costly and involve people being there to operate them. That is a real drain. Where electricity can be extended, I am sure it will encourage wealth creation.

I believe the policy for mineral exploration in parks is welcomed. It is sane and sensible. I do not think in this day and age anybody will allow miners or exploration teams to rip up the Territory. I know that the explorers themselves are painfully aware that pressure is being put on them. But I do not believe that we should go to the extreme that some would advocate and exclude all exploration and all mining. That just does not make sense.

I am pleased to note the administrative moves that have been introduced by the new Chief Minister. The aim is to streamline the process of government and that is welcomed. It will be welcomed by the public. It will take some time to check the results and extra changes may need to be made but I am pleased with the positive comments that I have received as I move around the community. The future of the Territory is indeed a challenging one. It is still an exciting one and I am very pleased to be a part of it.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon to the address in reply but, unlike the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I found a great deal of comfort yesterday in the Administrator's address. I found comfort in the continuation of the progressive and vital nature of industrial and economic development in the Northern Territory. It is through this development that we have developed an attitude in businesses and amongst the population generally that has led to an increase in real and meaningful jobs. My impression about that is quite unlike that of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am quite certain that his approach to statistics is questionable. We have heard in this Assembly before his interpretation of employment figures and I guess that is where we tend sometimes to come unstuck. The real fact is that long-term jobs have been created by the attitude and approach of this government.

To take a broad overview of the Administrator's address, one can only be impressed with the identification of this vital economic development. Personally, I see a great deal of interest in industry and the small business area. This government has been able to attract new businesses and new industries increasingly and to encourage the proper development of really viable businesses in the Northern Territory, particularly in the Darwin area. These increases in industry and business are of benefit to the Territory population both directly and indirectly. The direct benefits, naturally enough, are reflected in the creation of jobs. We see an increase in the market for local materials and supplies and an increase in the call on local technology through consultants and other subsidiary and secondary businesses.

The indirect benefits that come from this broadening of the economic base are reflected in housing construction, development of broader and more modern infrastructural facilities and the improvement of the viability of our air, road and sea transport. I am sure that we will see a year of improvement in ocean transportation through improved economies on the wharf. Of course, the broadening of this industrial base helps to provide a better range of services for the local community and this was identified in the Administrator's address.

We heard the member for Sadadeen comment on the new cement plant which is operating in the Darwin area. I envisage that, with the vital growth of the Territory and the approach to marketing interstate and internationally, it will not be too long before we see an upgrading of that plant to provide a much more complete production of cement as opposed to the current crushing of imported clinker.

The mention of exporting clay bricks and other building materials to South-east Asia does not surprise me at all, Mr Deputy Speaker. Quite obviously, the technology and development of building materials in the South-east Asian area is fairly well behind the times. It is not simply a matter of transporting clay bricks which one might smugly think is duplicating what native people might produce in the back hills of Indonesia, but rather a matter of exporting high quality, architecturally-finished building materials. Together with these building materials is the technology of constructing clay bricks for high wind areas. The combination of the technology and the product itself leaves no doubt in my mind that we have more than just the materials themselves to export. Certainly, we are able to export some of that knowledge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have spoken broadly about economic development. I intended to speak only very briefly this afternoon. There is no doubt in my mind that this government is about growth. It is about enterprise and, therefore, about the development of jobs. With the infrastructural development

that will flow from projects such as the gas pipeline, improved facilities at the wharf, trade development zone hypothesis and, ultimately, from our railway, there is no doubt that the future of economic and industrial development in the Northern Territory is in good hands. However, it is not good enough to continue our positive approach to economic development alone and this government is certainly concerned with addressing itself to the social issues of the day.

The member for Jingili addressed himself to the welfare of our residents, particularly our young people. It is pleasing to see that we are addressing ourselves to problems of concern to the community as it is today. The social issues and social pressures stem from a diverse community which has a different approach and different requirements from those of 10 years ago.

From an electorate point of view, I am particularly interested in the problems associated with the aged. This is an area which I will continue to stress. Through the government's support of the Council on the Ageing, we have a viable body to help coordinate services and facilities for the aged. Through the government's support of residential accommodation for senior citizens, I am quite sure that the aged in the Territory are better off than those in any state in Australia. That benefit results more from the efforts of this government than from those of our federal counterparts. Unfortunately, I reflect once again, as I did a year ago, on the tardiness of the federal government, through its Minister for Social Security and its Minister for Health, in coming to a decision about additional facilities for aged people in nursing homes in Darwin. As I mentioned almost a year ago, negotiations had been going on at that stage for a long time, probably 18 months or 2 years. After a bit of pressure resulting from the Northern Territory elections in 1983, the Minister for Social Security, with a little bit of prodding, decided that he would accept the proposals put forward by the Salvation Army for its facility in Darwin. That was all very nice in the shadow of an election; it was a bit of flag waving. Unfortunately, of course, it requires the agreement also of the Minister for Health. Thus, the federal government, through its bureaucratic processes, is able once again to delay development of this much-needed facility in Darwin for our very worthy senior citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Salvation Army has the funds to proceed with this development. It has now been waiting over a year. Once again, the Salvation Army thought there was some light on the horizon. Prior to the last federal election, when the federal Minister for Health visited Darwin, he gave an assurance to the Council on the Ageing and to other senior citizens in Darwin that he was almost certain that a favourable decision would be handed down in January 1985 in regard to additional facilities for the aged in nursing homes. Mr Deputy Speaker, January has long gone and still we have heard no word. It will turn out, I am sure, that people who have funds to spend on these facilities will look for alternative projects and the losers will be our oldies. In the Territory, the aged population is increasing at a greater rate than what is acknowledged as the highest rate of normal population growth rate in Australia. That is for good reason. Here in the Territory, they have found that facilities are very much worth while and attractive. It is worth their staying on in their retirement years. Older people are following their children here and are finding that the lifestyle and the climate is very much worth their staying. Despite this rapid increase, we are fast finding that we have elderly people, who do not have the support of their families, housed in unsatisfactory accommodation. It is just not good enough.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my other electorate concern is the problem associated with migrants. I have an electorate in which 35% to 40% of the people were born

outside of Australia. They have come from places like Greece and Timor. Certainly, there is a high percentage of Aboriginal people. Their particular problems need to and have been addressed by this government. I am pleased to say that Darwin is one of the most successfully cosmopolitan cities in Australia. That goes for the electorate of Wagaman too. I am quite confident that the residents of Wagaman are entirely satisfied and integrated within their community.

Mr Bell: The whole 2500 of them. Good on you, Fred.

Mr FINCH: The whole 2610 of them.

Mr Bell: I do apologise.

Mr FINCH: In addition to our seniors and our migrant population, an area that concerns us all is youth. This was addressed by our new member for Jingili. We need to give our youth the opportunity to participate in this very healthy economic development and to participate in what I see to be a bright future for the Northern Territory. To achieve this, we need to do it both socially and educationally. On the educational basis, we need to continue to identify training areas. I understand that, thanks to Department of Education policies and the Industrial Training Commission, we are identifying areas where we need to train our young people, particularly through apprenticeships and through higher education at the Darwin Institute of Technology. One would hope that, before too much longer, we will train them through a Northern Territory university. One of the objects of this government, as was indicated in the Administrator's address, is to continue on this path with a great deal of vigour. The new arrangements of the Department of Education and the ITC certainly address themselves to meeting that end.

In regard to the social aspects, much of the concern of parents is how our youth can fruitfully use its leisure time, particularly through sport. We are all aware of the increasing success of our young people on the national scene. We could name dozens of young Territorians who have made their mark on the national scene in the last 12 months. But sport is not only about champions and this government has been helping to develop to the best of their abilities great numbers of young people through its various facilities. Facilities in my electorate include the Casuarina High School sporting facility. Every afternoon at the school, approximately 60 or 80 young people participate in 6 or 7 different sports. A great number of sporting competitions are held there. The Police and Citizens Youth Club holds its training programs there. Next Friday night, for those members who are interested in seeing how young people enjoy themselves, there is to be another Blue Light Disco. That Blue Light Disco is a well-controlled and organised program, sponsored and supported by off-duty policemen and the Lions Club in that area. At the last 3 discos they have held there, over 350 young people enjoyed themselves in a healthy and well-controlled environment.

Other facilities in the area include the Fire Escape which is a drop-in-type centre for young people run by the YMCA. I shall say no more about that because members from nearby electorates also participate in that program.

Some of the residents of the Wagaman electorate attend the brand new Sanderson High School. Apart from being the most modern and exciting high school that one could expect to find in Australia, it has an extremely well-presented recreational facility through its open area and gym. That will provide an extra outlet for young people to exercise their bodies as well as their minds after hours as well as in school hours.

The Marrara facilities, which are adjacent to my electorate, have also been heavily used and increasingly developed over the last year or so. The youth of my electorate has access to and in fact uses all of these government-sponsored facilities but it is obvious that facilities in themselves are not enough. It is pleasing to see that this government has addressed itself to the social issues and people are encouraged to participate in organised sports etc. Through the Minister for Community Development's Task Force on Juvenile Crime, I am positive that we will be able to identify and address some of the social issues that result in young people getting off the rails and not utilising the opportunity to fully develop themselves as fruitful and worthwhile citizens of the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, contrary to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's concern that the Administrator's address did not include anything exciting, I am definitely comforted that this government is still heading exactly on track and will provide a bright future for all Territorians.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I rise in the Assembly this afternoon, under standing order 72, to raise with you a possible breach of privilege. Mr Speaker, 5 minutes ago, I received a letter from the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. It was marked urgent and was hand delivered to me in the Assembly. As well as referring the letter to yourself, Mr Speaker, for investigation as to whether it constitutes a breach of the privilege of this Assembly, I would like a response this afternoon from the minister responsible for the Northern Territory Development Corporation - he is just taking his place and, by the surprised look on his face, he will probably have to tell me that he knows nothing about it - as to whether this letter was first cleared with him as the responsible minister in the context of what I think everyone in this Assembly will accept as being an extremely sensitive and controversial matter. Mr Speaker, at the very least, I would have to say that this letter shows the most appalling lack of judgment on the part of the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation that I think I have seen in the time I have been here. I fail to understand his motives in doing it, and he is a person I have known for many years.

Mr Speaker, I will read out the letter in full and I wish to make it clear before I begin as to why I am raising this matter of privilege under standing order 72. If this letter had finished at the paragraph before the last, I would have discussed the matter with the responsible minister and then telephoned the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. However, the last paragraph of this letter is so outrageous that I intend to raise this as a potential breach of privilege of this Assembly. The letter is dated 27 February. It is on Northern Territory Development Corporation headed paper and is marked: 'From the Office of the Chairman'. It is addressed to me. It reads:

Dear Bob,

I was surprised and disappointed that, in the course of the censure motion on the casino issues this morning, the name of one of my officers was used in a detrimental and most unfair way.

The thing that concerned me most was that Terry Smith used selective quotes and attributed them to Jim Moore. Terry Smith was not at the press conference. I can only assume that someone

who was present gave his hearsay statements as I am assured by Jim Moore that many of the quotes were used selectively and out of context to authenticate a point of view of the opposition.

Neither of us is able to confirm whether or not the statements were in fact made at all because we did not keep transcripts of the conference, nor did we believe that those attending might attempt to use statements in this way. The exercise which Mr Moore undertook was intended to be a background briefing for the press prior to the Chief Minister's press conference.

I would be surprised if, on learning of these views, you were not concerned also.

On the other hand, if spokesmen for the opposition are to approach debates in the Assembly in this way, I can assure you that I will move to ensure that my officers' legitimate interests are protected in future.

Yours sincerely,

Ray McHenry.

That is an outrageous letter from the head of a department to a member of this Assembly. In my view, Mr Speaker, it at least constitutes ground for investigation as a breach of privilege. There is a clear threat contained in that last paragraph which I do not appreciate in the slightest.

Mr Speaker, I will point out a number of factual problems with the position that Mr McHenry is taking on this matter and which I think are dazzling. If Northern Territory public servants are used in a public context by a minister, as indeed ministers are entitled to request public servants to be used for those purposes, and if those public servants are misquoted, there is a clear and proper course of action for those public servants to follow. Nobody except a member of this Assembly crosses that bar except under very special circumstances and all public servants in the Northern Territory, particularly departmental heads, are represented in this Assembly by responsible ministers of the government. The responsible minister in this case happens to be the Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory. Mr Ray McHenry did not have sufficient wit and judgment as head of the Northern Territory Development Corporation to contact his minister first to point out to him where he considered factual errors were made in statements made by the opposition in the Assembly. The minister could then have used the avenues available to him by way of a suspension of standing orders or a ministerial statement to rebut those incorrect statements. As we know, the minister is not necessarily required to give the opposition an opportunity even to respond to it. I would be surprised if any honourable member in this Assembly has had something similar to this brought to his attention by a departmental head in the Legislative Assembly. It is absolutely outrageous. As I said before, the best thing one can say for it is that it shows an absolutely gross lack of judgment on the part of the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation.

I would like to point out a few other things. Mr Speaker, irrespective of whose side you are on or what you think about the casino, it would be conceded by anybody that the major government press conference to which this letter refers was, without doubt, the media event of 1985. It was to lay all of the fears concerning the casino to rest. The Northern Territory Development Corporation used its officers in a completely public way; they were shown quite

happily on television that night explaining things. I cannot believe that this corporation could be so unprofessional at such a controversial press conference to fail completely to keep any kind of transcript or tape-recording of what its officers said on the public record to the press. What kind of organisation is the chairman running? I quote again:

Neither of us is able to confirm whether or not the statements were in fact made because we did not keep transcripts of the conference nor did we believe that those attending might attempt to use statements in this way.

Can I assure Mr McHenry that I have a transcript of the conference. A tape-recording was made by every journalist who attended the conference. If it is good enough for the journalists of Darwin to take a tape-recorder each to this controversial conference, one would have thought the Northern Territory Development Corporation could have organised a tape-recorder to keep its own record of what was said and what was not said.

I am fairly annoyed about that but the particular matter that I wish to refer to you, Mr Speaker, is the final paragraph of this letter. Under standing orders, it is only a prima facie case that has to be established - this should be referred to the Privileges Committee of this Assembly. I would also like a response from the responsible minister as to whether this letter was sent to me with his authority and approval.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to standing order 72, I will give the matter full consideration and report back to this Assembly.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a few comments in relation to the address in reply. I commence by noting that, in relation to the portfolios for which I have a specific responsibility in the opposition, there was mention in the Administrator's address of new initiatives in those areas. Those portfolios are lands, housing and transport and works. In relation to those portfolios, I will refer to a glaring lack of new initiatives. I dare say that this will come as no surprise either to yourself, Mr Speaker, or to members of the government because it has been the subject of 2 matters of public importance debates in this Assembly last year. I refer specifically to the ongoing problems of the government's making in providing an adequate supply of serviced land for the many people who are in dire need of adequate housing at a reasonable price in Alice Springs. I will not rehash those arguments in this afternoon's debate but I will note that, upon his reaching the dizzy heights of a ministry, I extended to the member for Nightcliff as Minister for Lands an invitation to participate in a briefing on these matters. I believe that I and people employed by the opposition have developed considerable understanding of this issue over a number of years and I believe that we had a perspective that might have been of value to the honourable minister. He was in Alice Springs opening the Dixon Road subdivision in the week that he would have received my invitation but I note that he declined to take me up on it. Mr Speaker, I am sure you will find that as regrettable as I do.

To move back in time in respect of the same issue, I wish to mention a letter I received from the former Minister for Lands. It was received in my office on 19 November last year which, of course, was a fairly hectic time for most of us. The letter was in response to inquiries I had made of the honourable minister in respect of planning studies in and around Alice Springs.

The reason I mention it today is to place its contents on the public record and to draw them to the attention of the new incumbent.

In his response, the member for Fannie Bay, then the Minister for Lands, referred to 7 particular studies that were being carried out. He referred to a development plan for the Larapinta Valley which was completed in September 1984. Secondly, he referred to the Undoolya structure plan which was being prepared by Pak Poy and Kneebone Pty Ltd in conjunction with Willing and Partners. In that letter, he mentioned that a draft report was due on 21 December 1984 with a final report due by the end of January 1985. Thirdly, he mentioned a study of the central business district which was expected to be commissioned before the end of 1984 at an estimated cost of \$50 000. The recommendations from this report, I was advised, were to be included in the 1985 structure plan. Fourthly, the Undoolya and Whitegums area groundwater study was under consideration and it was expected that this would be commissioned at a cost of \$100 000 early in 1985. Fifthly, alternative areas for long-term growth of Alice Springs were also being investigated on what the minister referred to as an in-house basis by Department of Lands staff and it was said that these options would be presented in the draft structure plan. Sixthly, the draft structure plan for Alice Springs was expected to be available by March 1985. Finally, we were advised that the final Alice Springs structure plan would be prepared by Department of Lands staff and would be available by July 1985. Mr Speaker, quite clearly, there are a number of particular targets to be met there: the draft report due on 21 December, the final report due by the end of January and so on. I look forward to hearing from the minister whether those particular studies are on target.

Before I finish with that particular subject, I think that it is not unreasonable to reiterate that the government continues to reap the whirlwind of ill-advised land development decisions that it has taken over the last 2 years. Unfortunately, it is not the minister sitting here nor the honourable members of government who reside in Alice Springs who suffer the misfortunes of the lack of direction the government has taken in this regard. It is the poor beggars who come through my office. I am quite sure other honourable members - the members for Flynn, Braitling, Araluen and Sadadeen - see people under similar circumstances. What staggers me is that those members never make contributions to this Assembly on that basis. They believe that, if they shut up for long enough, the problem will go away. Well I have news for them: it will not go away.

A second matter that I wish to address briefly, because it was brought up in the Administrator's address, involves my own electorate: Yulara and the proposed development at Kings Canyon. With respect to Yulara, we note that the Australian taxpayer is responsible for considerable debt in that regard. It has been the subject of debate in this Assembly on many occasions. That is perhaps a negative aspect of the Yulara development that only the opposition will bring forward. However, so that we are not criticised for carping in this regard, let me not hesitate to put on the public record that I find Yulara as an architectural achievement considerably impressive. As with honourable members on the other side of the Assembly, I look forward with interest to Yulara being a successful enterprise.

However, I represent a constituency which has a majority of traditionally-orientated Aboriginal people. I would add the following caveat with respect to the tourist industry and its benefits for the Northern Territory: there is some concern. Some of us are used to travelling large distances and meeting with new people as part of our work. However, the way of life of those traditionally-orientated Aboriginal people, which has existed in central Australia for such a

considerable length of time and is dependent on the tight-knit social structure of a relatively small group of people, runs the severe danger of, if not disintegrating, at least suffering further disadvantage because of the impact of huge numbers of tourists. I would like to draw that to the attention of the responsible minister. Whenever we talk about the great benefits - which there are and I am on the public record as saying there are great benefits in this regard - I do not believe that we should entirely ignore the potential problems that those benefits may create.

In the time that I have been in this Assembly, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge in regard to Kings Canyon. I do not propose to go through chapter and verse on the history of the creation of the national park at Kings Canyon. But I would like to say that I welcome the government's initiative in regard to, firstly, management at Kings Canyon National Park. I have made contributions in this Assembly along the lines that there has been a considerable need grown up, because of increased visitor numbers, for more adequate management practices in that place. To put it in simple layman's terms, the place was becoming a real mess, and hence the need for improved management of the park and improved management of the impact that those increasing numbers of visitors were having there. That is one reason why I welcome the government's initiative in respect of the Kings Canyon National Park.

I also welcome another government initiative. The Chief Minister may be interested to hear this. Having spoken to the Aboriginal men and their families, for whom the Chief Minister has been able to negotiate living areas within the park, they are very pleased that this has happened. Certainly, it represents something of a change of heart in this regard because, undoubtedly, Mr Speaker, you will recall that on many occasions I have pleaded their case in this Assembly.

I have a particular question in respect of the Kings Canyon National Park and that relates to the growing number of tourist facilities in the area and their relative viability. We have had a number of statements from the Chief Minister in respect of what some people have referred to as another Yulara at Kings Canyon. I draw the attention of the Chief Minister to the existence of places such as Wallara Ranch and Kings Creek Station and point out that there has been considerable private investment in those particular operations. For example, we had the honourable member for Sadadeen stressing the importance of small business. I believe that, in respect of these 2 operations, it is certainly to be hoped that they will not cease to be viable because of plans that the government may have in mind.

Mr Speaker, I note with some interest that the Chief Minister has decided that the government will not proceed with a number of bills that he quite clearly seeks to have little to do with and that he has had them removed from the notice paper. Quite clearly, that is another example of the determination - and it is a welcome initiative - of the present Chief Minister to distance himself from the somewhat less than worthy activities of his predecessor. Quite obviously, the ongoing issue of amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act is topical at the moment. As far as I am concerned, it has been too topical for too long. Certainly, the Chief Minister's predecessor must bear considerable blame for the atmosphere of uncertainty that has surrounded the operation of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

Unless honourable members are labouring under the delusion that I am suggesting that that uncertainty affects only Aboriginal people, let me say that, in my view, it is far more the industries, particularly the mining industry, the

virtues of which are frequently trumpeted by honourable members opposite, that are more seriously affected by the sort of uncertainty that has been created in the past by the Northern Territory government. With respect to the recent announcements by the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I am concerned that these throw into further doubt the findings of the Toohey Inquiry into the operations of the act. I believe that, for the ordered economic and human development of the Northern Territory, it is very important for the Land Rights Act - landmark legislation in Australia - to be allowed to operate in an unfettered way for a period of time. But, instead, we have various agencies creating uncertainty.

I have referred to the Northern Territory. Believe me, Mr Speaker, I will not stand up and defend the actions of the federal government in this regard. I make no bones about that. I am quite dissatisfied with the nature of the proposals. There is no time to discuss them in this debate. I am also seriously disturbed by the ongoing uncertainty. Honourable members on the other side of the Assembly should not giggle without looking at the record of their own leaders. At least I have the guts to criticise mine when I believe it is necessary. I hope to heaven that some of those members have similar intestinal fortitude, but I doubt that they will have.

Mr Speaker, I welcome the government's intention not to proceed with these particular and provocative bills - not all of them were provocative in content but certainly in the way that they were introduced into this Assembly. The particular tactics that surrounded their introduction were highly provocative and very productive of the sort of uncertainty of which I have complained.

I doubt that I will be able to do my next subject justice in the few minutes that remain to me. However, let me put the government on notice with respect to its intention to alter the requirements for the approval of exploration and mining in national parks. In the Administrator's address, we heard reference to stringent statutory requirements that must be met prior to the granting of any exploration licences or mining titles within a park or reserve. It is established practice throughout Australia and the world that there be plans of management. A minimal position in this respect, I hasten to add, is that mining be permitted in national parks only where there is a plan of management in operation. By way of apology for the government's intention in this regard, we had this statement: 'Procedures will be adopted to acknowledge a consultative role between the Conservation Commission and the Department of Mines and Energy in relation to exploration and, in addition, the use of procedures under the Environment Assessment Act will determine the terms and conditions of resource development proposals'.

Mr Speaker, let us just look at this 2-pronged suggestion that will safeguard national parks in the Northern Territory: 'Procedures will be adopted to acknowledge a consultative role between the Conservation Commission and the Department of Mines and Energy'. That should be going on already and, if it is not, the responsible ministers should be ashamed of themselves. The final point with regard to the operation of the Environment Assessment Act, which is quite different from the statutory requirements at the moment, is that the Environment Assessment Act will come into operation only at ministerial discretion. Given the way that ministerial discretion operates so vaguely amongst these supposedly responsible people here, heaven help the national parks and heaven help one of the fine tourist facilities in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, time forbids me from providing a fuller description of problems in this regard. I am quite sure the opportunity will provide itself at some other time during this sittings.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I also wish to speak to the address in reply. There are a number of points that I would like to discuss this afternoon. It is interesting to note that the honourable member for MacDonnell again has ignored at least one of his major areas of responsibility, that of transport and works, but nothing would prevent the member for MacDonnell from discussing the shadow responsibilities of one of his parliamentary colleagues, that of Aboriginal affairs. If he is given an inch, he must speak on that subject at any given time ...

Mr Bell: I have a few of them in my electorate, Roger. Is that okay?

Mr VALE: Mr Speaker, I sat and listened to the honourable member opposite in silence.

Mr Bell: You interject whenever you feel like it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr VALE: Mr Speaker, I think it is a welcome change to have a minister in Canberra who is taking a rational look at the operations of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act as they exist and as they have existed for some time in the Territory.

Mr Bell: It might be in Braitling ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr VALE: Mr Speaker, as I said before, I listened to the member opposite in total silence and I would expect him to extend the same courtesy to this side of the Assembly.

The honourable member for MacDonnell has hardly ever spoken about one of the basic planks in any development of the Northern Territory, that of roads. Even though he represents one of the largest electorates, he seldom raises that issue either in the Assembly or outside of it. Yet I see here a note circulated by the Leader of the Opposition that he is shadow minister for transport and works.

Mr Speaker, one area that I wish to discuss this afternoon is a problem not only in the Northern Territory but elsewhere in Australia and other parts of the world. I refer to juvenile crime. Whilst I do not wish to pre-empt any of the inquiries which are under way in the Northern Territory, I raise in this Assembly some time back the need for a juvenile prison farm in central Australia. I use the words 'prison farm'. Quite possibly, there is a much better term. What I envisaged then and still believe is needed is some type of facility out in the scrub where these young kids who are causing the problems around town could be taken to and given some type of formal education and training in farming systems so that they learn a little bit of community responsibility.

Paramount to any type of control over the juvenile crime issue is both parental control and parental responsibility. Other honourable members have probably seen the age of some of these kids that get up to high jinks, not during the day, but in the early hours of the morning. At least in central Australia, and I guess elsewhere in the Northern Territory, the age of some of these children really is amazing. Where are the parents?

Mr Speaker, another area of concern in central Australia is that of young teenagers in cars and the speeds and daredevil antics that they get up to around

the town and just out of town. For example, last year, a mob of kids were on the Stuart Highway north of town and took to the bitumen road with diesel and petrol to make a slippery surface and then started a dragster operation. Fortunately, the police moved in fairly quickly and took them off the road with defect notices. But this is the type of irresponsibility that is being witnessed in and around central Australia. One night on Lindsay Avenue, which is a divided road, 2 kids were travelling in the same direction down either side of the road. A young lad got loose in the Braitling school after the federal election. He drove in behind the buildings, along the bike path, then out onto the playgrounds. He was not just travelling slowly; it was flat out all the way. It was fortunate that there were no children playing in the grounds at the time.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to one of my favourite topics: roads. The Plenty Highway in central Australia is under way. By the end of this year, sealing will have been completed to 105 km from the Stuart Highway, leaving just under 40 km before it reaches Harts Range. Given the fact that the Queensland government is now spending a lot of money on the road from Boulia to our border, I believe we need to take a deliberate decision on whether or not we are going to continue upgrading the Plenty Highway to the border to meet up with the work that the Queensland government is doing. In regard to the Yulara to Kings Canyon proposal, which I first raised here over 2 years ago, I am delighted to see it is now being placed on the front burner and the survey of that road is actively under way.

I wrote last year to the former Minister for Lands suggesting that the government should move at an early date to rename what is popularly known as the Wallara Road, between the Stuart Highway and Kings Canyon, after Ernest Giles, the explorer. I believe that it should be called the Giles Highway. Ultimately, when the Yulara-Kings Canyon road is completed, the name of that road should be extended to Ayers Rock as the Giles Highway.

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Chief Minister this afternoon mentioned the South Road. As he has indicated, by December next year, the road at long last will be completed. Presently, only 392 km of that road is unsealed. By December this year, another 177 km will be sealed, leaving only 215 km to be completed by December next year to fit in with the South Australian government's 150 years celebration in that state. It is one of the largest single highway projects undertaken anywhere in Australia since the Second World War.

The Northern Territory, particularly those communities in outlying areas, has been particularly fortunate in recent months to receive television coverage of major national sporting events. I refer particularly to the Benson and Hedges one-day cricket series and, before that, the 5-day tests with the West Indies. I pay tribute tonight to the Channel 9 organisation in Sydney which provided access to the ABC at no charge, provided it transmitted to areas not serviced by commercial TV. That of course includes Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Nhulunbuy. Mr Speaker, the Ashes tests, which are to commence in England later in the year, are normally televised by the ABC. This year, Channel 9 has the commercial rights and, whilst it has again made the offer to the ABC to televise to non-commercial areas, the ABC has indicated its reluctance to take up that offer. We hope to change its mind.

I have spoken elsewhere about the need to investigate further, once the third satellite is launched late next year, my proposal to reserve a channel exclusively for the transmission of sporting events. I have already discussed this with the major commercial stations in Sydney and they have indicated their interest in participating. In effect, this would give Australia 24-hours TV

coverage of major sporting events without disrupting other programs, which some people from time to time get a little upset about. I accept those people's opinions and concerns.

Mr Speaker, during a debate last year, I spoke about the need for the Northern Territory, be it government or private enterprise, to investigate the possibility of establishing a petrochemical industry in the Top End. I would like to enlarge on that briefly tonight. It was my belief that such an industry could be used to bring ashore natural gas from the offshore fields. It is my belief that, if this gas were brought ashore for domestic use, then it would need an industrial base to help reduce the costs for ultimate domestic consumption. By comparison, offshore development costs are enormous compared to onshore.

Whilst talking about industry, I believe that the Northern Territory should now investigate the possibility of establishing a cement works in central Australia. Past research has indicated that the 2 basic products for such an operation, gypsum and lime, are available in abundant quantities on the eastern side of Alice Springs. I think it is something that the Northern Territory Development Corporation, possibly in association with one of the cement companies, could investigate at an early date.

Mr Speaker, one area of concern in central Australia in past years has been that of obtaining and retaining the services of eye specialists. I am delighted to report tonight that we now have 2 resident eye specialists in central Australia. I also report that they are operating in extremely cramped conditions and the Northern Territory government must act quickly to expand their facilities if we are to keep these 2 highly-trained men who are much needed in central Australia.

On a second point, the former Minister for Health gave an undertaking that a renal unit was to be established some time in the near future in central Australia. That must be done at an early date because there are a number of families in Australia who are split up purely and simply because one of the partners in the marriage is undergoing day-to-day care at the renal unit in South Australia whilst the other partner stays in Alice Springs to earn the money needed to pay for such treatment.

In the area of housing, Alice Springs continues to create a problem, particularly in the rental area. Whilst the lion's share of the Northern Territory budget since self-government has been devoted to the provision of housing, both through construction and through an extremely attractive home loans scheme, I believe it will be a number of years before adequate rental accommodation is readily available on the market to reduce what I believe are exorbitant prices presently being charged in some areas.

Mr Speaker, I have spoken in this Assembly on a number of occasions in the address in reply. Those issues that I raised very briefly tonight are the main issues of concern to a number of residents in the Alice Springs district. I support the address in reply to His Honour's speech.

Debate adjourned.

STATEMENT Filming and Photographs

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, prior to the Assembly sitting this day, I gave permission to the ABC and to Channel 8 to make videos of the Assembly

sitting for library purposes. The permission expressly forbade the use of sound. I also advise honourable members that tomorrow morning the government photographer will take official photographs of the Assembly in session, and a group photograph will be taken at lunch.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, in tonight's adjournment debate I would like to pay tribute to a former resident of central Australia, the late John Gorey of Yambah Station.

John was born in Tennant Creek on 16 October 1942 and died in Canada on 27 November 1984. He was educated first in Alice Springs and later completed his education at Scotch College and then Urrbrae Agricultural College in Adelaide.

The death of his father in the early 1960s placed a huge responsibility on John's shoulders. It was a responsibility which he took in his stride and, under his management and initiative, Yambah became one of central Australia's best run and most improved pastoral properties. It was because of these improvements that Yambah Station became one of the first properties in the Northern Territory to convert to perpetual leasehold.

During the last 20 years, John, with the support of his wife, Nancye, and his family, devoted much of his time and energy to developing a shorthorn cattle stud which was founded on Yambah. It was his belief that locally-produced stud bulls would more readily adapt to Territory conditions, thus giving the locally-produced bulls an advantage over their southern and imported counterparts. His shorthorn stud received the benefit of some outstanding sires and many thousands of dollars were invested in the best that the country could offer. On many occasions, John met the challenge from Australia's leading shorthorn stud breeders to acquire the very best of top sires and bring them to central Australia. At the time of his death, he was supplying over 300 bulls yearly throughout the Northern Territory to cattle stations.

The development of his shorthorn stud was something which had never been done within the Northern Territory. In recent years, stud bulls from Yambah Station have been purchased by such leading Australian studs as Gundabri and Kelso Park. Purchases by these properties confirmed that John Gorey and Yambah Station were producing some of the best bulls in Australia.

Although shorthorns were his first interest, John had a great appreciation of the value and the potential of other breeds of cattle. He was one of the first cattlemen in Australia to use charolais and chianina. In recent years, John Gorey judged the shorthorn and chianina cattle in the Royal Brisbane Exhibition, and the Royal Adelaide, Royal Perth and Royal Sydney Shows. The judging of these shows bears testimony to the fact that cattlemen all around Australia believed John Gorey to be one of Australia's leading cattlemen. His last judging was in 1984, at the Royal Adelaide and at the Royal Brisbane shows.

It was his penchant for innovation, improvement and development of beef cattle that took him to Canada in November 1984. He saw the need for new bloodlines in the shorthorn breed in Australia and, having studied the breeding operations and trends overseas, decided to take the initiative himself in seeking this new bloodline.

Mr Speaker, in addition to his role in the pastoral industry, John also devoted much of his time and energy to people and organisations within the central Australian community. He was a chairman or member of a number of racing clubs and a member of the executive of the Central Australian Cattleman's Association for many years. On a number of occasions, he was host on Yambah Station to many field days organised by the show society, various government departments, including the Department of Lands, and cattle organisations. The last of the field days was one I opened on Yambah on 17 August 1984. It explained the perpetual leasehold system to pastoralists. He was the patron of the South Alice Springs Football Club and was delighted last year when they won their first ever A-grade premiership - a delight, as he said, heightened by the fact that, in winning this flag, they beat my club, Pioneers.

An area of community involvement in which John Gorey was less well known but to which he was totally committed was that involving young Aboriginal boys in the Alice Springs district. Amongst other things, John and his wife, Nancye Gorey, set up a camp on the property where children from the town areas, under the supervision of Graham Ross from the Gap Neighbourhood Centre, could enjoy some of the benefits of country life. In addition, John would also employ Aboriginal lads in many projects on Yambah Station ranging from mustering, branding and yarding to fence building and tank construction. Boys too young to be employed on the property were still made welcome at Yambah, either in the camping facility of under work experience programs. His generosity was well known and, believe me, his gifts of horses to these young people were truly appreciated. It is my understanding that the camp for these boys is still being run by his wife Nancye and eldest son Aaron. In this field, John and his wife set an example which others in the community could do well to follow.

Mr Speaker, the death of John Gorey was both untimely and a tragedy and it has robbed not only the Northern Territory but also Australia of one of its leading cattlemen. John Gorey was, in the words of many cattlemen, a legend in his own lifetime. I am certain that I speak for all members of this Assembly who knew John Gorey when I extend to his widow, Nancye, and his children, Aaron, Nathalie and Geordie, the sympathy of all Territorians.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr HATTON (Ports and Fisheries): Mr Speaker, in my capacity as Minister for Ports and Fisheries, I would like to place on record the death on 1 January this year of Captain Thomas Milner, a well-known Darwin identity and man of the sea. The citation for his well-deserved MBE, awarded in 1983, summed up his generous contribution during his long residence in Darwin by saying that it was earned for services to shipping and the community. Tom Milner, who was born in 1916, had a lifelong association with the sea commencing with his entrance examination for boy entrants to the Royal Australian Navy in 1929. He gained experience in a wide variety of vessels in the Navy and, although invalided out of the RAN in 1939, saw service in troop transports during World War II. He maintained a keen interest in all forms of boating and, in 1947 and 1948, navigated a contender in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

In October 1949, Captain Milner, together with his wife, Doctor Phillips, took up positions with the Gilbert and Ellice Islands administration. He was master in those colonies for trading vessels. The Milners left the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1954 and Tom joined the Wangarra as second mate in order to look at Darwin as he and his wife thought that they would like to remain in the tropics. Although Darwin was a major port in Australia for many years, the Harbour Master was the Station Master in the days when the railway ran to the port.

Tom's appointment as Assistant Harbour Master in 1957 was the first time a qualified master mariner had been so appointed since the 1870s. In 1959, he was appointed Harbour Master and retained this position until he became the first Chairman of the Northern Territory Port Authority, as it was then known, at its inception in October 1963, a position he held until 1975. He was active as a board member for several years afterwards.

Tom Milner was a foundation member of the Australian Institute of Navigation. In 1960, he was appointed Lloyds agent in the NT and, in 1971, he went into partnership with Mr Melbye to start a marine consultancy and survey business. From 1977 to 1982, he was honorary consul for Japan. Apart from being life patron of the Darwin Sailing Club, Tom was also a stalwart of the Darwin Club and an honorary member of the Officer's Mess of both Larrakeyah Barracks and the RAAF base.

Tom Milner was a man of integrity and he was held in enormous respect by all who came into contact with him. He had a strong determination and interest in seeing a job well done. He did not sidestep a fight on an issue when his opinion was contradicted. But to his merit, even his opponents would never deny him the respect he deserved because he always endeavoured to be fair in his dealings. Melbye put it in a nutshell with his accolade of Tom: 'He was a gentleman among gentlemen. Darwin is the poorer for his passing'.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will resist the temptation at this stage to reply to the rather peculiar letter from the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. I expect I may get an occasion to do that later. As the matter has been referred to the Speaker for his decision, I will proceed to something else.

Basically, I want to talk a little bit about the Disadvantaged Schools Program. I hope that the honourable Minister for Education, myself and all members of this Assembly may be able to do something to get more money for the Northern Territory.

I have a particular interest in the Disadvantaged Schools Program because 2 government primary schools in my electorate, Millner and Rapid Creek, both receive money under that program. Millner receives money to the extent of 2 additional teacher aides and subsidised funds for needy families. In the words of the principal of the Millner school, that provides the ingredients for the cake but certainly not the icing on the cake. At Rapid Creek, the Disadvantaged Schools Program provides funds for a full-time resource teacher, a part-time resource aide, \$2000-worth of resource materials and equipment and a language development program in the school.

At present, the Disadvantaged Schools Program aims to support projects in declared disadvantaged schools which promote more effective learning, more enjoyable and relevant schooling and improved interaction between the schools and the communities which they serve. A school is declared, rather subjectively at present, on the basis of the social and financial circumstances of the community from which it draws its students. I mean 'subjective' in the sense that there are no actual procedures to establish disadvantage. It is a subjective judgment. Without doubt, the contribution made by the Disadvantaged Schools Program to both those schools is excellent.

The Millner school is the more needy in that area. What has happened at Millner since the program has been introduced is that attendance has gone from one of the lowest in Darwin to one of the highest. There has been a much greater parent involvement in the school. Vandalism has dropped off noticeably

and the general tone of the school has improved considerably. However, the need has not disappeared. In my view, there will always be a need for extra resources and, if you take those resources away, the school will slip back because, if staffed on the normal Department of Education staffing levels, the school could not cope. I would expect that the minister would support that as well. For example, it surprised me to know that 33% of the students at the Millner school class themselves as Aboriginal. A significant number of those, and I do not have the exact percentage, are in fact tribal Aborigines who have been in the Darwin area for only a few months. Unemployment levels in Millner, according to statistics, are higher than elsewhere in Darwin. There is a higher percentage of single parent families. There is a larger percentage of Housing Commission flats and houses in the area than elsewhere.

Despite the obvious need in Millner and Rapid Creek, the programs in those 2 schools are under threat. They are under threat from 2 different sources. There is a body of opinion within certain sections of the department, including schools, that Millner and Rapid Creek have had their turn and it is the turn of somebody else to receive additional assistance under the Disadvantaged Schools Program. Quite clearly, this ignores the evidence that Millner and Rapid Creek can both demonstrate: that social and financial circumstances of the community justify their being favoured over other urban schools. But it is a strong feeling and it is getting stronger.

The other threat that I see to funding is a more legitimate one. Aboriginal schools have never received their full share of the program and, obviously, as a matter of equity, this should be redressed. But it is very difficult to argue for Millner and Rapid Creek when you are aware that schools like Umbakumba and Docker River are not receiving their full share of the program. If those Aboriginal schools were to receive their full share, it is quite clear that, under the present basis of funding, urban schools would miss out.

As I understand it, the Schools Commission is conducting a review of the indices it uses to determine state allocations. Hopefully, what will come out of that is that the subjective judgment which has been made in the past will be replaced by a set of indices that are currently being worked up by Dr Ken Ross of Victoria. My understanding is that these indices have fairly widespread acceptance amongst all the states, which are presently working through all the implications for their particular states and territories. To give you an example of the indices he is working up, they include ethnicity, Aboriginality, family, caravan parks, income, occupation, education, tenancy and crowding. Obviously, some of those need spelling out to understand fully what they mean. If you want to know fully what they mean, come and see me.

The tentative conclusion in the Northern Territory from making projections using his indices is that the Northern Territory should get a significantly larger share of the cake. At present, about 6500 kids benefit and the total value of the program to the Northern Territory is about \$779 000. Victoria and New South Wales, if you use those indices, and particularly New South Wales, are overfunded. Of course, the problem will be to get those powerful states to recognise that they are overfunded and to allow the money to go where it is most needed.

It is quite clear that, if schools like Millner, Rapid Creek and Wagaman were in any other state, they would have no problem at all qualifying for assistance under the Disadvantaged Schools Program. That to me is the basic point that we must put across in these discussions that are taking place at present. Despite that, if more money is not granted, as I said before, those

urban schools will miss out because of the greater needs in Aboriginal communities. If our grant were doubled - in other words, 13 000 kids benefited - there would be no problem. I would think that that is what we should be aiming at.

I am sure that none of this is new to the Minister for Education. I take this opportunity to express my support and the opposition's support for what the government is trying to do there. We believe the Northern Territory has a legitimate need that is not being met at present. I invite the Minister for Education to call on the opposition if he thinks we are able to assist in getting a fair and equitable breakup of the funds for disadvantaged schools programs in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the second issue I wish to raise also concerns a school. However, I am not in the happy position of being able to compliment the government, although I can offer to work with it. I want to talk particularly about the Rapid Creek Special Unit. The Rapid Creek Special Unit is located in the Rapid Creek school. It is a unit for kids who are intellectually or physically less capable than kids in the normal school program.

To my shame, I had not visited the special unit until a couple of weeks ago. Frankly, it was an appalling experience. I have not seen in the Northern Territory a unit of education in the field that is less well equipped than the Rapid Creek Special Unit. The image that came across my mind when I went into that special unit was an image of a 19th century school somewhere in darkest England. It really does look that bad. It is not the fault of the teachers. The teachers are doing a very good job with the limited resources that they have.

The school just does not have simple things. It has relied on parental assistance to get scraps of carpet squares, to put up what curtains it can and to provide what equipment it can for the school. It needs some tender loving care from the honourable minister. He should have a look at it and make his own assessment. I have been to other special units in the Northern Territory. I must admit I have not been to the new Alice Springs Special School. Certainly, the old Alice Springs Special School was a joy to visit, as the member for Sadadeen would probably say. It was well equipped and had a good atmosphere and great teachers.

Rapid Creek Special Unit has great teachers but it is not well equipped. It has a significant disadvantage in its actual physical location. I am not sure what can be done about that. Certainly, a lot can be done about the equipment.

I asked the teachers to give me a list of their priority needs. The list is quite interesting. I will just go through it. They would like carpeting to replace the horrible, ragged carpet squares that presently cover some of the floor. They want 12 mobile trolleys with drawers and shelves. That is a pretty basic request: 12 mobile trolleys with drawers and shelves. When you see some of those kids, and the limits to their mobility, you will realise why they want them. They want a pin-up board to cover a dividing wall. They want some curtains to brighten the place up a bit. They want a computer with a keyboard modified for children with limited movement who obviously cannot read and write properly. They want some photocopying paper. They would like the rattling air-conditioners to be fixed. They would like a small washing machine because, obviously, some of those kids go through 2 or 3 sets of clothes in a day.

Mr Speaker, those are not unreasonable requests. We are spending millions of dollars erecting showpieces like Sanderson High School which I have had the pleasure of looking over. It is a terrific school and a real asset to this community.

Mr Perron: Look back to a year ago when they were fighting about it being done.

Mr SMITH: I cannot remember ever telling anyone that. It is a real asset to the community and a real tribute to the government. But cheek by jowl, if you like, with Sanderson High School, we have this neglected unit at Rapid Creek. I suspect it has been neglected simply because it is so small and tucked away in a larger school. It really is quite a revealing contrast: Sanderson High School and the special unit. I would ask the minister, as busy as he is, to give it some priority, to have a look at its needs and to attempt to remedy them.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak today on a couple of matters. I cannot let the remarks made by the member for Milner go by. He asked the government to supply certain requirements to a certain school in his electorate. Whilst I have sympathy with the children who go to school there, their parents and the teachers in that school, I would like to point out to him that the situation in the rural area provides a great contrast. I would like to ask him to ask the parents and the teachers: where is the initiative of the parents? Where is that great Australian character-building exercise? Where is that great Australian trait: the ability to scrounge? Once everybody scrounged if the government was a bit short on supplying things.

In a certain part of the rural area, there was a need for a bus shelter. It is just an ordinary area but 18 children would wait there for the bus without any shelter. The parents got together and agreed to build a bus shelter. They went around and scrounged. They scrounged in the right places and they acquired the makings for the bus shelter. They acquired some new material and some secondhand material. They fabricated the bus shelter in consultation with officers of the Department of Transport and Works and put this bus shelter where it would do the most good, where it was most convenient and where it was safest for the children and for traffic. They did what they felt was necessary for the children, for their convenience and safety, without asking the government for one single penny. It stands out as an example of people doing things for themselves.

I recognise that parents of handicapped children may not have as much time to spare for social and extra curricular activities. But I think the spirit of looking after yourself and your own, looking after the particular children in your care and doing something off your own bat is something that we lose sight of these days. We always have our hands out for something from the government.

Mr Speaker, I would like to add to the remarks of other honourable members when they spoke of the demise of 2 gentlemen in the Northern Territory. The Minister for Ports and Fisheries spoke of the work of the late Captain Tom Milner. I would like to add my kind remarks to those of the minister. I think I can sum up what he said by saying that Tom Milner was one of nature's gentlemen. I do not think anybody could go further than that. He was a personal friend of ours for some years and I think that his passing leaves the Territory the poorer.

I would also like to add to the remarks made by the member for Braitling

regarding the late Mr Gorey from Yambah Station near Alice Springs. He mentioned his great contribution to the cattle industry. I knew Mr Gorey from many years ago for his contribution to the breeding of cattle dogs. Some good cattle dogs came from Yambah Station. Not only did Mr Gorey contribute to the cattle industry but the progeny of his kennels will be seen around the Territory working in conjunction with the cattle industry to the betterment of both for many years to come.

The main gist of what I have to say this afternoon concerns the 1983-84 annual report of the Department of Primary Production, which was given to honourable members yesterday. I found this report very easy to read and I must compliment the people who compiled it. To the uninitiated, it is a very easy book to read and it certainly shows that primary production in the Northern Territory is going from strength to strength.

I am particularly concerned with the animal industry section. Of course, the matter of greatest importance in the animal industry section up here is the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaign. The cattle industry is of greatest importance to the Department of Primary Production, followed by the buffalo industry and then other animal industries. I suppose that one should be grateful that these other animal industries are mentioned. They have been mentioned previously but only in passing. I refer particularly to poultry, pigs, dairying, goats, rabbits, stockfeeds, camels and horses, which are mentioned under the heading: 'other animal industries'.

Whilst I do not have much knowledge of camels and horses, I have some knowledge of the other animal industries mentioned. I think that it is time that the Department of Primary Production realised that the people out there in the wider community are doing their work, especially when it comes to small animal industries. In the large animal industries, the government leads in the fields of research, husbandry, management and advice. In the field of small animal industries, the people out there lead the government.

Research in the Northern Territory into poultry, pigs, dairying, goats and rabbits is minimal if not non-existent. In rabbits, it is non-existent. Mr Deputy Speaker, a lot of people might say: 'Well, so what? We get our main income through cattle and buffalo'. However, as I have said before, these small industries are up-and-coming industries for the Northern Territory. We saw what happened when we put all our eggs into the one basket of cattle, and then brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication had to be carried out. The cattle industry has taken a big downturn because of that and it will be many years before it is back on its feet. It is only common sense that our primary industry eggs should not all be put into the one basket. Therefore, the encouragement of these small industries must get under way soon.

I will not discuss rabbits at this time but, in all the small animal industries that I have mentioned, poultry, pigs, dairying and goats, the industry leads and the government follows. Minimal research has been done. When it comes to the viability of projects in comparison with other states, the Territory government falls far behind. It is the small producer who introduces a particular breed and follows that breed through. He breeds from it, determines whether it is a goer or not, continues with it and encourages other people to continue with it, or he leaves it or finds out information from other states and other places about that small animal industry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is more than time that the government led and the industry followed. Even now the government is not leading in the Northern Territory. Mention is made in this report that the Australian Meat Research Committee has granted \$13 500 to the Department of Primary Production to study

goat production characteristics and to determine management requirements of goats raised on improved pastures in high rainfall areas. This work will be undertaken at the Coastal Plains Research Station. Whilst I commend this, because this is the first time ever in the Northern Territory that regard has been paid to this small but burgeoning animal industry, I deprecate most strongly that the Northern Territory government has not at least matched that amount. It might be said that \$13 500 will go a long way considering the price of a pedigree goat but it will not when all the costs inherent in the management of goats are taken into consideration. It has been brought to my attention that, to carry out this project, the government is looking at buying local stock at minimal cost - less than \$100 per animal. I say that this is spoiling the ship for the ha'p'orth of tar. If the officers of the Department of Primary Production had any sense and were looking to the long-term interests of the goat industry and the long-term interests of what could be a very profitable overseas export industry, they would not be looking around for the small-time local stock that I and other people have; they would be looking down south to bring up first-class, top quality stock from the major 3 breeds that can be bred and which will make money in the Northern Territory.

I must say here that I have received every encouragement from officers in the Department of Primary Production when I have made inquiries about veterinary matters. I know that other goat breeders have also. But when it comes to information on husbandry and management, I would say that the industry again leads the government. I would like to reiterate that, if the Department of Primary Production really has the interest of the new goat industry at heart, it will look to spending a bit more than this \$13 500 that the Australian Meat Research Committee has allocated for research into the goat industry and buy top quality stock down south.

I have good reasons for saying this. The Gunn Point Prison Farm is in my electorate and one of the income-earning projects at Gunn Point is the breeding, management and husbandry of a very good herd of pigs. They are not ordinary pigs; they are top class. If memory serves me correctly, they are large, white or landrace pigs. Not only do these pigs supply top class pork for government institutions and other places, they also provide an income for the prison farm which sells breeding stock to interested people. These people are in the rural area in my electorate and in other places in the Northern Territory. If the government continued this profitable practice by buying top class goat stock from down south and managing it under Top End conditions, it would not only do the industry a great deal of good but it would also help and encourage further the people who are in the industry now. They are only in it in a small way but they have put their money where their mouth is. They have spent all their capital. They have started little farms in the rural area and they are the people who I believe deserve all the help and encouragement the government can give them.

If these people are encouraged by the government, it can only work to the long-term betterment of the industry. The people have helped themselves. The goatkeepers have got together and formed a club of which I am a member. I have other connections with the club as well. I can see that, because of the interest generated in the Association of Goatkeepers up here, similar goatkeepers, goat clubs and associations will be formed in other parts of the Territory. I can see in the very near future a very profitable export industry.

While I am on this matter of a goat export industry, I might say that the people who are engaged in goat husbandry at the moment have sought their own local markets. I would say that, to a man or a woman, they have a product to sell. They have meat and milk to sell and they have gone out on their own

and found their own local markets. They are not looking for handouts but government encouragement through active research conducted with good quality stock would be of advantage not only to the government in relation to an export industry but also to the goat industry of the future.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I aim to speak briefly today, but in a rather regretful tone, about a decision made by this Assembly with which personally I cannot concur. I refer to the decision to go ahead with the building of a new parliament house. I can sympathise with the member for Elsey and other honourable members who have had to suffer the lack of facilities in this Assembly for some 10 years or more. I estimate that, over that period, those members have spent in toto something approaching 6 months in this place. Mr Speaker, as a person who has only been a member for some 15 months and spent less than 3 weeks in toto in here, I can sympathise. There are many times when a day here can feel like a month elsewhere.

In making my remarks on this subject, I have given particular thought to the staff of this Assembly. Of course, they are here virtually on a full-time basis and I would be the first to admit that their working conditions are not up to today's standards. I would not be making my remarks if I did not believe that the expenditure of funds to build a new parliament house was not a provocative insult to another group in our society. I talk now of all those people who are either unhoused or inadequately housed. I have heard cost figures for the new Assembly ranging up to \$30m. Much as I would enjoy a proper restaurant and an office in the same building, I have to acknowledge that the expenditure of funds to provide me with those facilities would be immoral whilst so many thousands of people have nothing.

The amount of money we are talking about for a new house of parliament would be sufficient to build some 600 houses at \$50 000 each or enough temporary shelters, with showers and basic washing facilities, to house every person in the Northern Territory who is now living in old motor vehicles, under rusty sheets of corrugated iron and so on. Inadequate shelter such as I have described is not simply a matter of discomfort. The lack of adequate quantities of water within 20 feet of a person's residence is the major factor in many of the diseases which have assumed almost endemic proportions in many Aboriginal communities. I refer to diseases such as trachoma and gastro-enteritis. Pneumonia is a major killer amongst the under-5s and the over-50s. I have said that the expenditure of money on a new parliament house at this stage would be immoral. It would be worse than that, it would be bizarre. It would be a clear signal to the unhoused of where we place our priorities. It would be a monument to a lack of feeling for our fellow men which would cast a pall over its construction and invite bitterness to accompany its completion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when we have broken the back of the housing problems in this Territory, I will applaud the construction of a new parliament house but, until that time, I myself am unable to do anything more than signal that, personally, I will oppose the expenditure of money on the new parliament house for the Northern Territory.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, we are all standing this evening to speak very briefly but I would like to reflect momentarily on some of the behaviour of fellow members in this Assembly. I do so sincerely and genuinely in the hope that some of our members opposite might pick their game up.

Mr Bell: Is this about interjections?

Mr FINCH: Yes, it is good stuff, I can tell you. One of the matters I want to speak about later on is that of interjections. In fact, I welcome them. It shows that our opposition members have not gone to sleep yet.

When I was asked originally why I entered politics, I was able to answer in 2 ways. The first, constructively, by saying that, despite the fact that I am a backbencher in this Assembly, I have an opportunity to contribute and participate in the policy and development of the Northern Territory. I can do that through committees and through policy discussions and by direct lobbying to ministers and the Chief Minister himself. He is only too pleased to see us all.

I am able to justify my entry into this particular occupation even despite my previous cynicism towards political life and politicians generally. I think that cynical view is shared by many professionals and by the community at large, and I guess for somewhat good reason when you look at the national press and the behaviour of parliaments in Canberra, Brisbane and elsewhere. But I can justify my entry into the political scene in the Northern Territory by positively admitting that I see and interpret this scene as being a far more civilised atmosphere in which to work for the benefit of our community. That is why I have risen to speak.

I am concerned that, over the last 12 months, there have been a number of times when members of the opposition have used the opportunity to denigrate members of the backbench on this side of the Assembly. They do so usually with a slight chuckle or a ridiculous interjection which really is not constructive at all. In the last 2 days, the Leader of the Opposition made front page news and he did so in a manner that does not do the reputation of this Assembly any good at all. I would like to quote from the last 2 front pages of the NT News - final paragraphs in both cases. It is a bit unfortunate that the author of the 2 articles did not run out of room and put him on the back page because that is where he belongs. I will quote from the NT News of Tuesday 25 February. The article finished: 'Opposition Leader, Mr Bob Collins, caused a ripple of amusement through the crowd when he arrived at the Assembly. Those waiting for the arrival of the Administrator ...' - and I might add that the Administrator is the senior representative in this Territory and it was a very formal occasion - '... outside the building who were within earshot of Mr Collins heard him say, as he approached the group of CLP members, "I see all the clowns are here. All we need now is the ringmaster".' He said the same thing again inside this Assembly. I am quite happy for interjections from the members opposite because that is exactly how I would like to play the game. Unfortunately, one needs to try to maintain some sort of civility in this place.

The article today in the NT News said in its final paragraph: 'In winding up the debate, Mr Collins referred to Mr Tuxworth and government members as Captain Rabbit and his new-age thinkers'. Brilliant.

Mr Tuxworth: He won't offend me.

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, last year I rose to comment regarding a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition. In effect, he had said that the government backbenchers did not have a brain between them. That is fair comment and it is all good stuff off the shoulder but, when we get it consistently, I start to wonder why the Leader of the Opposition has such a phobia about intelligence and brains. As I pointed out on that occasion, I am confident that, being surrounded by an intellectual vacuum, I can quite understand his frustrations. These sorts of remarks do absolutely nothing for the credibility of this Assembly. Aside from the reference to circuses, the

Opposition Whip in the last sittings of the last session referred to members opposite as a bunch of clowns. Having been bred and brought up in a pretty rough and tumble place, downtown Port Kembla, I am quite happy to participate in that sort of descriptive language and whatever else.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I committed myself to 6 minutes but I will extend that. Despite all of the traumas of self-government years and of its high rate of development, this Assembly has maintained a relatively good reputation for sensible debate. The NT News articles of the last 2 days and some of the chatter that goes on in here does it no service at all.

In closing, I appreciate interjections from my fellow backbenchers. The new member for Jingili hit it on the head today in his maiden speech. He is very astute as, of course, all government members are, and recognises that the opposition has failed to be an effective opposition. That is something that I would be ashamed to admit. I guess it disappoints me as well. However, probably it does give backbench members here the opportunity to participate more fully. The rules of the game are very simple. If opposition members wish to continue to denigrate the members of the government by commenting in a derogatory fashion, I am quite happy but let them deliberate on it first. It makes the game very simple if we are all going to pour it on because, aside from the numbers, I think the brains and the intelligence have the weight as well.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise, in fact, to endorse the comments of the member for Braitling. I had intended in this evening's adjournment debate to address several other matters but, because the honourable member for Braitling spoke of the untimely death of Mr John Gorey of Yambah Station, I wish to put on the public record my endorsement of those thoughts and those feelings. I think it was the untimely nature of John Gorey's death in Canada that shocked all of us in the central Australian community. I hope John Gorey's family will not think it ill of me to rise and speak in these terms to the Legislative Assembly. John would not have been a political supporter of mine. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think you made reference to that other football club in Alice Springs and I regarded it as a privilege to have had dealings with John Gorey through the South Alice Springs Football Club over the time that I have been a member of this Assembly. John's support of that football club was an extension of the work and the effort that he put in on behalf of a number of Aboriginal kids around Alice Springs that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, described so adequately.

I recall the great exhilaration that we all experienced when the club that we had been supporting finally won its first grand final last year. That was a time of great triumph and I remember John's great delight that his many years of support for the club had come to fruition in those terms. Of course, Yambah Station is in my electorate and I am aware of John Gorey's place in the forefront of development of the pastoral industry in northern Australia, and I am happy to endorse the comments of the member for Braitling in that regard.

This Assembly has not sat for some considerable time and other central Australians and people with an attachment to central Australia, and to the north in general, have passed away in that period. Whilst this not in the context of this evening's debate, I will make reference to an erstwhile member of this Assembly, D.D. Smith, who I imagine will be the subject of a motion of condolence at some time during these sittings. I will leave my comments in that regard to that time.

However, I would like to mention some other people, perhaps first and foremost Lycurgus John Rickard Underdown, a great central Australian personality who passed away on 4 November last year. I had known Ly personally for a considerable time and some members may recall my addressing this Assembly in respect of a particular place name that he wished enshrined in Alice Springs. I understand that, in the electorate of the member for Sadadeen, there has been named a Mooney Terrace. Mooney Terrace, of course, was so named because of Ly's insistence that an Aboriginal man who had worked for a considerable length of time, and who in Ly's view was responsible for much of the building of the Alice Springs Hotel, should be remembered. I am pleased that that was able to be finalised before Ly passed away.

Ly Underdown was born in 1904 in Oodnadatta in South Australia. He spent his early years on Bore Station. He was educated at St Peter's College in Adelaide. His family was forced off the land by drought. In 1929, he opened his store in Gregory Terrace in Alice Springs on the site of the place where he was later to construct the Alice Springs Hotel. Many were the stories he told me. I am not sure that I can recall them all. Ly Underdown had, to say the least, an extraordinarily pugnacious storytelling style and my memory is that he was derided by people who should have known better for building foundations of solid concrete. He was told that these would not be strong enough but, in fact, Ly was proved right and those foundations, as you would be aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, stood for many, many years. In 1930 that particular hotel was built by Ly and it was opened in 1933. Subsequently, in 1946, the hotel was rebuilt and it was a source of considerable pride that that particular building had the only lift in Alice Springs. Until quite recently, when the new hospital was built, that was in fact the case.

Ly Underdown was a keen cricketer and a fine wicketkeeper in his time, and he was very fond of showing people the indoor cricket pitch that he had built on top of the hotel. The hotel was sold to the Telford Group for \$505 000 in 1979. Perhaps it is a poignant postscript, and the point at which I will finish my comments in that regard, to say that I think it was a mere 2 days after he passed away that his hotel was burnt down.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is unusual for me to pass similar comment about Aboriginal people who have passed away in my electorate. Many of them I have known well for many years. Generally, there is a strong requirement that people's names not be used after they pass away. It is also a strong requirement that photographs of those people should not be retained; they should be destroyed or at least kept away from people for some time after a death. I am not sure if attitudes amongst some people are changing in that regard but I do not think that anyone will think it ill of me if I place on record the death of somebody who was known, I imagine, to nobody here but a man I knew and who made a great contribution to central Australia, Mr Archie Coulthard. Members may have met him at Hermannsburg, Areyonga or Tempe Downs where he used to work as a stockman. Archie passed away just before Christmas and was buried at Areyonga on New Year's Eve.

He was very much a man. He was a man of very wide experience. Not only had he served with the armed forces during the Second World War but he had worked in many different places around Australia and was able to tell some excellent yarns about his experiences with people he had worked with and the occasional story about the odd fight with a cheeky boss here and there. A brighter, more enthusiastic, better-humoured person you would be unlikely to meet. He was well respected as an Aboriginal man. He was what is referred to in Pitjantjatjara as a doctor man and, when they were ill, the people in many of those communities would see Archie before they would seek any other sort of medical assistance that was available. I shared many experiences

with him and I learnt a great deal. Certainly, to me personally, and I believe to all the people in the communities in that area, his passing was a sad loss.

Mr Deputy Speaker, time has run away with me. I wish to make further reference to people for whom not only I, personally, but I believe large numbers of people in central Australia had deep respect but I might leave those comments for some later hour.

Mr PERRON (Fannie Bay): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not keep the Assembly long. I was not intending to speak in the adjournment debate this afternoon but, after a glance at the front page and the editorial of the NT News today, I thought I should at least put my views on record about the question of the renaming of the casinos in Darwin and Alice Springs. I noted with some amazement that the views of the city council have been brought together formally and that this matter should rate formal debate by our esteemed city councillors in Darwin. I was also surprised that they unanimously, I think it was, passed a motion calling upon the company that is now operating the casinos in the Territory to change the name of the casinos from Diamond Beach, in the case of Darwin, to Mindil Beach as it was before. I think it amazing that the council should take it upon itself to place itself in a position of judgment in this regard as far as a commercial enterprise is concerned, a commercial enterprise to which its reputation and its promotional campaigns are very important. They are crucial to the success of the casino and the whole atmosphere of the promotion. The way in which it is done and the names that are selected are very important for its future.

I am surprised that the council should say that it does not like the name that has been chosen and that it thinks it should be changed. I suppose it feels it speaks on behalf of its constituents. However, I wonder if the city council would like its wishes to prevail as to the colour of the stationery that the company might care to use or the colour of the carpets that the operators will refurbish the building with or perhaps the plants they select to extend the landscaping which unfortunately was not done by the previous owners.

I think it is a nonsense for the council to become involved in this sort of project. In an editorial, the NT News has also chosen to support the council and express what it perceives as the wishes of the Darwin community in naming the casinos. I just do not think the name of the casino has any particular relationship to the name of the beach alongside it. We should not feel that the name of Mindil Beach will be somehow stricken from all the maps of the Northern Territory or of Darwin. I presume it is the name formally adopted by the Place Names Committee and it is unlikely to change unless the Place Names Committee and the minister choose to change it in the future. The casino operators clearly and justifiably wanted to change the image of the casinos as they have operated in the Territory in the past, and well we know the need for a change. There have been many visitors to those casinos. Visitors to the Territory have passed through the casinos in Darwin and Alice Springs over the past several years and I would hope that some of their memories of their experiences in those casinos will fade and that the change of name might assist them to forget that the service provided was far less than satisfactory.

I think that the decision as to what the casinos should be called is a commercial decision. I believe it should be left to the commercial operators. I think that, for organisations such as the city council and, indeed, the NT News, whilst they are obviously quite entitled to express their opinions,

to try and represent those opinions as being representative of what Darwin people want is a nonsense. In any event, I do not think it is any of their affair.

Motion agreed; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

NOTICE OF MOTION
Censure of Chief Minister

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I give notice that, on the next sitting day, I will move that this Assembly censures the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for his arbitrary and illegal actions in appointing a principal/director of the former Darwin Community College and changing the name of the college and the role and functions of the college council without consultation with either the Minister for Education or the college council, which actions have seriously undermined the credibility, status and integrity of tertiary education in the Northern Territory.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, in accordance with practice, the government will not proceed with further business until the notice of motion of the Leader of the Opposition has been disposed of. Mr Speaker, the government requests that questions be placed on notice.

Mr Speaker, I move that so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition moving without notice a motion of censure of the Chief Minister.

Proposal supported by required number of members.

MOTION
Censure of Chief Minister

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly censures the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for his arbitrary and illegal actions in appointing a principal/director of the former Darwin Community College and changing the name of the college and the role and functions of the college council without consultation with either the Minister for Education or the college council, which actions have seriously undermined the credibility, status and integrity of tertiary education in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, in my highly biased opinion, the Northern Territory has one of the better Education Acts in this country. If honourable ministers of the government would like to oppose that, they should feel free to do so. Mr Speaker, one of the memories I will take away from this job will be the process by which the Education Act was put together. In my opinion, the Education Act of the Northern Territory stands as one of the most positive examples of what governments and oppositions can do when they choose to cooperate. I have said in the Assembly - not for a long time, I must say, because I did not think we would be debating something like this today - how much I appreciated the level of cooperation that was extended by the then Minister for Education in that very complex and prolonged process of formulating the present act. That is why I feel offended when I see the act breached. It is particularly offensive when the laws of the Northern Territory are broken by the Territory's Chief Minister.

Mr Speaker, I realised how I felt after the first time I rang the Darwin Community College after the arrangements had been announced by the Chief Minister. I can understand that the Chief Minister might have difficulty in agreeing with the point of view of someone like myself. However, the woman who

answered the phone said: 'Darwin Institute of Technology'. My response was: 'No, it isn't'. In fact, it is not.

Mr Perron: You're really polite, aren't you?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I was not quite as impolite as that on the telephone. In fact, the woman was interested enough to ask me what I meant. I said: 'Because, in terms of law, you are still the Darwin Community College and, until the Chief Minister gets around to amending the act under which you exist, you will remain the Darwin Community College'. I would have preferred it if the Chief Minister had said, when he announced his rearrangements, that it was the intention of the government to introduce legislation to change the name of the Darwin Community College to the Darwin Institute of Technology and change the status of the Darwin Community College Council and give it a completely different role and responsibility.

Over the Christmas holidays, our new Chief Minister had dispensed not only with the Northern Territory law but also with common courtesy in consulting with his own Minister for Education about the college council whose name and role he so dramatically changed. They were left completely out of the process. We know that that is not an unusual action of the government because we know that the Minister for Education is indeed a political eunuch. If he was in a cricket team, he would score a run for the other side every time he bowled a ball. Every time there is an important decision made, the Minister for Education is left out of it. I now know why he is the only minister who did not have his portfolio changed: they did not need to change his portfolio because they just ignore him every time a decision needs to be made. When they wanted to close down the oldest school in the Northern Territory, they did it while he was on holidays. They told him when he came back. When they wanted to contravene the Education Act, they did the same thing: they told him when he came back.

I have that on good authority. The Minister for Education is my authority. The Minister for Education might learn 1 or 2 lessons this morning about the only piece of legislation that he has to worry about, and which he clearly knows nothing about. I remember well his response to the changes. He said he was not consulted by the Chief Minister and asked why he should be. He said: 'It is up to the Chief Minister to appoint heads of departments and he has the right to appoint Kevin Davis as head of the Darwin Institute of Technology if he wants to'. That is on the public record. He admitted that he had never been consulted on the process. He collaborated and corroborated with the Chief Minister when he broke the law.

What I find most offensive is the basis on which he did that. We are told that the Chief Minister has the right to appoint departmental heads. In this instance, the mechanism he has used is to change the status of the Darwin Community College to one that has never existed under the act that he administers. He showed his complete lack of knowledge not only of the proper protocol that exists with tertiary education but also of the existing law. Mr Speaker, can I just say this to the Minister for Education: 'If you cannot do anything else in terms of getting on top of your job, at least become familiar with the only act of parliament you need to be familiar with in order to properly administer your responsibilities as Minister for Education'. As somebody who played a not inconsiderable role in drafting this piece of legislation, I point out that the way it is structured in the act is not accidental. It did not simply happen to turn out that way at the end of a process. The act was deliberately designed to place the relationship between the college, its council and the minister precisely in the way it is laid out. I would suggest to the Minister for Education that, before he makes any further

public statements, he should become familiar at least with the act that he has to administer in the Assembly.

The other member who is concerned in this debate this morning is the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory who, as the chief legal adviser to the Chief Minister, no doubt gave the legal advice on which the Chief Minister carried out his action. I would imagine on the basis of that, that the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory would be quite capable of getting you life imprisonment on a parking offence.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Education might like to refer to the Education Act while I go through it with him. Part VI of the Education Act relates to the Darwin Community College as it still is in law. Section 41 establishes the college as a statutory corporation. Under section 44, the governing body of the college is its council. Subsection (3) of section 44 specifically provides that all things done in the name of the college with the authority of the council are deemed to be done by the college. In other words, the college operates through the council. That is not accidental; it was deliberately done that way.

Subsection (2) of section 44 says that the council is subject to the direction of the minister. In the course of events that took place, this point becomes irrelevant. The minister issued no directions to the council. He totally disregarded the legislative framework established for the proper functioning of the college. The Minister for Education is just as culpable as the Chief Minister in this breach of the Territory's law because he publicly supported it. Section 56 of the act specifies that the principal is in the service of the college. Section 43 empowers the college to do all things necessary in the performance of its functions including, under paragraph (2)(j), the power to employ such persons as are necessary.

Quite simply, the Education Act requires the principal to be appointed by the college. Under the act, the college acts through the authority of its council. In other words, the council, not the minister, appoints the principal. The principal of the Darwin Community College is the servant of the college. He is responsible to the council and not the minister. That is the way it should be and it better not be changed. If the minister wishes to exercise his proper role in involving himself in the functioning of the college, including its appointments, he must give valid directions to the council. I will explain that to the minister. What I mean is that, although under the act he can give directions to the council, those directions cannot be arbitrary or capricious. He cannot say to the council: 'I want you to sack Mr X because I do not like him'. His directions must be valid directions.

Mr Speaker, not only was the Chief Minister's unilateral intervention in this appointment completely unwarranted and very damaging but, quite simply, it was illegal. If the honourable Minister for Education is worrying about the word 'valid' in the Education Act, I can tell him that it does not need to be in the Education Act. It is in another body of law altogether. Ministers cannot act capriciously in their functions. One of the nice things about the courts is that they do not determine truth on the basis of 19 to 6, as the Legislative Assembly did yesterday.

There is no question whatever that the Chief Minister broke the Northern Territory's law in appointing Kevin Davis as principal of the community college. My sympathy is entirely with Mr Davis in that particular matter because that must be an intolerable position for him to be put in. Mr Speaker, I have no standing to go to court to challenge this. I have no standing in the matter but there are plenty of people who have and it is an intolerable position for the

minister to put the college and its students in. It would only require someone with the necessary standing to challenge the appointment under the Education Act and have his day in court and, in my view, he would succeed.

Of course, there is only one way which is open to the government to fix up this mess and that is to use that particular act of parliament which, quite rightly, is anathema to most members of the Assembly and which should be resorted to only under the most extreme conditions. I mean by that the good old retrospective, validating legislation making legal an act that was illegal when it was performed. That has been done in this Assembly before on very rare occasions - 2 that I can remember. Of course, it should not have to be resorted to by the government. On this occasion, if any certainty is to be given to Mr Davis' employment and to the operation of the Darwin Community College, I see no other course of action available.

Mr Speaker, may I make it quite clear that the option to raise this matter in the Assembly by any other course than a censure motion is not open to me because, quite rightly, one cannot accuse a minister of the government of breaking the laws of the Northern Territory without doing it by way of a censure motion. I would be interested in hearing the Northern Territory's Attorney-General speak during this debate and provide this Assembly with the details of the legal advice which, no doubt, was sought from him by the Chief Minister when this appointment was made. I would like a copy of the advice which he would have received on the matter from the legal officers of the government. Perhaps he could help us by tabling it or having it circulated to honourable members. Perhaps the Chief Minister could give details to the Assembly of when he sought such advice from the Attorney-General. Perhaps the Minister for Education could explain in this Assembly how, under the Education Act that he administers - and I do not think it is too big a job to have to handle one act of parliament; other ministers have to do more than that - he can equate the job of principal of the Darwin Community College with that of a departmental head. I would be interested in hearing his general interpretation of the sections to which I have just referred.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude, I want to raise my general concern about things that have been going on in respect of the government's attitude towards the college. This relates directly to the Minister for Education. I do not want to get into too much detail about an incident which distracted attention away from the major point at issue - the Barry Coulter affair. I do not want to delve too deeply into that because I do not think that it is the major point at issue. Mr Speaker, perhaps I could just say to the Minister for Community Development that it is appropriate for members of parliament to make application on behalf of constituents when they have problems but I hope that the Minister for Education would agree with the course of action I think should have been adopted. I will tell you what I would have done, and I am in the opposition.

Mr Speaker, had something as serious as that been brought to my attention by a constituent - and I have a good enough relationship with the Minister for Education to be confident that I would receive the proper response - I would have contacted the Minister for Education and said to him: 'I have a constituent who is complaining about academic bias against her in respect of her exam results'. I appreciate only too well what a life-shattering experience it can be to a person's career prospects to face the possibility of failing an examination on which his future employment would depend. It is a pretty serious matter. I would have said to the Minister for Education: 'I would like you to investigate at a ministerial level the allegations that have been made and tell me the results of your investigations'. If I had been dissatisfied with the report from the minister, perhaps I would have proceeded further. I said

publicly that directly contacting, not even the principal of the college but people further down the line - and I thought it was a fairly moderate statement on my part - showed a profound lack of judgment on the part of the member concerned.

Mr Speaker, if, as a member of the opposition, I can be confident of carrying out that course of action, how much more available is that proper course of action to a member of the government itself? I will be quite specific about this. In my opinion, the honourable minister, or the honourable member as he then was, in the face of receiving such a serious complaint from a constituent with all of the potential for his action being misinterpreted, should have contacted his own Minister for Education and said: 'Here is the situation. You are the minister. Go out there at ministerial level and let me know what you find out as Minister for Education and then I will decide whether to take it any further'. That should have been the proper course of action. I think that the honourable member, whilst not necessarily having to be raked over the coals for it, should at least be prepared to admit that it was an error of judgment on his part doing it the way it was done. That is the end of it as far as I am concerned because it is not the point at issue.

Mr Speaker, I have been going to Darwin Community College graduation ceremonies for a number of years now. I have not missed one for a long time because, as a completely uneducated clot myself and as someone who has deeply regretted that all of his life, I appreciate the great pride and sense of accomplishment that students feel when, after years of slogging, they receive a piece of paper that is public evidence that they have received a qualification and certain knowledge that it will be of use to them in the community. Graduation night for a student is as important an occasion as being sworn in as a member of parliament, as the new member was in the Assembly on Tuesday. I attended the first graduation ceremony at the Darwin Community College that was addressed by the present Minister for Education. I was shocked and upset on behalf of the graduates at that ceremony at the inappropriateness and insensitivity that was shown by the minister on that occasion. The minister knows that his speech outraged and upset parents, staff and students at that graduation ceremony. From the platform, the minister cast aspersions on the situation at the college, said that he was looking forward to when the university would be established in the Northern Territory, talked about second-class qualifications and said that he hoped that the college staff would stop all of their internal bickering and get on with the job of educating students.

I am not suggesting that troubles do not exist at the college. I am not suggesting that it is not the appropriate role for the responsible minister to take people to task for it. However, I thought it was a very strange platform to use. He did it in front of students who had been flogging their way through 3 or 4 years of study. By his speech, he cast public doubt on the value of the qualifications that they had received on the night they graduated. It was a speech that I will not forget for a very long time and I took the minister to task personally about it after the occasion.

I simply give that as an illustration to indicate my great concern at the continuing damage that is being done to the credibility of a very credible institution, an institution which is admired around Australia for the way in which it successfully handles an enormous number of students in a very small community of 60 000 people and offers complex and wide-ranging courses. There is a profound cause for censure to be laid at the feet of the government generally for the ham-fisted way it has quite unnecessarily damaged considerably the credibility of our tertiary institution. In my view, it damaged

considerably our chances of proceeding smoothly along the path towards a university for the Northern Territory. It alarmed and upset our students unnecessarily. If the minister wants to doubt that, I suggest that he look at a list of motions that have just been passed unanimously by the students association at the college condemning the Chief Minister for his actions. They wonder if what they are doing is worth while when there is all this public mud-slinging going on.

Mr Speaker, I will suggest an alternative course of action that was open to the Chief Minister and which would have avoided all of this unnecessary degradation of the college's standing. Very simply, he should have obeyed the Northern Territory's laws; it is as simple as that. It is not a complicated exercise to work out the proper relationship between the staff of the college, the council and the minister. It is in fact very simply and logically laid out. I take some personal pride in having helped to produce an act which is logical from the first page through to the last page. It contains very little unnecessary wording. Each section leads naturally to the next. The proper relationship is laid out. The Minister for Education had no role in this affair.

Mr Harris: You are wrong.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, either I am wrong or the Minister for Education's press statements are wrong. Nevertheless, that is not the point at issue. The Minister for Education should have obeyed the law and taken the hard course that the law specifically allowed him. He could have directed the Darwin Community College to appoint Mr X, Y or Z as principal of the college. That would have been the proper course of action to follow. It was not followed.

Even if there is some legal argument, which I fail to see, that the government's action was legal, there can be absolutely no excuse for the manner in which this whole operation was carried out nor for the damage to the college's reputation and standing that resulted from it. The reason that I raised the name of the college was not simply as an unimportant sigh. The reason I raise the question of the name of the college is because I think that little operation simply typifies the lack of thought and planning by the Chief Minister when he made that appointment. Of course, we all know that the Chief Minister and the government in general have a shoot-from-the-hip attitude towards not worrying about little details like the law. They think they can fix things up afterwards. Twice in this Assembly that I can remember things have been patched up after the event. But, in this case, there are a number of casualties that were not involved in the other instances. The students of the Darwin Institute of Technology are the major casualties in this whole affair.

Mr Speaker, may I conclude by giving a piece of gratuitous advice to the government. If this affair is not to be further compounded, I suggest to the government - and we will oppose it - that the only course of action that is available to it now is that, to at least make certain of the appointment of the principal of the Darwin Community College and afford no more confusion in terms of court cases and what I believe would be an inevitable result, it will have no choice but to introduce amendments to this act that will validate retrospectively the illegal act it carried out at the time. I put the Chief Minister on notice, Mr Speaker, that we will oppose that legislation on principle when it is introduced. I suggest to the Chief Minister and the Northern Territory Attorney-General - and I am looking forward to his contribution and to receiving his legal advice - and the Minister for Education that, as a result of their blundering, that is now the only course of action available to them.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I am delighted to be able to rise to respond to the verbosity and lack of substance of the Leader of the Opposition's speech because that is exactly what we have been subjected to for the last 25 minutes. I would like to put a few things into perspective for the honourable member, his colleagues and anybody else who feels seriously put out by the new administrative arrangements relating to the Darwin Institute of Technology. There was absolutely no equivocation in what I did at the time. Considerable forethought and planning went into it; it was quite deliberate. The object of the exercise was to try to bring together the activities of the Darwin Community College, the TAFE area and the University Planning Unit into one focal point and to try to head the Northern Territory's post-school education activities into a concentrated effort in the one direction.

Mr B. Collins: We support those changes.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says he supports those changes and that is great. It was essential to establish a new administrative structure to take care of those arrangements and the upshot was that a new director had to be appointed to head the institution. It was on the advice of education people, and I support it wholeheartedly, that the new institution should be known as the Darwin Institute of Technology. It was believed it would follow in the footsteps of major institutions in the states that have played a very important role over the years in post-school education. I cite one that was put before me, Mr Speaker: the Western Australian Institute of Technology which is regarded very highly throughout the nation.

Mr Speaker, the Darwin Community College had sought applications from people to head the Darwin Community College. As one would expect, the applicants applying for that job would not necessarily have been suitable applicants to head the new Darwin Institute of Technology with its new focus and responsibilities. I also believed that the issue of leadership at the Darwin Community College and the Darwin Institute of Technology which overtook it should be settled very quickly and not allowed to go on for months. I did a bit of homework on the matter and came up with the following facts that are very important in the context of this debate. I do not know that they have escaped the Leader of the Opposition's attention, Mr Speaker. I rather suspect that he omitted them intentionally so that he did not lose any ground in his argument.

Let us look at how the principal of the community college was appointed in the past. When the Darwin Community College was established, the principal was not appointed by its council since it did not have one. Interviews were conducted by a government planning committee, chaired by a First Assistant Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Education. Members of the panel included the planning committee of the college, the head of the Northern Territory Public Service Commissioner's Office and the Northern Territory Director of Education, Dr H. Beare. The appointment was made by the Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Education.

Mr Speaker, the assumptions on which the recent changes were made were very simply these: the Darwin Community College was being given new directions; that is, a new title of Darwin Institute of Technology and revised roles for the academic board and with proposals for some new operating procedures as proposed by one of the subcommittees of the council. I then asked my advisers how people in this situation are appointed in the states.

Let me bring to the attention of members the practice in Queensland where it was done recently on the basis of ministerial endorsement. In Queensland, the practice was carried out as follows. Where the institution lacks a council,

as in the formation of a new college, then the government makes the appointment decision by referring it to the Governor in Council. When the former departmental teachers colleges were converted in 1968-69 to colleges of advanced education, the state government retained the right to decide on new appointments even though college principals were in existence. Thirdly, when college amalgamations - which I think took place here - were taking place, governments in Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland made the decision as to which principal of the group of affected colleges should be the next super-principals. The precedent is very clearly defined.

Mr Speaker, I would like to touch for a moment on the arrangements of administrative orders when a Prime Minister, Premier or Chief Minister is organising his Cabinet. I announced at the time, it was announced in His Honour's speech and my colleagues announced publicly that there would be legislative changes to effect the administrative arrangements that have taken place. I took my precedent from the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, who when he came to government made certain administrative arrangements and announced at the time that he would be legislating at the next sittings of the parliament to put those arrangements into legal effect. I believe it is a perfectly reasonable way of doing things. It is not illegal or dishonest so far as I am concerned because the intention has been announced and clarified.

Mr Speaker, let us get a few things straight about the status of the Darwin Community College. The fact is that, in a very legal sense if the Leader of the Opposition wants to be legal, the Darwin Community College is an arm and a statutory authority of the Northern Territory government. Its head is appointed by the government. That is something that has been a standing arrangement with this government ever since self-government: the heads of departments and statutory arms of the government are appointed by the government. It also follows that the Chief Minister has the prerogative of appointing his ministers and departmental heads.

Mr Smith: Rubbish.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says that is rubbish. We have been conducting business in the Northern Territory on that basis for nearly 7 years yet today it is rubbish because it does not suit him. It is not rubbish, Mr Speaker. That is exactly how the system works.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister has the prerogative of appointing his ministers and his departmental heads. People argued that it was not my role to appoint the head. Under the precedents that were before me and the circumstances at the time, it was very definitely my role to appoint the principal and I will come to the business of consultation with my colleague in a moment. Any department or arm of this government that receives \$18m of taxpayers' money per annum is very much my interest and my responsibility and so is the appointment of its minister and its head. Some people wish to argue that, because the job they are doing is so different, it should not involve the government at all; the government should just send the cheques and they would look after the student passes. Mr Speaker, that is not on. Any arm of government that has responsibility under the Financial Administration and Audit Act is the responsibility of the head of the government and the minister concerned. The same goes for the head of that organisation.

Mr Speaker, let me be clear about something else that the Leader of the Opposition scooted around with a bit of fancy footwork. The act does not define specifically how the principal is appointed. It is a shortcoming in the act and I am the first to admit it.

Mr B. Collins: Yes it does.

Mr TUXWORTH: Perhaps in his final remarks, the Leader of the Opposition might like to read out the words which state who makes the appointment, how the selection is made, how it is recommended, whom it is sent to and how it is announced. It should be interesting to listen to him because he did not tell us this morning.

Mr Speaker, I would just like to touch on the matter of discussions with the minister. The Minister for Education was right when he said that, 2 or 3 days before Christmas, when working out the administrative working arrangements, I did not consult with him. It was a very honest remark. However, what he did not say, which I am prepared to say now and which all my colleagues could stand up and support, is that, in the course of the last 12 months, there have been many hours of ministerial discussion about the role of the community college, its performance and its relevance to the community. That has happened. The fact that it did not happen on the eve of the appointments seems to be some enormous calamity. It is nonsense and it just does not wash.

Mr Speaker, over a period of time, there were extensive discussions involving all the ministers, and particularly between the 2 former Ministers for Education and the present Minister for Education, on the role and the activities of the college. That process goes on from time to time about many arms of government. It happened with the Darwin Community College. Why did that happen? It happened because we are very concerned at how well the college performs and how well it serves the community.

One issue that was raised was the degree of consultation with the various groups in the community about the appointment of the new principal of the college. Mr Speaker, have you ever tried to have a meeting with academics 3 days before Christmas? Would you like to know where all the telegrams came from at \$84 a pop? They came from New Zealand, Bangladesh, South Africa and anywhere you like to name. There was not a lot of time available to me for comprehensive discussions with anybody. At the time, I had to make decisions. I made them and I stand by them. I did have some discussions with departmental people and others about the appointments and the directions that were being taken. I was happy with those discussions. That I failed to communicate with academics to the degree that they would have liked is perhaps regrettable but it is one of those things. I am quite happy to say that, after the changes, I had a meeting with members of the council and some of the academic staff at the college. They made their points of view clear to me and I made mine clear to them. Whilst we might not have agreed on everything, at least we cleared the air and understood each other's position.

The other interesting thing that I would like to touch on today, and which the Leader of the Opposition covered in a short burst, is the references that have been made continually for some time now about the appointment of Mr Kevin Davis. It was first suggested that Mr Davis is not a proper appointment; that he is not suitably qualified. I am not saying that the Leader of the Opposition said it but there are plenty of people out there with a loose lip who did. The point I am making - and I am going to read Mr Davis' curriculum vitae into Hansard - is that Mr Davis is, in my view, administratively competent and able to perform the duties that are expected of him. In my view, his main duty would be administration. I believe his curriculum vitae will give an indication that Mr Davis is a very capable and competent person:

Kevin William Davis

Nationality: Australian.

Date of birth: 17 January 1941.

Married with 2 children.

Qualifications: Teacher's Certificate, Greylands Teachers College, Western Australia in 1960; Bachelor of Education at the University of Queensland in 1971; Master of Education Administration at the University of New England in 1977.

Professional: Is a member of the Australian College of Education.

Affiliations: Is in the Commonwealth Council of Education Administration and the Australian Association of Educational Research.

Present position: Director of the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Experience: 1961-65, Western Australian Department of Education; 1966-71, Principal of the Shepherdson College, Elcho Island, NT; 1972-73, Principal of Kormilda College, Darwin; 1974-76, Principal Education Adviser, Katherine; 1977, away for full-time study at the University of New England; 1978-79, Assistant Secretary level 1, Australian Public Service Association, Assistant Director of Schools Branch, Darwin; 1978-84, Deputy Secretary, Programs Division of the Department of Education, Darwin; 1984, Acting Chairman of the Housing Commission.

Mr Speaker, Mr Davis has represented the Northern Territory Department of Education nationally and internationally. He has had wide experience in Aboriginal education and as the deputy secretary and divisional head responsible for the establishment of Katherine Rural College, the Batchelor College and from administration of departmental TAFE programs. He is experienced in accreditation of TAFE and advanced education courses. He has had 6 years' experience as a member of the Darwin Community College Council and he has acted as Secretary of the Department of Education on numerous occasions. Rather than allow any reflection on Mr Davis and his competence, capacity and propriety as a suitable person to head the Darwin Institute of Technology, let us just stop all the nonsense and give the man his due. He has what it takes and he will do a good job.

Mr Speaker, I would like to turn to the matter of academic freedom. There is a prevalent school of thought which suggests that academic freedom is total freedom over budget and appointment of personnel within the institution of government. That school of thought has been applied to the academic campus that we are talking about.

Mr B. Collins: Who wrote that line?

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I do not mind telling the Leader of the Opposition that that proposition was put to me at the meeting I had with members of the Darwin Institute of Technology and some of the academics. They told me that that is what academic freedom is.

Mr Speaker, I think it is time that that issue was addressed and, if necessary, rectified. Let me be quite clear. I am not interested in how

academics teach, what they teach or when they teach it as long as they do their job and everybody is happy with them. I am seriously interested in efficient administration and the distribution of resources that should take place in accordance with the policies of the government and the direction that the government wants to take. I am interested in that because, as far as I am concerned, the education of the Northern Territory's youth is the most important issue confronting the government today.

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

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that an extension of time be granted to the honourable Chief Minister.

Motion agreed to.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, both the Minister for Education and I have no interest in becoming involved in academic freedom, but we do have an interest and an involvement in the administration of the arms of government. If the government's interest and involvement in financial administration and the allocation of resources is regarded by the academic community as an infringement of its academic freedom, then there will be an infringement because the government is interested in those things. My own information, despite the loud cries from a few disgruntled people, is that most of the academics understand that situation quite well and are quite happy with it. That is the way it works everywhere else in the country.

I would like to pick up the point about the government appointing people and making changes in the direction of government. Recently, the federal Minister for Education made changes in the direction of education by consolidating areas of post-school education. That is fine. She made appointments in relation to those changes. That is the government's prerogative. At the Commonwealth level, a new chairman was appointed to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. He was Hugh Hudson, a man I sat on ministerial councils with in the early 1970s. Mr Speaker, since he was a former ALP minister, it could reasonably be argued that that was a political appointment. It could also be argued that, with his background, Mr Hudson was probably competent to do the job.

Mr B. Collins: Extremely competent.

Mr TUXWORTH: Right. I am not taking away from Mr Hudson. As I said, I sat with him on councils for some time and he was quite an interesting character to work with.

Mr Speaker, let me make it absolutely clear for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, the students and the staff at the community college that the government is not interested in political appointments to the position of principal of the college or any other position. Neither are we interested in having people appointed to satisfy the whims of a few members of the community. As I said earlier, the responsibility for the appointment lies with the government. My colleague will be introducing amendments to the act today to clarify the appointment procedures that will surround the appointment of the principal of the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Mr Smith: Retrospectively.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the honourable member says 'retrospectively'. Yes, retrospectively, announced at the time and confirmed in the Administrator's speech.

Mr B. Collins: It was not announced at the time. What nonsense!

Mr TUXWORTH: It was announced at the time.

Mr B. Collins: That you had broken the law and you would have to fix it.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, this morning, we had 25 minutes of waffle because the Leader of the Opposition did not have a case. I have just raised with the Leader of the Opposition the logic, the reasoning, the precedents, the court process, the argument and the objective of the government in doing what it has done. Mr Speaker, it is legal, it is proper and it is good for the Territory. It will not suit the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker, but tell me if anything ever does.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I would start by reminding the Assembly of the wording of the censure motion because, quite obviously, the Chief Minister forgot it, probably conveniently. It says: 'This Assembly censures the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory for his arbitrary and illegal actions in appointing a principal/director of the former Darwin Community College and changing the name of the college and the role and functions of the college without consultation with either the Minister for Education or the college council, which actions have seriously undermined the credibility, status and integrity of tertiary education in the Northern Territory'.

Mr Speaker, quite obviously, the key issue in the censure motion is the legality or illegality of the actions of the Chief Minister, particularly in the appointment of the principal. To give the Chief Minister his due, he did touch on that in his speech. I would like to go point by point through his rationale for the decision that he took.

First, he said that there was a precedent in the Northern Territory in that a previous principal of the Darwin Community College had been appointed by government. That was in 1973 or 1974, well before self-government, under Commonwealth legislation and not Northern Territory legislation. He also said that there were precedents in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. We do not deny that there have been precedents there. The difference is that those states had legal backing to make those decisions. It was contained in their relevant acts and determinations. The actions that the Chief Minister took are not validated by the relevant act. He then spoke about the appointment of Mr Hugh Hudson to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. The same thing applies. Senator Susan Ryan appointed Mr Hugh Hudson to that position. She had the legal backing of the relevant Commonwealth act to do it.

Mr Speaker, he then proceeded to talk about the power of this government to appoint ministers and departmental heads. He said that it has been government practice since 1978 to do that. We do not take exception to that. We think that is quite proper and legitimate for the government to appoint ministers and departmental heads. What we say is that, if it wanted to do that in the case of the Darwin Community College, it should have amended the legislation to provide for the government, the Chief Minister or the Minister for Education to make an appointment to the college. It is completely and utterly, without any doubt whatsoever, the job of the college council. The most that the government can do is direct the college to appoint a principal. But the government has not even done that. It has unilaterally ignored its own legislation.

I would have thought that the Chief Minister would have used in his defence an opinion from the Department of Law or the Attorney-General to justify what he has done. He did not take up the opportunity that was extended to him by the

Leader of the Opposition to offer such an opinion. One can only hope that the Minister for Education will offer such an opinion in an attempt to counteract the serious allegation that the opposition has made that the government has acted without power. The concern that we have on this issue lies in that very fact: the government has acted without power. For the sake of the government and education in the Northern Territory, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I hope this matter is not challenged in court because it is quite clear what the result would be. The government would lose and, ultimately, so would the people of the Northern Territory because it would keep alive an issue that has been around far too long. It would not have happened if the government had been competent and had been aware of its own legislation.

From the comments of the Chief Minister, it appears that, because you need to read 3 or 4 separate sections of the Education Act to find out how you appoint the principal, it is too hard for the Chief Minister. If it is not in one section in very simple words, it is too hard.

Mr Harris: Where is it?

Mr SMITH: You need to read sections 43, 44 and 56. If you read all those sections, it is quite clear that the college council has the power - and it is the only body that has the power - to appoint the principal and the principal is responsible to the college council. The only thing that the minister can do to amend or adjust that process is to direct the college council on any particular issue.

Mr Speaker, is it not amazing that, even now, after this debate has been raging for 2 or 3 months, the Minister for Education can ask me where it is?

Mr Tuxworth: You are the only one who knows.

Mr SMITH: If that is not an indictment of the performance of the Minister for Education, I do not know what is. Regarding the accusation that I am the only one who knows...

Mr Tuxworth: You are the only one who knows where it is.

Mr SMITH: ... ask the honourable member sitting on the left of the Minister for Education what his opinion is.

As I have said, the unfortunate thing about all of this is the effect that it has had on the community's perception of the role of the college, the effect on morale at the college itself and the effect on the national standing of the community college or the institute of technology as it will be properly known after the new legislation is passed.

Mr Robertson: You are helping, are you?

Mr SMITH: Yes, we are helping to keep the place on the straight and narrow.

Mr Speaker, time and again in this Assembly, the government has demonstrated its failure to consult properly and effectively with the appropriate people over issues before taking decisions. This has been the root cause of its gross mismanagement of Territory affairs. Unfortunately, this case is no exception. This time the lack of consultation leads not only to a lack of credibility in the government - the opposition would certainly be prepared to see it cop that - but it is also leading to what could be permanent

damage to the credibility and quality of tertiary education in the Northern Territory. That is of particular concern not only to the current staff of Northern Territory institutions but also will contribute to the long-term disadvantage of Northern Territory development.

Mr Speaker, there are a number of concerns that have been publicly expressed by various sectors of the community, all of which are connected to the actions of the government on this issue and their legality. As the Minister for Education and the Chief Minister should know, they are genuine concerns voiced by people deeply involved with tertiary education and its future prospects in the Northern Territory. Among the groups whom I am aware are voicing concerns, and I am not saying they all voice the same concern, are the students' association, the staff association, the Federation of College Academics and the academic board of the recently renamed institute. I would also be amazed if at least some of the applicants for the advertised position of principal/director of the former Darwin Community College have not conveyed their dismay to the government over the Chief Minister's pre-emptive intervention in that particular matter. That is a matter that the Minister for Education may wish to address because, if he has had correspondence from applicants for the position expressing their concern about the actions that the government has taken, that is a very good reflection of what the academic community in the rest of Australia, and perhaps overseas, think about what the government has done. Indeed, it is that particular action which, without doubt, has caused the most concern and the most damage. Once a reputation has been established and a precedent set, it takes a long time and much persuasive argument to convince people that it will not occur again. These are the kinds of statements being made and resolutions being passed about the consequences of the Chief Minister's ill-considered, ill-advised and, most importantly, illegal action.

Mr Speaker, there are some other areas of major concern in relation to the government's interference on this particular issue. I intend to deal with these now. Indignation and concern have been expressed in various quarters about the Chief Minister's action in abolishing the former college council and establishing in its place an NT council of higher education without first consulting with the council. We have heard from the Chief Minister's own lips that there has been no consultation because it all happened 3 days before Christmas. I want to ask the Chief Minister what he was doing in the time leading up to that. Everybody knew that he was going to reorganise his Cabinet. Apparently, by his own words - and he completely convinced me - it was an ad hoc decision 24 hours before he made his announcement without any consultation with anybody.

Mr Speaker, I think, and many agree, that there was quite a strong case for bringing more rationale and coordination into planning for tertiary education in the Territory. There are 2 points to be made in this regard: the lack of consultation which took place about the change and the apparent conflict of interest which seems to be inherent in the change. The new council has been instructed, as I understand it, that it is to be responsible both for the governing of the Darwin Institute of Technology and also for the planning of advanced education and university sectors in the Territory. While the Labor Party has always strongly advocated that the college council, students and staff should be heavily involved in discussions for planning in this area, surely there is a potential conflict of interest to place responsibility for that as well as responsibility for the DIT with the same body. There must arise occasions when decisions of a financial or resource matter will have to be made which will bring the new council into conflict with itself. For instance, I presume this is the body which will advise on certification of advanced education courses in the Territory while at the same time governing the institute.

This same concern has been expressed about the dual role which the new principal/director is expected to play: that of principal/director of the institute and executive officer to the council. I think this conflict of interest question must be addressed carefully by the government to ensure that Territory tertiary education in fact develops to its full potential and does not end up on the scrap heap torn apart by conflicting interests and demands.

While speaking of the council and its role, it is only fair to point out that the council and indeed the principal have been criticised for not taking a stronger stand in defence of the academic integrity and independence of the institute. This perhaps can be seen in part as one result of political interference in that people become frightened to speak out against unpopular government decisions. There is no doubt the current Chief Minister enjoys a reputation for engendering that kind of fear within the public service.

Mr Speaker, there are 2 more areas I would like to mention where concern has been expressed. The first may seem to be minor in comparison to the others: the arbitrary change of name. The fear that has been expressed to me is that changing the name may also mean as yet undisclosed changes to the direction of the institution and, given the government's record in prior consultation on such matters, the fears are probably well-founded. The other matter which has been raised with me is the arbitrary and sudden closure of the Nhulunbuy annexe of the Darwin Institute of Technology without consultation with the council. Again, this is a matter which properly should have gone through the council and I think the fear is that this decision is a sign of things to come and further government and political interference following from the Chief Minister's unilateral appointment of the principal before the applications had even closed. As I understand the decision about the Nhulunbuy annexe, it was made by the Department of Education rather than by the institute itself.

Mr Speaker, I hope that this sittings will find the minister and the Chief Minister accounting for their actions or lack of actions. Obviously, the Chief Minister has no intention of accounting for his actions; particularly explaining why he has acted illegally on these most important matters. Obviously, the Minister for Education has the opportunity in the next 20 minutes, and I hope that he will seize that opportunity. Most importantly, the government needs to lift its game in relation to the Darwin Institute of Technology. It needs to consult more. It needs to get the institute working as one so that, together with the government and the community, it can go about its task and restore the reputation and the prestige that it has had both in the Northern Territory community and in the wider Australian community. It is an unfortunate fact that the actions of the government have made that job necessary and the longer the government delays in coming to the realisation that it has to do something, the harder it will be to restore the prestige of the institute.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I have to take issue with the member for Millner when he said that the whole issue is about the legality of the appointment. The issue at the Darwin Institute of Technology is the fact that a public servant had been appointed to head that institute. That was one of the issues raised and one that the opposition has not addressed.

Mr Speaker, I will touch briefly on the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition because there are many issues to cover today. If I do not understand the law, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, then perhaps some of the academics also should go back to school and learn about the law. You will find that the resolutions that were passed by the council have stated in places: 'whilst valid in law'. You will find that resolutions of the academic board also contain the words: 'although acknowledging the legality of the present appointment

of principal'. The academic board's resolutions were all ratified by the student body and the staff association. By acknowledging and endorsing those particular comments, I presume they all would have a lack of understanding of what the law is about.

Mr Speaker, the issue that has been raised today is a very deep one and I am very sad that it has come to the stage where it is being debated in this manner. The only people who are being affected are the students of the Darwin Institute of Technology and the only people who are causing the credibility of the institute to be put under threat are the academics themselves. Their feelings on these issues have been put very clearly to me and I have listened to them. It is their right to put forward those views.

However, as far as the academics are concerned, there are some misunderstandings about the Darwin Institute of Technology. They relate to the institute of technology as an advanced education college. I believe that everyone who entered this debate today has considered that to be the case and has examined precedents in colleges of advanced education. The Leader of the Opposition knows that it is a TAFE college offering advanced education courses. The Darwin Institute of Technology is a unique institution. It has those 2 sectors: TAFE and advanced education. There have been suggestions put forward that universities, CAEs and TAFE colleges be all linked together. I do not know whether that is a good idea or not. That has been suggested by education authorities. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that, as far as the Northern Territory is concerned, we are not interested in being part of an experiment where there could be a lack of credibility placed on the awards and the degrees that the students at our college are obtaining. Whilst I am the Minister for Education, I will make sure that, as far as credibility is concerned, no slight can be placed on the institute of technology. I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition, the academics themselves and this government are all working for higher quality courses, awards and degrees which are accepted right throughout the world and also for excellence in teaching and learning. That is important and it is something that we must remember. Some time ago, when we were debating the establishment of a university, a proposal was put forward by the opposition. My understanding is that Dr Trevor James played a major role in the opposition's proposal.

Mr B. Collins: He did not. Don't take credit away from us. I wrote that.

Mr HARRIS: The proposal was that the university grow out of the Darwin Community College - that the university grow out of a TAFE college. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that that suggestion sent shivers up the academics' spines. When we are dealing in this area, academics become very concerned about their position.

Last year - and the Chief Minister referred to this in his address - as minister, I put forward the suggestion that, when the position of principal became vacant, the new principal should be appointed by the minister. I put forward that proposal. The reason I did that was because I queried the TAFE involvement and the advanced education involvement at the Darwin Community College. The Federation of College Academics and others see the institute as a college of advanced education. In all the states except Victoria - and we know what form of government that is - the TAFE colleges are the responsibility of the various state education authorities. The principals of those colleges are appointed either by the directors-general of TAFE, where there is a TAFE section, or the directors-general of education. Since the Darwin Community College was two-thirds TAFE and one-third advanced education, I felt strongly that there was every right to have a say in the direction of that college.

There was concern by members of the institute and by the public generally about what had happened at the college.

Let me cover the comments of the Leader of the Opposition when he spoke about my occasional address. I was concerned because what was happening was affecting the people who use the Darwin Community College. These innuendos had been there for years; they had been stuck under the carpet and I wanted to bring them out in the open. I made that comment with purpose on that particular occasion, as I had every right to do. At a graduation ceremony at the University of Newcastle, Senator Susan Ryan commented in her occasional address:

There are also few signs that university staff consider that anything is amiss or that change would be useful and desirable. University research appears to enjoy support from Commonwealth funds regardless of how well or badly those funds are spent. Universities do not really account for the ways in which they spend their funds. To date, they have not been expected to.

Mr Speaker, what Senator Ryan was asking for and what I was asking for is more accountability. You will find also that Senator Ryan, in an address to the national working party of women's advisers in TAFE, commented:

Tertiary education consumes very substantial amounts of scarce public resources for which governments are publicly responsible and, although I have yet to hear a critic who actually denies this fact, I have heard many who blithely ignore it.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that there has been a need for the college operations to be looked at in detail. Let me get back to the issue of the designation of the Darwin Institute of Technology because it is important. It is quite obvious that, if I do not have an understanding of the law, the Leader of the Opposition does not have an understanding of the designation of the Darwin Institute of Technology. This has been demonstrated in particular by academics at the college. I refer specifically to Dr Trevor James who is the President of the Federation of College Academics. He was talking on a program on the ABC radio. We were talking specifically about Kevin Davis' appointment not being a precedent and that it is quite a usual occurrence in other TAFE colleges. His response to that, because I had raised the issue of its being a TAFE college, made me laugh. I quote from the transcript:

I just had to laugh. Everyone else in Australia who hears that just rolls about because this is not a TAFE college any more than RMIT or WAIT in other parts of Australia are TAFE colleges. This really is just simply a horse that will not run.

He was referring to the Darwin Institute of Technology being a TAFE college. Mr Speaker, he was well off the mark. The Northern Territory fought long and hard to gain recognition of the Darwin Community College, as it was then, as a multi-level college covering both the TAFE sector and the advanced education sector. We worked hard for that. The college is of good standing in both sectors of tertiary education but I must now state categorically that the college and, more lately, the Darwin Institute of Technology, is not a prescribed college of advanced education in the terms laid down under the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Act. This act provides the mechanism to fund the 40 or so CAEs that we have in Australia.

What really happens in relation to the Darwin Institute of Technology funding, and what Dr James fails to comprehend, is that it is given special

consideration by CTEC within a category which includes technical and further education institutions, such as the Australian Maritime College. In the ACT, the act covers one CAE, the Canberra College of Advanced Education, and 2 TAFE colleges offering advanced education degrees and diplomas, the Canberra School of Art and the Canberra School of Music. Both of these are TAFE colleges like the Darwin Institute of Technology. They also offer highly-regarded advanced education courses. In Tasmania, one prescribed CAE exists, the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education. There is also one other Commonwealth institution, the Australian Maritime College. The Australian Maritime College has an advanced education sector budget allocation roughly equivalent to the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Mr Speaker, the Advanced Education Council of CTEC was also involved in the initial funding of advanced education incorporated in certain universities as a result of college and university amalgamations. Cases in point are the Institute of Advanced Education and James Cook University, and the University of Wollongong. Even the amalgamation of colleges of advanced education with universities did not go smoothly. There were concerns by academics, particularly from the university sector. I have no wish to labour this particular point but it was raised. It is a misunderstanding on the part of many people who see the Darwin Institute of Technology as a college of advanced education. This is spelled out very clearly in the CTEC reports and the Leader of the Opposition has these available to him. Advanced education is funded by the Commonwealth in colleges of advanced education prescribed within the act and certain other institutions including universities and TAFE colleges. The Darwin Institute of Technology clearly resides in the category of TAFE colleges offering advanced education.

Let me refer, Mr Speaker, to the comment that has been made about the lack of precedent in this issue. What the member for Millner said was right inasmuch as there are precedents in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, particularly with the amalgamation of colleges of advanced education. They were appointments by the government and there was a change of direction. It was decided that those institutions would be brought together and the government made an appointment. The same thing happened with teachers colleges and the colleges of advanced education. When they amalgamated, the position of principal to those particular colleges was by appointment. Let us not have this business about lack of precedent.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition also raised the Barry Coulter affair and I want to put this to rest. I have not raised it on any occasion and the government has not raised it on any occasion. It was raised in the first instance by Dr Trevor James on Territory Extra. I can recall very clearly the words that he said when he was referring to the minister or a minister. I can recall his voice booming through the speakers:

We can no longer continue to have a situation where we have a minister ring up the head of the department and ask him to bend the rules so that a student who would have been excluded can be given yet another chance to pass after having failed 2 semesters in succession. We can no longer have a situation where the minister can register a teacher in the Territory after and despite that teacher having failed in the Department of Education studies.

Mr Speaker, in that first instance, that referred directly to me as the Minister for Education. I am afraid that I was most concerned that he had called into question my integrity in this whole matter. I called on Dr Trevor

James to make a public apology because I have never been involved in trying to alter or change gradings of any sort whatsoever. There was no apology for the damage that was caused to me or to my integrity. Dr James then shifted his position and he started to broaden his approach.

On Tuesday 12 February, he again appeared on Territory Extra with so-called documents alleging that the MLA for Berrimah, Mr Barry Coulter, brought pressure to bear on lecturers at the institute to alter the gradings of a student. Those were very grave accusations. The suggestion that a member of this Assembly was not entitled to make representation on behalf of a constituent is contemptible. If opposition members have not received any comments from students at that institute, then perhaps they are not doing their jobs. They must have received representations and they must have made representations to the college or the minister to satisfy the requirements of a particular student.

Mr Speaker, I called immediately for information on this issue. I went through it in detail and I am satisfied that there was no political interference whatsoever on the part of the member for Berrimah, now the Minister for Community Development. I might also say that, whilst the Leader of the Opposition can say that the member for Berrimah should have gone through the Minister for Education, I might also say that the particular lecturer concerned should have gone direct to the principal if he was concerned about political interference instead of writing directly to a student on this issue, and I will come to that in a minute. If he was worried about political interference, the lecturer could have gone to the principal. The principal could have then investigated the case and, if he was concerned that there had been political intervention, he could have made his concerns known to me as the minister.

Mr Speaker, I shall just touch on this. The Leader of the Opposition brushed it off and said that he wanted to put the matter to rest; I wish to put it to rest as well. In relation to the letter that was written by a college academic, the lecturer of this particular student, he referred to the letter himself and said that he does not believe that it was a threat at all. That is his right. He saw it like that and I am not doubting that at all. Whether he did or did not see it as a threat does not matter. The fact is that the student concerned saw it as a threat, her parents saw it as a threat and many other people in the community saw it as a threat. Mr Speaker, I will read out the final paragraph of that letter once more.

Mr B. Collins: Can you please incorporate the whole letter in Hansard?

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I seek leave for the letter to be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

This letter is to confirm what I stated to you on the phone today.

1. *Your official result will be available only when the due end-of-term processes, including Department and School examination meetings, have been completed.*

2. *I am willing to short-circuit the process and give you the result unofficially now only because of your circumstances and the fact that the teaching of that unit is completed.*

3. *The recommendation is that you be awarded a Fail for EDU301 Maths Curriculum C. Since this is the second failure you have*

incurred in this unit, the course regulations require that your enrolment be terminated.

4. Because this is the last unit you require to complete your Dip.T., a meeting of the Department has narrowly recommended that I exercise my prerogative as Head of Department to vary the course regulations and, in certain circumstances, allow you to take Maths Curriculum C for a third time when it is next offered.

5. If you are to attempt Maths Curriculum C again, it is in both your interests and the Department's, that we require some assurance that you would be successful next time. Accordingly, we require, first that you take again the Maths Skills test. In the light of your results either termination of your enrolment will be confirmed (in the event of a very low result indicating a sub-Year 7 grasp of Mathematical concepts) or a suitable remediation programme planned to give you some chance of success when you next do Maths Curriculum C will be devised.

6. If you do not agree to take the Maths test or to follow the remediation programme devised, the course regulations will be allowed to act and your enrolment terminated.

7. I would remind you that appeal provisions are available if you feel an assessment has been unjust and if the circumstances match those permitted under the appeal provisions.

Finally, let me observe that your case has not been helped by your or your father's seeking political intervention. This department will not allow correct academic decision-making to be swayed by political influence and Mr Coulter's intervention has simply made it more difficult to gain the department's agreement to vary the course regulations. I have written to Mr Coulter to express my concern and that of my colleagues that political pressure should seem to be exerted to interfere with the outcome of academic assessment.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr) D.E. Ingram
Principal Lecturer and
Head of the Department of
Education Studies.

Mr HARRIS: I will refer to the final paragraph in that particular letter but, first of all, I want to cover my remarks by saying that it does not matter if the college was bending over backwards to help a student.

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

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move an extension of time be granted to the Minister for Education.

Motion agreed to.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, I thank honourable members. I believe that it is

important to air the issue. I only want to do what is right and put this whole matter to rest. Mr Speaker, that final paragraph reads:

Finally, let me observe that your case has not been helped by your or your father's seeking political intervention. This department will not allow correct academic decision making to be swayed by political influence and Mr Coulter's intervention has simply made it more difficult to gain the department's agreement to vary the course regulations.

Mr Speaker, I am not saying that the person who wrote that letter did not believe that it was not a threat. But I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that the person concerned would be regretting that he had put that paragraph in.

Mr Speaker, there are processes that can be followed and the academic concerned could have gone through those processes. If there was political interference, I can assure members that, as the Minister for Education, I would investigate the matter very thoroughly indeed. I might say that, after looking at this issue, I have decided that, whilst there has been no impropriety as far as the actual student is concerned, a number of questions in relation to student processes were raised with me and I found some that need to be answered. I will be directing the council to look at those concerns. That a student cannot obtain a result for 3 months is an incredible situation to have in the Northern Territory. We talk about unemployment; we talk about looking for jobs. We find that, in some cases, examination papers have been left with a lecturer who has gone on leave without transferring those papers across to the administration centre. This raises very grave concerns indeed, and they have to be looked at. In relation to assistance and student counselling, I will be asking the NT Council of Higher Education to examine those matters.

Mr Speaker, I think it is appropriate that I announce that I consider that many matters need to be examined at the college. Consistent with the new directions of the Darwin Institute of Technology and the anticipated expanded activity in university, advanced education and TAFE sectors, I will direct the NT Council of Higher Education to instruct the director to inquire, report and make recommendations to the Minister for Education by 30 April on financial arrangements of the institution for funding of TAFE programs and advanced education programs generally with particular reference to how priorities are determined, the relationships between expenditure, course offerings and the present and future manpower needs of the Northern Territory, per student cost of courses compared to national allocations per student from the Northern Territory and Commonwealth funded programs, the recoupment of costs, where appropriate, accommodation arrangements, workloads and general working conditions of staff, accountability arrangements to the director and the council, public relations, policies and practices, and to prepare a timetable and plan for the implementation of recommendations emanating from the inquiry and to consult, where appropriate, with the NT TAFE Advisory Council. If the director of the institute requires expert advice, he will be able to coopt people to take part in that particular exercise.

Mr Speaker, I think we all want awards and degrees in the Territory to stand without question in the eyes of the community generally. The only ones putting that at risk at present are the academics themselves, not the government. The decision relating to the direction of the government is a fact. The amendments which I will be introducing very shortly relate to the administrative changes that have been announced. The member for Millner said that this was done without consultation. What right has he to say that the Northern Territory

should not have a higher education authority? We should have a higher education authority as every state has. Most people agree that Kevin Davis is a man who is capable of doing the job and that the changes that have been made are reasonable. It will give more people in the Northern Territory the opportunity to take part in decisions on the future of higher education in the Northern Territory. I believe all bodes well for the higher education sector and the official move to have a university college established in Darwin. I might say on that note that the academics themselves made representations to me last year. Dr Trevor James, as the president, saw me about his concern at the lack of comment in relation to the establishment of a university college in the Northern Territory. Now that these amendments are being introduced, people will be able to look at the issues and have input into the vital matter of establishing a university college, which has credibility, and then eventually the move to a fully-fledged Northern Territory university in the future. Those people who have been concerned will be able to have a great deal of input into the whole exercise.

Mr Speaker, I believe the government has moved in the right direction. I do not believe the motion to censure the Chief Minister is warranted at all. I believe that it was his prerogative to announce the changes that were made and also to announce his ministers. Where he made decisions, he had to take into account the comments made by public servants, the community and his colleagues. I can assure members that, as far as I am concerned, he has taken into account my past comments and supported them by the announcements made on 20 December concerning administrative changes in the Northern Territory. I might say that I was disappointed with the Leader of the Opposition's remarks about me personally but, in this business, you have to be prepared to hack the pace. As one of the backbenchers said today, the corns start to grow a little thicker as time goes on. I am looking at what is best for Territory people and I am not going to enter into a mudslinging exercise. All I want to do is to ensure that what is meant to happen does happen and the academic board will ensure that the academic processes that are followed are not questioned. The government is not interested in intruding into the area of academic gradings or processes; that is entirely up to the academic board of the institute.

Mr B. COULTER (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention a couple of sections in the legislation which seem to have been overlooked when we were talking about the role of the minister and the Darwin Community College. It seems quite clear to me that, under section 44(2), the college council is subject to any direction of the minister. It follows that the minister can override the wishes of the council on any matter according to the minister's wish. Section 57 states that the Administrator, on the advice of the Executive Council, has the final decision in terms of employment. It makes it quite clear the minister signs the Executive Council paper to the Administrator as his recommendation. Therefore, the answer to the whole issue that we have been talking about, in terms of who appoints the principal, is simply the minister. I do not know why we have been talking about it for the last 2 hours.

Mr B. Collins: I thought that the clowns always came on first in a circus but they have come on last.

Mr COULTER: Read the story. It is in the book.

Mr Tuxworth: We want a good story with some facts.

Mr COULTER: With some facts, yes. We are not going to get this thing mixed up at all. Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said that my case

should not be mentioned here today. He spent 6 minutes telling us that he should not speak about it.

Mr B. Collins: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr COULTER: I would like to explain that a little bit because a number of people are now saying that my case should not have been spoken about and confused with this issue. One of these was Dr Trevor James who went national on the issue in the Australian on 13 February. The report stated: 'A politician in the Northern Territory government tried to have the marks of a student at the Darwin Institute of Technology altered, according to the President of the Federation of College Academics in the Northern Territory, Dr Trevor James'. On the same day, he went on the ABC and he said: 'I think everyone needs a chance to think about exactly what has happened'. He was quoted in a national paper in the morning and, before the paper had hit the streets in Darwin, he was telling everybody to think a bit about exactly what happened.

I will tell you what happened. My name was used in a political way to make political mileage for Dr Trevor James and the Federation of College Academics for their own purposes. If this was such a burning issue, Mr Speaker, why did it take 10 months for it to be raised? I will tell you why. It has often been said that some academics are people who have been educated beyond their intelligence. If that is true, I think we are dealing with a very good case of it here today.

Firstly, let me make one thing absolutely clear: I did not, at any time, ask for the student's grading to be altered. As a former lecturer at the institute for 7 years, and having spent 14 years in the education field, I am fully aware of the grading processes and I deeply resent any direct accusation or inference that I would attempt to interfere in those processes. Mr Speaker, the fact is that it cannot be done. Of all the members in the Legislative Assembly, I should know that. It is ludicrous to suggest that, with my knowledge of the grading processes, I would attempt to do something I knew I could not achieve. Whatever the level of mudslinging that has gone on, the crux of the allegations levelled against me is that I tried to alter the grading of the student. I feel that it is necessary to emphasise that point again. I did not suggest to any person at the institute that the student's grading should be altered and I did not raise the matter with the Minister for Education, either formally or informally. The reason for that is that my advice to the constituent at all times was to act through the process which was available at the college, and that was the appeal process. That is why I did not go to the Minister for Education.

Having dealt with that, Mr Speaker, I now intend to deal fully with what I did do and why I did it. My name was first mentioned publicly in connection with this matter in an interview with a lecturer at the institute, Dr Trevor James, on the ABC program Territory Extra on Tuesday 12 February. I quote from the introduction to the interview:

Territory Extra was yesterday given documents which the staff of the Darwin Institute of Technology say showed that at least 1 member of the Territory government has attempted to interfere with the gradings of a student.

Later in the interview, mention was made of a letter written to me on 16 April 1984 by the head of Department of Education Studies, Dr David Ingram. I would like to point out that, in that letter, he thanked me for my interest. That is in the opening paragraph: 'Thank you for the interest you have shown'.

I am not suffering from selective amnesia as the Leader of the Opposition does when he quotes willy-nilly. I am prepared to table this document to make sure. Dr Ingram continued: 'I would be pleased at some time to let you know more'. 'Political interference', and he was prepared to let me know more! He wanted to talk about it and he was thanking me for my interest.

The allegations were repeated several times in the media in the following days. The purpose of those allegations was to smear my name and reputation and, presumably, to demonstrate some sort of similarity between my inquiries on behalf of a constituent and the appointment of the principal of the institute, Mr Kevin Davis. Now nobody wants to talk about it. Mr Speaker, I did not raise it; they did. It is important that honourable members note that these allegations were not raised at the time at which it was said that I interfered. That was 10 months ago. They were raised at a time when certain people at the institute thought that they could get some political mileage out of it.

What we have here, Mr Speaker, is far from any political interference in academic affairs. This is academics trying to deal in political affairs. I suggest that these allegations were brought to light maliciously and in an inept and clumsy way by the so-called tactics committee of the so-called Federation of College Academics of which Dr James is the so-called spokesperson. It is interesting that, when he found out what a can of worms he had opened, he put himself into exile in the staffroom toilet and has not been heard on the subject since. It was all designed to put pressure on the government to change its mind on the appointment of Mr Davis. I have used the words 'inept' and 'maliciously' advisedly. I will demonstrate the clumsiness of this grubby affair by addressing specifically the matter which Dr James himself raised, and the malice through a record of interview between the concerned father of this student and a lecturer at the institute.

At this point, Mr Speaker, I would like to make it quite clear that, at no stage, will I be questioning the academic judgment of any lecturer at the institute. It is not my intention to show that a student was treated unfairly in the matter of gradings or that a student who failed should have passed or vice versa. I am in no position to do that and I would not consider doing that. But I will show that the student who undertook courses at the institute, with the best of intentions and with great optimism, had her hopes and enthusiasm diminished in a series of events she did not understand and which were not explained adequately to her. I will show that certain procedures at the institute give cause for much concern and that some lecturers apparently consider themselves to be beyond reproach under any circumstances.

The allegations refer to a student undertaking a diploma of teaching course at the institute and I now table a statutory declaration signed by her which describes the activities of the institute as seen by her. Mr Speaker, the name of the student has been removed but the original is available in my office if the Leader of the Opposition would care to have a look at it.

Mr B. Collins: Is any of this relevant to the motion before the Assembly?

Mr COULTER: Don't ask me. I was only brought into it by somebody I do not know. I was the one who was mentioned in here by the Leader of the Opposition this morning.

I make no reference to her name and it has been deleted from copies of the statutory declaration. The reason for this is that she is now a probationary teacher at a Territory primary school and it would be unfair to subject her or her pupils to public scrutiny. The lecturers are fond of the term 'academic

freedom'. I did not know academic freedom allowed an academic to make public the unfortunate circumstances of a student for blatantly political purposes. The statement by the student tells a sad and sorry story. Let me put it into perspective.

As a 17-year-old, this person matriculated in South Australia and moved to Darwin with her family. She wanted to be a teacher and had been admitted already to a teaching course in Adelaide. She transferred to Darwin Community College to be with her parents. I need hardly point out to you, Mr Speaker, that it is highly desirable that Territory teachers are trained in the Territory to avoid the huge cost of interstate recruitment, to counter a massive annual turnover of teachers and to prevent dislocation of students. This person had a firm resolve that she would become a teacher and honourable members will see from the story that she needed every bit of that resolve to make it.

Her academic records show that, from 1981 to 1983, she performed most creditably with a series of passes, credits and even one distinction. The assessment of her teaching abilities by various teachers and principals are highly complimentary and all the indications are that the student would graduate with a diploma of teaching in 1983 and become a welcome addition to the Northern Territory Teaching Service. Suddenly, everything changed. A brief one-unit mathematics course identified as EDU301 caused the hopes and aspirations of an exemplary student to crash. She changed from a bright and confident student with every expectation as a teacher in the first semester 1984 to a weeping shadow of herself, a regular visitor to the doctor...

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I think I have been fairly tolerant so far. In fact, considering the hour, I think I have let the honourable minister go on for far longer than I should have. My point of order relates to standing order 58. I refer you, Mr Speaker, to the terms of the motion. I am censuring the Chief Minister for breaching the Education Act of the Northern Territory and for his arbitrary and illegal actions and so on. I am censuring the Chief Minister for affecting the credibility of the college. It is perfectly true that I raised the question of Mr Coulter but I did so briefly in order to say that it had nothing to do with the terms of this motion.

Mr Hanrahan: Why did you raise it?

Mr Tuxworth: Don't mention it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr B. COLLINS: The question before the Assembly, Mr Speaker, if I could give a bit of elementary instruction to those opposite, is the censure motion against the Chief Minister for breaching the Northern Territory Education Act in his appointment of the principal. This long diatribe about a student at the college has nothing whatever to do with the question before the Chair. It is a complete contravention of standing order 58.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that, during his so-called diatribe, to throw back at him, at no stage did he...

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, there is no debate on a point of order!

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business will resume his seat. The Minister for Community Development will confine his remarks to the motion.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I cannot recall the dates but my involvement in this issue was raised today by the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to answer in some detail some of the accusations that have been made about me and also about how I should have acted...

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Can I indicate to the honourable member that I look forward to seeing the matter he is talking about raised in this Assembly by any number of means at the government's disposal, such as a ministerial statement or a personal statement. The opportunity is there for him to raise it and I will debate it. However, he cannot use my motion to debate it.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition should read what he has just said tomorrow morning in Hansard because, if he expects that the members of this government...

MR B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, there is no debate on a point of order. You rule on it.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Speaker, the government takes exception to the fact that the honourable Leader of the Opposition is apparently free at any time to allude to any matter that he wishes to on his censure motion.

Mr SPEAKER: The Minister for Community Development will confine himself to the motion or discontinue his remarks.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I will take the opportunity during this Assembly to give my remarks. It seems to me, Mr Speaker, that whilst everybody is prepared to talk about me and put it in the national press, I am not allowed to then get up and...

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is continuing, and I must say in a fairly appalling fashion, to disregard repeated instructions from the Chair. He has just contravened standing order 58 again. I think we are probably going to have a debate on this at some other stage by the look of it, Mr Speaker. Under standing order 58, would the honourable minister, by your instructions, confine himself to the subject of the debate?

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable Minister for Community Development will confine himself to the matter under debate or he will be named.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Speaker, I will finish as I commenced. If you look at sections 44 and 57 of the act, the minister can direct and appoint as he sees fit. I simply conclude on that point.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, could I turn honourable members' attention to section 57 of the Education Act which has been quoted by the honourable minister as substantiation for the government's actions:

Terms and conditions of service of staff: Subject to any other law in force in the Territory, persons employed by the college shall be employed on such terms and conditions, including conditions with

respect to the duration of their employment or with respect to dismissal from employment, as the council, with the approval of the Administrator, determines.

Mr Tuxworth: That is right, that is the minister.

Mr B. COLLINS: 'As the council, with the approval of the Administrator, determines'. Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to the interjection just made by the Chief Minister. He said: 'That is right, that is the minister'. I am sure the Administrator will be delighted to hear that he is now under the ministerial control of the Northern Territory government. It is a total indictment of the Chief Minister because it typifies his attitude to parliamentary democracy and the proper relationship of the government to the public service. He is condemned by his own words. The section specifically states that the Administrator will determine it, and the honourable Chief Minister said, by way of interjection: 'That is the minister'.

Mr Tuxworth: Who does the Administrator obtain his advice from?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, it is not the minister; it is the Administrator. In any case, it is a standard section in most acts and simply deals with the terms and conditions of employment of staff. I do not think a better illustration could be given that the Northern Territory really is in dead trouble. We have suddenly found out that the Northern Territory is now in the control of a bunch of incompetent people. Mr Speaker, I would offer to them a little piece of political advice. They had better clean up their act and they had better do it pretty rapidly. I think that anybody who may have liked to come into the public gallery this morning to witness what we have seen in here this morning would...

Mr Tuxworth: They would have left halfway through your speech.

Mr B. COLLINS: I must say that you are continuing to create the same impression.

Mr Speaker, someone said to me outside the Assembly that he cannot understand.

Mr Perron: Are you going to reminisce?

Mr B. COLLINS: No, I won't.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the point at question is whether Kevin Davis is legally employed at this time as the principal of the Darwin Community College. We have to call it the Darwin Community College because, in law, that is what it is. We have not seen legislation to change that. The government has confirmed in the debate this morning that the principal of the Darwin Community College has been appointed illegally. At this time, his appointment has no legal standing whatsoever. The Chief Minister used as his precedent the appointment of the former principal of the Darwin Community College by a Commonwealth minister before self-government in the Northern Territory.

Mr Tuxworth: It was not a minister.

Mr B. COLLINS: I am sorry. It was not even a minister; that is right. That was in the day of the Northern Territory Administration. He is happy to

use a precedent of Northern Territory Administration control of the Territory's affairs in the appointment of the principal of the Darwin Community College, not only before the Education Act even existed but before self-government existed in the Northern Territory. That is the legal basis of his appointment of the principal.

Mr Speaker, we, in the Northern Territory, are in dead trouble. We have discovered fairly dramatically this morning that the Northern Territory government and its ministers are incompetent. They think it is all a huge joke. They are rolling around laughing about it. We have had it confirmed this morning. The point of the censure motion has been vindicated from the government's own mouth: the appointment was and is illegal. Mr Davis must find that highly unsatisfactory from his point of view. The whole question of the competence of the government is the issue of this debate this morning. We have not witnessed particularly inspiring performances from the ministers who have involved themselves in it.

Mr Speaker, I would like to examine some of the things that were said this morning. I will say that, if the government puts into effect what it has laid down this morning as its relationship with the Darwin Community College or the Darwin Institute of Technology, absolutely certainly it will be responsible for destroying the advanced education sector of that college completely. It will do it by its own actions and attitudes. Mr Speaker, if a university or a college of advanced education existed in the Northern Territory, I could understand the government's actions and behaviour. However, because the population of the Northern Territory is so small, advanced education is currently incorporated in the institution known as the Darwin Community College. But if, as its ministers have said in debate this morning, the government considers the Darwin Community College to be no more than a government department - the minister's own words - if it truly considers that it is its role to appoint the principal, because it is a TAFE institution, then this government will be responsible for destroying what, in my view, is the most important developing part of the college: its advanced education sector. The Darwin Institute of Technology has some very fine academics who must now be wondering what the hell they are doing in Darwin working for the Darwin Institute of Technology. We will lose them. They will go and I would not blame them.

I will just quote some of the minister's words. The Chief Minister said: 'We pay \$18m for the college out there so we control it'. The whole question of the government considering the Treasury as its private purse was canvassed yesterday but it has been raised again this morning. There are many disbursements of public money to all kinds of organisations which the government administers on behalf of the electorate. The fact that the government is carrying out that function does not mean that it controls everything it puts money into. What a nonsensical thing even to suggest. But that was said here this morning by the Chief Minister. His one reference to whether he breached the act was to acknowledge that there are 'shortcomings in the act'. I would point out a fact of life to the Chief Minister. Courts are dealing with shortcomings in all kinds of acts every day of the week, and that is where they are determined. This morning, we heard from the Chief Minister's own mouth that the point of this censure motion is absolutely correct and valid. He said that the act has a shortcoming in that it does not deal specifically in the way he would like it to deal with the appointment of the principal. They will change it at some future time. We have not yet a bill in front of us and, probably for that reason, I will be opposing a suspension of standing orders to shove that through. It is there? I heard by way of interjection that this bill that I have not even sighted is going to go through today. All right, it is going to be in front of us today. We have had it vindicated.

Let us deal with a few more remarks of the Chief Minister. He said a very strange thing. He said that he did not have time to do it but he thought perhaps he should have talked to the college academics about the appointment of the principal of the Darwin Institute of Technology but they were all in South Africa and various other places. I do not know what relevance that had. I wonder if the Chief Minister could explain to me, at some later time in the Assembly, why he thought it would be proper for him, as Chief Minister, to go to the college and talk to the academics about the appointment of the principal. The point at issue in this debate is complying with Northern Territory laws. Find that in the Education Act.

Mr Speaker, the people he did not consult with, and with whom the act requires him to consult, are not the academics at the college but the council of the college. That is in section 40 of the act. He confirmed this morning that he did not do that. It is now obvious from the silence of the Attorney-General that he did not even bother seeking legal advice on it. Indeed, I know what the result of that would have been. The precedent he used for the appointment was the Commonwealth government before self-government of the Northern Territory. That is where he went for his advice.

I have suggested to him that the most appropriate place to provide himself with the authority to appoint the principal would have been the Education Act of the Northern Territory. It controls the operation of the college and indeed controls very strictly the relationship between the minister, the government, the college and its council. It appears from the debate this morning that the Education Act was not even consulted because it did not even rate a mention. We had a list of precedents. We had a list of appointments of principals elsewhere, which I dare say were done under the relevant state acts involved, and we had total confirmation that the appointment of the principal of the Darwin Community College was and is at this time illegal and has no standing.

I will quote from the debate: 'We dispensed with the recruitment procedure out of hand because those applicants that had applied' - sight unseen, I might add, and I will bet money that the Chief Minister or the Minister for Education never bothered to have a look at any of the applications - 'may not have been successful for this new position'. The Chief Minister made it quite clear by his statements that he did not know that; he just thought it might be the case. It is a pretty thin case on which to base the kind of action that he then took. How did he know they may not have been successful? I know for a fact that some of the academics have written to the council protesting mightily about the way in which they were dealt with by the Northern Territory government which threw their applications out the window before the application procedures had even been concluded in January. The facts are that some of those applicants may have been very desirable indeed. They were not even given an opportunity to be considered.

Mr Speaker, apart from any other issue, let us come back to the almost unbelievable incompetence of this new government. Let us assume the government wanted to change the job description from principal to director. In respect of the Northern Territory's major and almost only tertiary institution, having had a new job description written and having decided that a change of direction was necessary, do you not think, Mr Speaker, that it would have been to the benefit of the Northern Territory, on whose behalf and on whose trust the administration of the college was placed temporarily, to have readvertised the position nationally and internationally? That happens with most academic appointments of note. It would have given the Territory the opportunity to look at the potential of the people who might have wanted to work here. I do not know because I am not in a position to examine the applications that were received.

I do know that some of those applicants wrote to the council and protested at their treatment at the hands of the Chief Minister.

At the very least, our Chief Minister should have given us the opportunity to have examined the talent that was available and which we may have had the opportunity to employ. He did not. He decided over Christmas that he would appoint whomever. To me, it is irrelevant to this debate who the person is or his qualifications or lack of them. The Territory, courtesy of our leader, did not even have the opportunity to see who might have been available for this new job. That in itself is a disgrace.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister gave us his view of what was required of a principal of the Darwin Institute of Technology. He said that administration was what was required. My view and his view of what kind of person is required to fill that position are dramatically different. If that is his view of the proper role of the Darwin Community College, then it is no more than a government department. He wants the right to appoint its head and that person shall be, primarily, an administrator. If all that is true, then the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory is about to single-handedly destroy the advanced education sector of the Darwin Institute of Technology because he will not attract any academics of worth or of note. Such people are required, not only to teach degree courses but also to give the degree courses the standing that they need. Those people will leave and the Territory will be the loser thanks to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.

The Minister for Education said: 'We were justified in doing what we did because the Darwin Institute of Technology is a TAFE college. It is not a college of advanced education'. I have no dispute at all with the Department of Education and the minister appointing the principals of TAFE colleges. Technical and further education comes within that ambit in my view. But we have a unique situation here in the Northern Territory, and it is purely a product of our size. The Northern Territory's Minister for Education is telling us that, because we happen to be small, he will personally ensure that we are disadvantaged because of that. The Darwin Institute of Technology has a further education sector in the college purely because we are not big enough to have one at the moment that stands on its own. I implore the Minister for Education to acknowledge that that is the situation. If he continues to treat the Darwin Institute of Technology as a TAFE institution, that is what he will end up getting: a TAFE institution. I suggest to this government that, before it destroys that institution, it should wait until we have a university or a college of advanced education. Rather than destroy what we have already, we should be trying to build on it.

I was appalled by what I heard in this debate this morning because it was very bad news for the good administration of the Northern Territory. I implore the Northern Territory government to wait until we have, if not a university, at least a college of advanced education before dealing with the Darwin Institute of Technology as a TAFE institution and destroying what we have.

Mr Speaker, the debate this morning has raised an issue which, in my view, is even more serious than the censure motion itself. I guess it is a matter that I will take up in the Legislative Assembly at a later time. The one thing which, on the government's own evidence, is absolutely irrefutable is that the terms of this censure motion have been revealed to be entirely accurate. The principal of the Darwin Community College is in the entirely unfortunate position - and I feel for him - of not being legally in a job at all. The government of the Northern Territory, for putting that person in that position, for putting the college in that position and for putting us in that position, deserves the strongest censure of this Assembly.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6

Mr Bell
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith

Noes 19

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Hatton
Mr Manzie
Mr McCarthy
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Setter
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Motion negatived.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Continued from 27 February 1985.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition raised with me a question of privilege which concerned a letter sent to him by Mr Ray McHenry, Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. I was requested to examine the letter with a view to referring Mr Collins' complaint to the Committee of Privileges pursuant to standing order 73. I have examined the matter and I do not propose to refer Mr Collins' complaint to that committee.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, under standing order 73, I move that the letter be referred to the Committee of Privileges.

Mr Speaker, I wish to make it clear to you that I move the motion not for the purpose of bringing the letter before the committee. I appreciate fully that the motion will be defeated. It is not moved because I have any particular disagreement with your decision on the matter. It simply is to afford me the opportunity to make some comments about the letter in the context of a privilege debate. Mr Speaker, I accept the decision that you have taken. However, I simply wish to say this in respect of the letter. It indicates only too clearly just how dangerous and unproductive is the normal Westminster relationship between members of parliament and public servants, in particular senior public servants and departmental heads.

Mr Speaker, I would not be prepared to sign, without some examination, one of those statutory declarations that were flying around this morning.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable Leader of the Opposition is entitled under standing order 73 to move a motion without notice but not to give a speech.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr B. COLLINS: If the Leader of Government Business would like to read his standing orders, he will also find that debate on the matter shall ensue immediately and take precedence over any other business of the Assembly until the question before the Chair is determined.

Mr Speaker, to the best of my recollection, I have never sent a communication directly to a departmental head, and I will not do that. The arrangements that were in place between the opposition and the previous government were correct to the point of absurdity. I am confident that the new Chief Minister and the new government would not want those particular arrangements to continue.

The arrangement was that not only would members of the opposition not communicate directly with public servants but that, because the former Chief Minister distrusted the capacity and discretion of his own ministers so much, the requirement was - and it has been acceded to on every occasion - that shadow ministers, seeking briefings or other communication with ministers or departmental people, would first of all write to me. I then had to write to the Chief Minister who would then write back to me and indicate whether the briefings would be granted. Indeed, there is a very thick file containing letters on that subject. I protested on a number of occasions in the Assembly about that arrangement but only to the point where I said that it was very silly that the Chief Minister did not trust his own ministers to the extent that arrangements could not be made directly between shadow ministers and ministers of the government. That arrangement is still officially in place. It was a matter of written correspondence between myself and the Chief Minister. Currently, shadow ministers write to me, I write to the Chief Minister and he writes back to me to say if it is okay for a particular minister to provide a briefing.

Mr Tuxworth: I just brief you.

Mr B. COLLINS: Right. I would suggest to the Chief Minister that, whilst maintaining the essential relationship between members of parliament and senior members of the public service, he simplify the issue a little by allowing opposition members to write to the relevant government ministers directly rather than to me. I do not particularly appreciate having to channel this stuff on all the time and then having the Chief Minister write back to me.

Having said that, can I assure the government that, so far as the opposition is concerned, the practice of shadow ministers not directly communicating with departmental heads will and must continue. If this system is to operate and not break down, it is essential that that happen.

Mr Speaker, the letter in fact raises a number of embarrassments and shows a profound lack of judgment. It is a very poor reflection on the minister responsible for the Northern Territory Development Corporation. The chairman of that corporation indicated, by writing to me officially and by having the letter delivered to me in the Chamber, that he has little faith in his own minister and he does not trust his minister's capacity to rebut successfully, on behalf of the corporation the minister represents, whatever arguments the opposition presents in here. That is one aspect that it raises.

Of course, the disturbing part of the letter is the final paragraph which contains a statement to the effect that, if the opposition does this, then the chairman will do that. In my view, that is inexcusable from a public servant of

that seniority. I have known Mr McHenry personally since he was private secretary to the former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner. That was many years ago. I can assure the Assembly, and indeed Mr McHenry, that, if the letter had not contained that last paragraph - although I thought the rest of it was just as ill-advised - I would have communicated with him directly and asked him what was going on. I would have brought the matter to the attention of the minister concerned.

Mr Speaker, we have alleged before in this Assembly that a grey area sometimes seems to exist between the government and the public service in terms of partisan connections with the government and there being a CLP entity within the public service. Letters like this do not assist that debate, in terms of the government's position, in any way whatsoever.

The opposition wishes to place on record its regret that that incident occurred at all, particularly in the context of such a contentious and difficult debate as the casino debate has been. Mr Speaker, can I assure you that, if the letter had been a personal communication and not on headed paper or signed by Mr McHenry in his capacity as Chairman of the NTDC, I would have taken the matter up personally with Mr McHenry.

The letter also highlights a couple of other problems. If senior public servants are used by the government - and I am not suggesting they should not be - to act as de facto representatives of ministers, then it is perfectly appropriate for the opposition to canvass - not in terms of personal criticism - the information which is given by those public servants. If any member doubts that, I would suggest he read in the Hansard the opposition comments about the NTDC yesterday. There was no personal criticism whatsoever of any Northern Territory public servant. It was the information that had been delivered that we were protesting about. Indeed, we know that the whole casino affair is so bad that the most consummately skilful public servant could not possibly have put an honest complexion on what was done to stop us from making criticisms. That is a fact.

Of course, it is a legitimate role of this Assembly to criticise information that is given or not given. If that were not so, a quite absurd situation would result. If there were some nonsense perpetrated that, because information is given by a public servant, it could not be criticised in parliament, then the government would continue to hide behind public servants every step of the way. I am sure even the government would not suggest that such a situation should exist.

In respect of what is contained in the final paragraph of the letter, I would simply say this to Mr McHenry: if the threat contained in the last paragraph of the letter is to be implemented - that is, if the opposition does this, he will do that - then the most efficient way of ensuring, as he says he wants to ensure, that this will not happen again is that he, as Chairman of the NTDC, tell his political masters that he does not want them to hide behind his employees again. If he wants to implement this policy effectively, the minister concerned should make himself thoroughly competent in terms of his knowledge of the position and conduct press conferences himself rather than leaving it to senior public servants. That indeed would solve the problem for all time.

Mr Speaker, having made those remarks, I do not intend to take any further action on the matter.

Mr DONDAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I think I should advise the Leader of the Opposition that I have received a letter dated 28 February 1985

from the Chairman of the Northern Territory Development Corporation. Yesterday afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition asked whether I had any knowledge of the letter which had been sent to him and had asked me for a response. This letter is dated 28 February 1985 and it is addressed to me:

My dear Minister,

I was greatly disappointed to hear continual references made by Mr Terry Smith during the censure motion yesterday, which referred to Mr Jim Moore, an officer of the corporation. I believe Mr Smith's remarks were unreasonable because he was not at the press conference. They were made selectively, were taken out of context and, for this reason, they were uncharitable.

I wrote to Mr Collins yesterday raising with him my concern because remarks of this nature reflected disparagingly on Mr Moore and the corporation, and this is a matter of great concern to me and my staff.

In writing to the Leader of the Opposition, you would see from the form of address that it was written in a personal, open but concerned way. It would seem that Mr Collins has misunderstood or misinterpreted my remarks, taken exception to them and raised them with the Speaker because of the comments in the last paragraph.

The final paragraph in my letter indicates that, if it is to be the practice of the opposition to reflect badly against the character and performance of members of the corporation in a personal way, and as a method of reflecting on ministers, then I will quite clearly, with your cooperation and support, have to take steps to protect the interests of my staff.

I deeply regret that the Leader of the Opposition interprets this to be a threat against himself or members of his party or the parliament. It very simply means that I will have to take action to ensure that the integrity of my staff, their performance on behalf of the government, and statements they make in the course of their duties are adequately covered.

Under no circumstances were any threats intended. I really cannot understand why the Leader of the Opposition is choosing to make this assertion. My motives for writing in the first place were with the highest ideals, and with a genuine concern for one of my staff. Clearly, I am concerned with the precedent that this has created for my officers of matters being raised in a place where they have no opportunity to defend themselves or put a point of view. In hindsight, I would agree that I should have raised this matter through you with Mr Collins and it is regrettable that I did not consult with you before sending the letter. I give, as justification for my action, my concern for my staff and the corporation and apologise for any inconvenience. I assure you I meant no disrespect to Mr Collins or the Assembly.

*Yours sincerely,
Ray McHenry.*

I have had that letter circulated to members of this Assembly and I now table it.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has raised other points of procedure with the new government, as he calls it. As far as I am aware, the

practices that have been in operation in the past will be maintained. Of course, on occasion, some friction has been caused by some members opposite when they have had problems in trying to obtain briefings. However, from where most of us sit, I think there has been very little obstruction to those particular briefings, especially in my portfolio areas. In fact, in many cases, most ministers would have tried at least to set the wheels in motion to allow discussions to take place in a proper manner. We remember that the reason why these particular procedures were implemented was to enable an orderly method by which members of the opposition could obtain briefings.

Mr Speaker, I can understand the concern that Mr McHenry had for his corporation's staff and the Leader of the Opposition a few moments ago said that these were very unusual kinds of discussions and negotiations. Certainly, it has been very technical. I suppose nerves were a little bit frayed on both sides of the fence yesterday and Mr McHenry could only reflect on the position taken by the opposition last year in other debates when public servants were mentioned in this Assembly who were unable to put their points of view forward. In one case, information was provided at the time by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He is looking at me as if he is not quite sure what I am talking about - the housing affair. It has been proven since that those officers did not make large financial gains.

Mr Smith: One.

Mr DONDAS: The argument still continues 7 or 8 months later. However, I suppose that was in the forefront of Mr McHenry's mind at the time. Members would be aware that he was in the box yesterday and he would have been aware of the spirit of things as a former member of the Legislative Council.

With those words, Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his statement that he does not intend taking this matter any further even though he has other courses of action open to him.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the opposition, we are pleased to accept the tenor of the letter from Mr McHenry and, hopefully, that has cleared up the misunderstanding that has arisen. I want to respond to a couple of things that the Deputy Chief Minister said. Mr Speaker, if you look at the situation that arose last year in relation to public servants who were mentioned in this Assembly and the situation created yesterday by Mr McHenry's letter, it provides a perfect juxtaposition of what did happen and what should have happened yesterday. Last year, the Chief Minister very effectively put me down on incomplete information that I had given to this Assembly in connection with 1 public servant. That is how it should have been done. It should have been done by the relevant minister, if it was to be done at all. It should not be done by a public servant. I am pleased that we have had confirmation that Mr McHenry did not go through the relevant ministers or the Chief Minister before he directed this piece of correspondence to the Leader of the Opposition. I think we all accept that that was wrong and, hopefully, it will not happen again.

For the record, I want to make it perfectly clear that, despite what I think Mr McHenry said in his letter, there was no attack on the integrity of his staff member or the personal characteristics of Mr Moore. I do not even know what Mr Moore looks like; I have never met the gentleman. I was using remarks made by Mr Moore at a press conference to justify a case that we were presenting to this Assembly on an action taken by the government, and an action explained publicly on behalf of the government by Mr Moore. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, if the government is going to place public servants in

that position, the opposition has a duty to this Assembly and to the community in general to use those remarks in debate when it thinks that is appropriate. We make no apology for that and will do it again if necessary. The only conclusion I can draw from Mr McHenry's letter to the minister today is that he will stop his public servants taking on this more political role. If he wants to do that and the relevant minister is so thoroughly briefed that he can do that sort of thing, that is all right with us. But I serve notice on the government that, if it is to continue using public servants in this role, we believe it to be our legitimate right and responsibility to criticise them as we would criticise a government minister delivering exactly the same information on behalf of the government.

Mr Speaker, at the basis of this is the right of members of this Assembly to use whatever information they wish to further their aims in debate. Of course, that is quite clearly covered in the Legislative Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act at section 5(1) which reads: 'There shall be freedom of speech, debates and proceedings in the Assembly and that freedom shall not be impeached or questioned in any court or place outside the Assembly'. It is my view that, in his original piece of correspondence, Mr McHenry went very close to doing that, if in fact he did not do it. I am quite prepared to admit it was not a major breach but, certainly, it was worth putting the question to Mr Speaker and, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, we accept his ruling.

I think we had an even more pertinent example this morning of where a member may have gone beyond the bounds of good taste. I am referring, of course, to the honourable member for Berrimah. I was personally appalled by his performance this morning but I support his right to do it. If he wants to make a fool of himself, he can do it because it is an essential part of the Westminster tradition and what we are all about.

Mr Coulter: Thank you, Terry.

Mr Tuxworth: That is right. You do it every day and we do not stop you, Terry.

Mr SMITH: That is right, and that is the key to this debate. It is why the opposition was concerned that a senior public servant, a public servant who has had experience in the political arena directly as a senior private secretary to a federal minister, overstepped the mark. If we had not raised this matter, it could well have set an unfortunate precedent. I am pleased that the matter apparently has been resolved to everybody's satisfaction and, hopefully, we will not need to have a discussion like this in the foreseeable future.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in view of the explanation given by the minister and the letter circulated in the Assembly, I seek leave of the Assembly to withdraw my motion.

Leave granted.

TABLED PAPER
Report of Board of Inquiry into the System of Workers'
Compensation in the Northern Territory

Mr DONDAS (Industry and Small Business): Mr Speaker, I table a report of the Board of Inquiry into the System of Workers' Compensation in the Northern Territory. I move that the Assembly take note of the report.

This report was commissioned by the government because the present system of workers' compensation was perceived to be cumbersome, unwieldy, costly and

almost incapable of meeting the needs of the community. It is not my intention to occupy the time of the Assembly needlessly by dealing with all the findings contained in the report. Honourable members will need time to study the report and, given some of the recommendations, it is certain that some groups will have several things to say. I propose that the report be made available for public comment. The object is for the government eventually to determine its attitude on the report and its recommendations and to introduce appropriate new legislation. Public comment will be received and compiled by my department.

Mr Speaker, I thank the members of the board of inquiry for the work they have done. It remains to be seen how kindly the public and this Assembly treat the results of their work.

Debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT Tourist Complaints Investigation Mechanism

Mr DONDAS (Industry and Small Business)(by leave): Mr Speaker, since the advent of self-government in July 1978, this government has made an unequivocal and continuing commitment to the development of the tourist industry. That commitment has been made in recognition of the past, present and future growth potential of tourism as a major contributor to the Territory's economy and as a substantial generator of job opportunities. However, in the face of major disappointment and frustration in other areas where we had anticipated strong impetus to growth in some highly prospective industries, such as mining, tourism has assumed even greater significance to the Territory economy and its future development.

Indicative of the government's determination to maximise tourism's economic potential is the budgetary increase provided for the Tourist Commission which has been increased from \$1.3m to \$14m since the establishment of the commission in 1980. In addition, the Northern Territory government, in concert with private enterprise, is working vigorously to ensure that all significant infrastructure constraints which may otherwise impede the realisation of tourism potential are eliminated. In this context, it is noteworthy that currently some \$600m has been committed throughout the Territory to the development of essential facilities and there is no doubt that more will follow. It is estimated that, by 1990, our 2 major national parks, Kakadu and Uluru, will each attract in the vicinity of some 200 000 visitors. On a broader scale, Territory tourism has been identified as possessing the capacity to achieve visitation in excess of 1 million visitors per annum and generating direct employment opportunities for an estimated 10 000 persons by the end of the decade.

However, there is little room for complacency and every effort will be taken by this government to ensure that visitor expectations and experiences are consistent with the marketing image that we portray and do not otherwise erode the gains already achieved. While it is supreme idealism to suggest that, in any multi-faceted industry such as tourism, it is possible to eliminate the source of all visitor complaints and negative experiences, it is a sound commercial practice to ensure that each complaint is investigated in a rational and thorough manner not only to establish the validity of the expression of visitor dissatisfaction but to identify and, where possible, to remedy the cause.

Accordingly, I have requested the Tourism Advisory Council chairman to prepare for my consideration a proposal for the establishment of a tourist industry complaints tribunal. The tribunal will provide a formal and ongoing

system for the investigation of complaints involving all aspects of the Northern Territory tourist industry. I envisage that the tribunal will consist of the chairman and 2 additional members from each of the Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy and Jabiru regions. I anticipate the tribunal will convene as quickly as possible following the receipt of a written complaint from a visitor. The complaint will be considered by a panel comprised at least of the chairman and 2 members in the region to which the complaint is principally related. Consideration of the complaint will involve an assessment of any evidence called for by the tribunal and the subsequent reporting of the findings to the minister. On receipt, the minister, where appropriate, will direct the tribunal's findings and recommendations to the respective chairmen of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, the Northern Territory Development Corporation and the Northern Territory Liquor Commission for the implementation of joint or individual action necessary to achieve expeditious resolution of the complaint.

Mr Speaker, in practice, such a system is not expected to entail frequent, onerous or costly activity. However, it will serve the desirable purpose of providing a recognisable vehicle for the investigation and assessment of visitors' complaints which have a potentially harmful impact on our tourist industry's image and reputation. Additionally, the establishment of this tribunal should be regarded by the industry as an expression of the government's refusal to condone less than acceptable minimum standards of service or the otherwise unprofessional presentation and operation of a service which is likely to mar the pleasure of a Northern Territory holiday.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

The minister was kind enough to provide me with some forewarning of his statement and I would like to make a few comments. The honourable minister is now establishing a good record in setting up these types of committees to hear complaints from people. We all remember that, after persistent prodding from this side of the Assembly, the minister established a patient care committee in the hospital system. I have had some concerns about the operation of the patient care committee which I will address later in this sittings. I would hope that the committee that he is proposing now will act with a little bit more vigour than the patient care committee has on 1 or 2 occasions.

I must say that I support this initiative, as I am sure every member does. As I said yesterday, it is important that we get away from the idea that the more buildings and motel rooms we build, the more tourists we will attract. It is not that simple, as we are all beginning to realise. We have to offer a high-quality product to attract tourists and that means more than high-quality hotel or motel rooms; it means good service and reasonable prices as well. I would expect that the major part of the committee's work will be concerned with questions relating to service and prices.

Mr Speaker, I return again to a point I made yesterday. The question of service is connected with the provision by both the industry itself and the government for the training of people working in the hospitality industry. The more you train people, the fewer complaints you will receive. The hospitality and training industry people realise that. One of the courses that they are operating in their own capacity within Darwin is the customer service course for people who deal directly with customers. They teach them how not to snarl at customers if they want something that is slightly out of the ordinary and how to treat the tourists as welcome guests, as people who are making an important contribution to this economy and as people who will return.

Mr Speaker, I conclude by welcoming the government's initiative. It is one small additional thing that can be done. I hope that the government will see it in the broader context of providing for or at least facilitating more training opportunities for people working in the tourist industry in the Northern Territory.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 99)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Education Act to put into effect the administrative changes announced by the Chief Minister in December. I gave notice to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday that I would be seeking urgency for this bill to pass through all stages at this sittings.

The amendments help to achieve a more streamlined and cost-effective system of administration in post-school education. We are looking forward to significant growth in the various post-school sectors and, in preparation for this growth, it is essential that we achieve better coordination, remove duplication and establish clear lines of responsibility and control.

Members may be surprised, as I was, at the sheer volume of this bill. This is largely due to the fact that, in certain parts, our parliamentary counsel thought it best to repeal whole sections and replace them with completely new sections. In some cases, just one word has been changed but those whole sections have been lifted from the act as it is at present.

One of the major changes is the redesignation of the Council of the Darwin Community College as the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education. In its new and expanded role, the council will be responsible for the most important function of coordinating the development of higher education in the Territory as well as governing the Darwin Institute of Technology. It will also be responsible for integrated planning of the advanced education and university sectors and for liaison with the Advanced Education Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. The Council of Higher Education will also have Territory-wide responsibility for advanced education services. In other words, it will be the higher education authority and will include the functions of the former Post-school Advisory Council. Higher education is developing rapidly in the Territory and health services, nursing, teaching and business studies are 4 particularly important areas of higher education where we expect growth to occur.

Mr Speaker, another important amendment to the Education Act concerns the redesignation of the Darwin Community College as the Darwin Institute of Technology. At the same time, the title of the college principal is to be changed to that of director of the institute. This marks the beginning of a transition from a technical and further education institution, with some advanced education courses, to an institution which will be expanding its programs in the advanced education sector and in higher level technical studies.

Mr Speaker, the bill provides also for significant changes in the technical and further education area to remove duplication and save costs. Along with the

abolition of the Vocational Training Commission and the Post-school Advisory Council, the Department of Education is to become the TAFE authority for the Northern Territory. As such, it will be responsible for management of the Territory's TAFE capital works program, training for industry, coordination, planning and provision, training for employment of Aboriginal people, liaison with the TAFE Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and procedures for accreditation of TAFE courses. Actual accreditation is to be carried out by the TAFE college councils.

The department will be responsible for meeting the Territory's expanding needs in technical and further education and will be giving increasing attention to the training needs of the tourist industry. It will also be aiming to improve services to the regional centres. As part of the rationalisation of TAFE services, the department has taken over the responsibility for meeting TAFE needs in Nhulunbuy and will contract the Darwin Institute of Technology to run particular programs where necessary. As part of the rationalisation measures, the Community College of Central Australia has taken over all TAFE services in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

Mr Speaker, the bill will facilitate local decision making on TAFE services by giving increased powers to various college councils. To facilitate decision making on Territory-wide issues, the bill provides for the establishment of a TAFE Advisory Council to advise the Minister for Education. It will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education and will include representation from all college councils plus strong industry and employee representation.

Concern has been expressed about the credibility of the Northern Territory TAFE courses because of the proposed delegation of the accreditation function to college councils. Members should be aware, however, that such delegation to college councils will be subject to the condition that the councils follow accreditation procedures determined by me on the advice of the TAFE Advisory Council. Members should also be aware of the recent unanimous decision by the Australian Education Council that, whilst the accreditation of TAFE awards should remain a responsibility of the states and territories, a national body should be established. Among other functions, it would issue guidelines for the registration of TAFE awards and monitor adherence to those guidelines. Guidelines and procedures for accreditation of TAFE courses in the Northern Territory will be consistent with practices throughout Australia.

Members will be aware that some of the functions and responsibilities of the Vocational Training Commission have been transferred to the Department of Industry and Small Business and that legislative changes will be necessary to formalise these new arrangements. In the interim, since the amendments to the Education Act are primarily to provide for transferred functions, it is obvious that there will be dual provisions in both acts. However, during the period prior to legislative action being taken on the Vocational Training Act, the potential for conflict has been resolved by the delegation by the commission to the Secretary of the Department of Education of the commission's powers with respect to TAFE and to the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business of the commission's powers relating to apprenticeship supervision.

Mr Speaker, the bill embraces a number of measures which will place the government and various organisations involved in post-school education in a much stronger position to meet the Territory's growing needs in this vital area. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

PAY-ROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 88)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Pay-roll Tax Act to clarify the powers of the Commissioner of Taxes in relation to certain practices aimed at avoiding tax. Pay-roll tax is imposed on wages paid by an employer to employee. In some cases, attempts have been made to avoid paying tax by entering into arrangements whereby the employee purports to carry out work for the employer outside the employee-employer relationship. The amendment does not change the existing liability to pay tax. However, in line with similar state provisions, it makes it quite clear that the commissioner may go behind arrangements to see if they are legitimate or merely shams. Where the arrangement is a sham, it may be disregarded. The bill does not change the status of bona fide subcontractor or consultancy arrangements and these will continue to be recognised by the commissioner. The bill requires the commissioner to give his reasons for making a determination under the amended section. The taxpayer will be informed of the basis on which the determination is made and will be able to challenge the assessment under the review provisions currently contained in the act.

Lastly, the bill provides for the amendment to have effect from the time of its introduction. I feel this is necessary to reduce the possibility of schemes being arranged during the period between sittings of this Assembly. At the same time, the appeal provisions are extended to an equal period to give a fair opportunity to any aggrieved party to lodge objections. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION
Purchase of Casino Properties

Continued from 27 February 1985.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the government has brought on this debate after lunch although I must admit I am surprised because I did not realise it would want to be kicked in the head twice in the same day. I suppose the easiest way to precis the whole casino debate, and certainly the comments made by the Chief Minister during the debate, is to say that the Northern Territory government has completely rewritten the meaning of private enterprise. It is quite interesting that I am standing here as the leader of the parliamentary Labor Party lecturing the so-called private enterprise government on this matter. Certainly, it has established a benchmark in terms of socialism that I do not think that any government of any political complexion has ever achieved in Australia.

Mr Speaker, I will refer to the statement itself. On page 1, at paragraphs 2 and 3, the Chief Minister has attempted to do nothing more nor less than simply rewrite history. The act to which the Chief Minister referred was the act that acquired the casinos yet that does not rate a mention in his description of the act. He talks about the act as being a means to determine a fair price and all the rest of it. The basis of the act was that it was an act of compulsory acquisition of private property. It was not an acquisition as is normally made by government for a public purpose but on behalf of a private

consortium to its enormous benefit and to the detriment of the Northern Territory government and therefore of the people of the Northern Territory. That does not rate a mention.

Mr Speaker, we then get into cloud-cuckoo-land material when he starts talking about how good a deal he obtained. At page 2 of the statement: 'This settlement was \$23m below Federal Hotels' valuation claim and \$5m below the maximum they said they claimed under the original sale and purchase agreement'. What a bargain! On page 3: 'The government has been criticised for spending \$2.5m of taxpayers' money'. I have put a note in the margin that says: 'and the rest!' He then went on to make a very strange statement: 'We are vindicated in taking the action we did and in paying out and absorbing the losses we did'. We are vindicated because, if we had done all these other terrible things whispered underneath, horrendous expenditure would have occurred. The government then listed all of the details of the acquisition act itself which it passed in this Assembly. The government introduced it. It passed it. It wrote the rules. Now it complains about how dreadful they were and the horrible results that would have occurred if they had been implemented. In effect, they are saying: 'Instead of implementing our own rules which would have really got us into strife, we did this and this and paid out \$Xm and you should pat us on the back'. They really do believe in some kind of fairyland on the other side of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I refer honourable members' attention, as I did yesterday, to the second last problem that may have occurred as listed by the Chief Minister in his own statement. He said on page 3 that, had they implemented the acquisition act - we gave them the opportunity to vote against it - they could have faced among other terrible things, 'the possible loss of the new operators'. Mr Speaker, I issued a statement last year speculating, purely on the information that we had, that that was highly likely and that it would have been a mess indeed. I am prepared to confirm what the Chief Minister said in his statement. I am prepared to say that, had that unbelievable act, put into place by the government opposite, actually been implemented, the probable scenario is not only that the Northern Territory would have gone down the gurgler in a far bigger way than it has but it would have been faced also with the horrendous possibility that, after having booted Federal Hotels out of the Territory and having taken on board 2 privately-owned casinos, the new operators would have walked out on the deal.

Mr Speaker, as a result of speaking to the new operators in Atlantic City and London, I knew last year that the new operators were not prepared to pay - and this was not negotiable - more than \$45m. However, I had given an undertaking before I had those meetings with the operators overseas that I would keep all of the details of my discussions with them confidential. The government has now announced in this ministerial statement that the operators were not prepared to pay more than \$45m. They told me that last year but I said I would not make the information public and I did not. I knew perfectly well that, when this thing started to get out of hand, they would have said to the government: 'We cannot make a quid on the price you are telling us we have to pay. See you later, Tux'. They would have gone back to Atlantic City and London and it must have come within a hair's breadth of that happening. They would have gone back to London and Atlantic City thoroughly sorry they had ever seen hide or hair of this Northern Territory 'competent government' in the first place.

We would have been left owning 2 casinos and with no operators. The only operators with any domestic experience on how to operate a casino would have been Federal Hotels whom we had just booted out after having ripped their

property off them. We came, and I speculated on it last year, within a hair's breadth of that situation actually arising. I now have confirmation of that in the Chief Minister's own statement in this Assembly. They have the hide to put themselves forward as being some kind of a competent government.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister said - and not too subtly; he is about as subtle as a kick in the backside - that this was all the fault of the previous Chief Minister. He said in his statement: 'I was left with it'. I am not doubting that, Mr Speaker. I know that is true but it reveals something pretty extraordinary about how this government operated because there is a member sitting opposite who was the former Treasurer in that government and who is still on the front bench of the government. The former Chief Minister said publicly that the former Treasurer knew as much about the casino deal as he himself. Paul Everingham said it publicly when he dropped a bucket on the current Chief Minister. He said: 'If I had still been Chief Minister, it would not have happened. The former Treasurer and I had all this together. I cannot understand why the new blokes fouled it up and spent all this money because, if I had been there, I would not have done it'. I know what he was talking about. What he was saying was: 'If I had still been Chief Minister, I would have implemented the act that was introduced'.

Mr Speaker, there is one thing that the new Chief Minister of this government and I agree on absolutely. In my view, and obviously in his view, if that act had been put into force, the Northern Territory would have been involved in the greatest international scandal and financial mess you could have possibly imagined. They escaped literally by the skin of their teeth and the evidence is here. The facts are as we recounted them. The way this casino deal was managed indicates the absolute incompetence and irresponsibility of these ministers. Do I have to remind them again that, under our system of government, ministerial responsibility is a collective responsibility shared by all ministers of the government?

I know what the Chief Minister is telling me and I do not say that I disagree with it but, Mr Speaker, it is no good saying that it was all Paul Everingham's fault. It probably was but it is no good saying it. What kind of a government was being run in the Northern Territory when someone could actually rip off \$50m of private property under an act of compulsory acquisition and nobody questions him in Cabinet? When the legislation came before the Assembly, 2 ministers of the government even contributed to the debate and everybody opposite voted in favour of it. Let us not have any attempt to weasel out of the deal now. I really cannot emphasise this enough and I did not expect to see it in the Chief Minister's statement. I agree with him. I can remember the speeches, particularly the one from the Treasurer telling us how necessary it was and how useful it was.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt at all that we avoided an unbelievable financial scandal by the skin of our teeth; the evidence is on every page of this document. Why then have we got the unbelievably bad deal that we now have? I know that the Chief Minister has to put as good a face on this as possible; he has to do a reasonable job because it is his government now. As I said last year, we were led up the garden path on this deal. We were put in an exposed and defenceless position by the mismanagement and incompetence of the government. They are all still here bar one: the Deputy Chief Minister is still here and the former Treasurer, whom the former Chief Minister said knew as much about it as he did, is also still here. We were put in a totally exposed and defenceless position. As the Chief Minister said, we could have lost the new operators if the rules they wrote had been implemented. As a result of being over a barrel, we were forced into concession after concession.

As a result, this private enterprise government lost millions of dollars of taxpayers' money at the start of this deal and is likely to be reminded at every budget session between now and the year 2000 that the Northern Territory will lose a great deal more. Let us not have any further cloud-cuckoo fantasies that are contained in the last bit of this statement - about how we are going to clean up in 15 years if we all make it to the year 2000. In today's world, that is entirely unrealistic. As Federal Hotels would have told them, the casino and hotel business is one of the more risky operations. I found that out last year when I went to the Isle of Man and walked past literally hundreds of closed hotels. Because of cheap holidays in Europe and high fuel costs, those kinds of businesses can go bad very quickly indeed. It is stupid to con people into believing that you can responsibly look 15 years ahead concerning the potential profits of casinos. Five years is a reasonable time to make some reasonable kind of projection. We know that there is not the slightest chance at the end of 10 years that we will be effectively \$1 in front of where we would have been if Federal Hotels had been left to operate its own properties in the way it is still continuing to operate them successfully in Tasmania.

Let us have a look at where we are. We are up for \$2.5m in legal costs, travel expenses and other expenses. How about this stuff that we have not heard about? How much money was spent on this double page advertisement in Time magazine? My information is that it costs \$10 000 for a double page ad in Time magazine. It was paid for by the good old Northern Territory taxpayer on behalf of Henry and Walker and the private consortium. There is the logo of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. Do not try to kid me, Mr Chief Minister, that this was done to promote the Northern Territory tourist industry. There are no other hotels in the background, are there? I simply say that there are many private enterprise businesses in the Northern Territory that would be very grateful for double-page ads in Time magazine specifically highlighting one hotel and one operator, at \$10 000 a shot but at no cost to them. I just wonder how much more there is that we do not know about yet. We know enough. None of it is very good.

Mr Speaker, the cold hard facts are that, if Federal Hotels had been left to run the business, this is the position we would have been in. The former Treasurer is looking very puzzled. I know what it is. It is that term 'private enterprise' that threw him. He does not know what it means now.

Mr Perron: How long do you reckon it would have stayed here?

Mr B. COLLINS: About as long as it will stay in Tasmania.

This is the position that Federal Hotels were in: private investment, no government assistance, a tax rate of 20% of turnover in Darwin and 15% in Alice Springs and a tax of \$2.5m in the 1983-84 financial year. How were its profits to be assessed? I will tell you: on its own performance, its own management and the operation of its own assets. There it is.

Instead, we have been given this by this wonderful government - a government seizure of private property and a government holding company - a dummy company. I must refer to this in passing. In the Chief Minister's statement, 2 pages are devoted to refuting claims that public servants were in direct receipt of money by being on these dummy companies. I never said that. I read the press pretty carefully on this casino issue and, to the best of my knowledge, no one else did either. It is classic tactic of the Chief Minister which he has used for a long time: you manufacture a statement that does not exist and then you answer it yourself. No one suggested that they were actually getting any money out of it.

Mr Speaker, a dummy company was set up. There was a seizure of private property. Bridging finance was supplied to the tune of \$21m. There was a direct contribution of \$2.5m to the purchase price out of public money. There was a long-term - and I mean long-term - loan of \$2m. There were interest deductions from tax. There was an indemnity on private borrowing from the NTDC. There was a guaranteed return on investment of 10%. There was a full redemption clause in the agreement which means that, if it goes sour and the private enterprise people want to get out, they knock on the Chief Minister's door and he fills up their suitcases with money and they go away. I am very familiar with that; there is a redemption clause in the Yulara agreement too. Tax has been reduced from 20% down to 8% - and don't hold your breath before it goes to nothing, folks. We have already had the flag so it will not be long. There were deductions for variable costs and attributable fixed costs. There was a guaranteed return to the operators of \$600 000 a year to run the casino. The people who owned it used to do it for the price of wages. They received this thing called 'profit' at the end of the year on which they paid this thing called 'tax'. It is all called 'private enterprise'. It worked very well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition's time has expired.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I move that the Leader of the Opposition be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, in terms of something that happened this morning, could I remind the new government and the new Leader of Government Business that the arrangement on extensions in this Assembly has operated very well for 7 years. The lead speakers only from either side get the additional 10 minutes.

Mr Robertson: There is a convention to be observed as well.

Mr B. COLLINS: It is obvious that the competence being exhibited by the new Leader of Government Business is being used as a benchmark by the rest of the government.

Mr Speaker, to conclude, we have been really left holding the can in a very bad way. I would ask all honourable members to read the Chief Minister's statement carefully because it really does hurt me to say this. I have some degree of sympathy for the new Chief Minister and the position that he was left in. It is obvious what happened. Good old Paul went overseas on that secret trip, did a deal and came back. He used to hit it right about 9 times out of 10 but the casino deal was number 10 and he blew that in a very big way indeed. There is evidence for this. I would ask all honourable members and members of the public to read the statement carefully and also read the documents and some of the telexes that Ray McHenry had to send back to the Chief Minister. Have a look at them, Mr Speaker, because they all say the same thing. Paul Everingham went back to the new operators and said: 'Sorry fellows, we have a bit of a snag with Federal Hotels. It doesn't want to sell its property and we will have to introduce a compulsory acquisition act and take it to court. We will probably only be there for 3 or 5 years. It might end up in the High Court. It might cost \$60 zillion'. As evidence of that, have a look at page 3 of the Chief Minister's statement. It is dead right; it would all have happened. Lord Aspinall, who is a very sharp fellow indeed, and I picked that up in about 10 seconds flat, said: 'See you later, Paul. We are not particularly interested. I'll stay in England thanks'. Pratts said: 'We'll stay in the United States too'. That is what happened. They were led up the garden path.

What happened was that good old Paul, in his usual fashion, was running around the world at 950 miles an hour and he had a group of public servants staggering along behind him trying to lash things together in his wake. It would have taken a pretty sharp bunch to have kept up with that deal which was thrown together on the run. That is what it all boils down to. We have been left holding the can and he has gone off to Canberra to be a front-bencher in the federal opposition. There is probably something very apt about that happening. He could not be any worse than Peacock. The problem is that we are the ones who have to wear it all.

I will bring it right back to this government. It is no good trying to evade its responsibility in this issue. I can read confirmation of my story in every line of the Chief Minister's statement. I hope somebody bothers to read the papers that were delivered. Have a look at some of the messages that went backwards and forwards. You can read the story in every line. The new operators were not interested in Mr Everingham's compulsory acquisition act or the horrible consequences that would have flowed from it. I knew perfectly well that Federal Hotels were not going to take it lying down. Federal Hotels engaged a firm of solicitors - and who could blame them - to put a submission to the Foreign Investment Review Board and indicated their willingness to come back and run their own casinos. They would have taken it all the way to the High Court. That is a fact. The people responsible for putting us in that situation are sitting opposite us now. The former Chief Minister has been kind enough to name publicly the former Treasurer as an accomplice in this affair. That honourable minister is still a minister in this government. I find it difficult to believe that, as Treasurer, he did not at some stage say to his Chief Minister: 'Just hang on a minute. This is starting to fall apart a bit'.

Mr Speaker, the legislation was introduced. Everyone had an opportunity to vote against it. Everyone opposite chose not to. There is a collective responsibility, certainly for the members of the former Cabinet of the former government. They cannot escape it. It does not matter what sort of good complexion the new Chief Minister tries to put on it. I say again that he has my sympathy.

The facts are that we have been lumbered with a dreadful deal. We would have been far in front if we had simply left private enterprise to operate in the efficient way those opposite are always telling us it does. We would be so far in front now, it is not funny. We have swapped a situation where we had a private firm, operating its own business and paying us \$2.5m a year in taxation for a situation where we are up to our ears - I am still trying to work out why - financially and in every other way, in casinos, and we are obliged to carry out obligations under that agreement to the year 2000. It is not much of a comparison. It does not reflect well on the competence of this government. The new Chief Minister does not do himself proud either. He laid it out very carefully and accurately in the first half of his statement but then went off the rails again with Myilly Point fantasies in the last half of his statement. Instead of 1600 jobs a year to be created, we are now told there will be thousands and thousands.

Mr Speaker, I am prepared to bet that, in the next 5 budgets of the Northern Territory government, of whatever complexion they might be, we will have dished up to us just what a bad position we have been put in by this deal. The Northern Territory will suffer a considerable degree of economic loss as a result of this mess. Members of the government opposite were all members of the last government with only one exception. Only one member has left. That government was responsible for landing us in this mess. I must say that the contribution I look forward to most in this whole debate is the contribution of

the former Treasurer of the Northern Territory, the honourable member for Fannie Bay.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is nice to know that the Leader of the Opposition was not absolutely and totally negative in his attitude in the debate on the motion to note the Chief Minister's statement. In fact, he admitted that he supports the course of action taken by the Chief Minister in settling the purchase of the casinos from Federal Hotels without going through the full processes of placing the determination of the price before a tribunal. It is interesting that he should say that because, in this Assembly yesterday, we had a censure motion on virtually the same subject and today we have the Leader of the Opposition agreeing that, tactically, the course of action taken by the Chief Minister was, in fact, a sensible one. That is about the only positive thing that the Leader of the Opposition said during the debate.

Perhaps it is not unexpected that he should take that line because the opposition just cannot bear to see a major project get off the ground in the Northern Territory without doing its very best to at least undermine it. The members of the opposition know, of course, that most projects they cannot stop because, thank goodness, the government has the numbers and the authority to get on with the job of governing the Northern Territory and to develop our potential. But they will do their best to undermine every possible project that we initiate. Their persistent record is one of carping criticism at every opportunity. The Gardens Hill development, the Marrakai Apartments, the Beaufort Hotel, negotiations over the Sheraton Hotel in Alice Springs and a dozen other major job-creating projects that the government has been assisting in the Northern Territory have received their constant criticism. Even Yulara, the jewel in the crown as far as tourist infrastructure is concerned and a project that is operating successfully today, is regarded by the opposition as a giggle and another commitment by government. It is a commitment and it will cost us funds to keep Yulara going until such time as it can float on its own. The time will come when Yulara will be an enormous success and a financial benefit to us all. In the meantime, it is a financial success anyway. Despite funds that will flow from our annual budget to Yulara, it is a success.

If the opposition believes that accommodating the people at Yulara as they travel through the Northern Territory and spend money in the Northern Territory is something we should be ashamed of because we are assisting and supporting it as a government, clearly we are so far apart on matters of principle that it is not funny. We should not be surprised at their attacks on projects any more; I guess it is their negative bitterness which is disappointing. It is not surprising, just persistently disappointing.

The ALP attitude is that past casino operations in the Northern Territory were fine; the Leader of the Opposition has just said that we should have left Federal Hotels there. Never mind the background of the company, never mind its financial circumstances, never mind its standard of operation. We should have just left it there and all would have been well for the future. That would be great for a government that did not want to do anything, did not want any waves and, of course, did not want to go anywhere. Second-rate casinos and facilities might be all right in the opposition's mind. In the government's mind, they are not good enough and we have moved to ensure that the game is picked up. The ALP can be satisfied with second-rate operations; we believe that the Territory deserves better.

When we commenced this exercise to build major additional tourist infrastructure in Darwin and Alice Springs, we believed that the Territory was

reaching a position where we needed to take 1 significant step forward to take advantage of decisions, such as the upgrading of the airport, the very substantial boosting of the Tourist Commission's vote in international promotion and to support those additional hotels that were being built at the time. With all the planned expansion for tourism and hotel rooms in Darwin and Alice Springs, we have not reached the stage where we can take continuous flights of large aircraft bringing tourists here. After some advice from consultants, we believe that Myilly Point and a significant site in the Alice Springs golf course are major projects to get off the ground in the next few years together with improvements to and expansion of the casinos. We believe that, in a few years, the Territory will be where it should be as far as infrastructure is concerned.

To obtain top operators for the casinos, we had to seek them internationally. We believe Aspinalls and Sands are the right people to do the job and I think that one other aspect the Leader of the Opposition has not criticised is the calibre of the people we are dealing with in those 2 companies. Of course, they did not rush to sign up when the suggestion was made to them that they might operate casinos in the Northern Territory. Who on earth would have expected them to? Aspinalls is a very small casino with probably the greatest turnover of any casino in the world, particularly on a per head of population basis relative to staff and facilities. Sands is a successful operation in Atlantic City, not one of the biggest but certainly a successful one and one that is regarded highly as far as its management and promotion is concerned. Aspinalls has one casino among quite a few in the middle of a city of 10 million people. I was advised that the market within 300 miles of Atlantic City was about 60 million people. Both of them are dealing with very substantial populations. Why would they want to come to the Northern Territory which has a population of 130 000? Subtract the children and the other people who are not allowed into casinos or would not want to gamble anyway and the population is very small. We managed to establish a level of interest with those people through the fact that we are likely to be one of the very few casinos within a 1000 or 1500 mile radius of Darwin and, of course, we are on the doorstep of a very significant population. Our tourist figures are very attractive and growing every year by a considerable amount.

They showed a spark of interest and we followed up negotiations with them. The facts are that they had to be attracted to come to the Northern Territory; we make no secret of that. If you want top people, you have to go out and get them the best way you possibly can. It is all a matter of what your aspirations are and what your vision is for the Northern Territory. We did it, of course, despite the ALP and its interventions. The whole arrangement would have been much smoother had we not had the unjust, unwarranted, unnecessary, blatant political intrusion into our affairs by the federal Treasurer's stunt of placing a freeze on the FIRB application of those 2 companies to come into Australia. The FIRB application was not for those 2 companies to own a piece of the casinos in the Northern Territory. They were to own a smaller portion than required to seek FIRB approval. The approval was simply for them to be allowed into Australia to take over the casinos as operators - as we have heard from the Chief Minister - a company with a \$50 000 capital.

It was all right for South Australia and Queensland to have overseas operators in their casinos and Western Australia is to have overseas operators. The ploy that the federal Treasurer used in justifying his freeze in the Northern Territory was that he wanted some additional information. Of course, it was very convenient. We were entering the federal election campaign and the federal Treasurer wanted to embarrass us somewhat. Who wanted the additional information? The FIRB? We think not. We think the FIRB had all the

information it wanted after a series of negotiations prior to its submitting the matter to the federal Treasurer. Perhaps the federal Treasurer wanted some more information. After all, he was the guy who put the freeze on. Not even he wanted additional information. He did not ask for any and, indeed, he did not receive any prior to lifting the freeze. Not one word of additional information had the Treasurer received when he lifted his freeze.

The Leader of the Opposition, very conveniently, virtually avoided any reference to the FIRB freeze either during yesterday's censure motion or today's debate. It is important to note that, when the agreement was reached with Federal Hotels that we should buy the casinos for \$49.5m or whatever the end figure was, the federal Treasurer promptly lifted his freeze and let those 2 companies into Australia to operate, without one skerrick of additional information being provided to him or the FIRB on the application. Yet those were exactly the grounds on which the freeze was imposed. If that was not taking advantage of a political situation in trying to embarrass this government during a federal campaign, then I am not a politician at all. Where was the local opposition while all this was happening and the Northern Territory was being stepped on? And we were being stepped on; that is the only way to describe the freeze. Where was our federal member, Mr Reeves, or our local ALP senator while this charade was going on? Of course, they were doing their best to undermine us anyway. They always have. It was notable at the time that, of all the possible spokesmen the ALP had on the casino issue, they chose Mr John Reeves to put out the scare release saying that the government had used funds from its budget and programs to buy the casino and its government programs were under threat. It was a very logical ploy although a pretty dirty one: scare the public servants on the eve of the federal election and tell them the government was running out of money to put in their pay packets. Reeves was chosen as the spokesman and he had not come anywhere near the casino issue until then. He was chosen as spokesman because he was fighting for his political life and he was dying fast. Thank goodness, he has come to a rapid end. That was the only time John Reeves, 'John Who?', took any interest in the casino issue whatsoever.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the bottom line of this whole exercise is the 2 positions of the Northern Territory government and the ALP. If the ALP had been in government for the past 6 years, we would not even have casinos yet the Leader of the Opposition tells us how much money we are losing in taxation because the changed tax regime has been put forward. The ALP has never had a casino policy in the Northern Territory. Some \$6m in taxes has been received so far from casinos in the Northern Territory and there are 200 jobs directly associated with casinos or 500 jobs if you add the hotels together with the casinos. The Territory would not have benefited in that regard at all had the ALP been in power. All of a sudden, there is a massive fuss - terrible things are happening and the tax flow from casinos to the Territory coffers is declining. We are the reason there was a flow at all. The opposition members have the hide to be critical of the new tax structure when their gaming policy would have offered Territorians poker machines in clubs and they have been game enough to admit that. They would not have got a great deal of revenue out of that. You do not get hordes of tourists flocking to clubs to play poker machines. In fact, the rules of most clubs say that people who are not members are not really allowed in them.

We are talking about dollars which the ALP is really pinching out of our pockets, in the theoretical sense, and then it says that there is not enough.

Mr Bell: That really does not follow.

Mr PERRON: Mr Deputy Speaker, perhaps honourable members do not want to follow me but the Leader of the Opposition informed us that, at every budget from

now to the year 2000, the opposition will remind us of these casino tax dollars which we have forgone under the new tax regime. Why will it not take even one tenth of the interest it has shown in this matter and show that interest in the Territory's financial relationships with the Commonwealth? There we are talking about not \$2.5m or \$6m or even \$30m over 15 years but about \$800m to \$900m per year that has a question mark over it.

If it would care to sit there this year and say that the Northern Territory funding arrangements with the Commonwealth are not under threat, then it should be terribly ashamed of itself. It has had lesson after lesson in this Assembly for years now. We have asked it to try to comprehend the Commonwealth-Northern Territory financial relationships and understand the perilous state that they are in, particularly in the first half of 1985, and to please play a role. If it has any influence in the federal sphere, it should use it on behalf of every Territorian. We have not had a single whisper. All we have had is carping, whingeing and crying about the deals that this government is putting together to create jobs and to put ourselves on the map so that, one day, we will not have to rely on the federal government to the extent we do today for subventions to keep the place running. We are trying to stand on our own feet but, as all the indications are at present about the way the money will be cut, it will be a very difficult job. Why doesn't the opposition get its priorities right and spend the time of this Assembly on something a bit more productive?

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, it is customary to say a few words about the previous speaker but that was such a rambling empty speech that I cannot work out what the point was. In fact, I do not think the honourable member made one. In the last couple of minutes, he spoke about the need to maintain the relationship with the federal government so that we can keep the money coming from that end. I can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the efforts of the government during this whole sorry fiasco over the casino probably have created the biggest problem that we have to contend with in that area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in this government, there are 19 members and all but 1 were members of this government in April 1984 when this whole sorry deal was first commenced. Every government backbencher and every government minister is responsible for the shameless way in which the former and the present Chief Ministers hatched this agreement in this Assembly. Every government member voted 19 to 6 to pass the legislation which formed the ground rules for this debacle. We have heard of the government's need to complete this financial deal quickly because of the costs that were accruing to the government and the taxpayer if settlement was delayed. Mr Deputy Speaker, those costs accrued to the government because it took 2 critical decisions. One was to oust Federal Hotels and the second was to write the rules by which this game was to be played. In the latter case, Mr Deputy Speaker, every government member of this Assembly is tarred by having voted with his feet for legislation which could no more solve the acquisition problem than it could save the government money. Every member of Cabinet should be condemned for allowing both Mr Everingham and the present Chief Minister to get away with this shocking episode of ineptitude, incompetence and deception. I refer specifically to 4 members of the present Cabinet: the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister, the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Mines and Energy. The Chief Minister's actions have been covered by the Leader of the Opposition. But what of the complicity of the other 3? The Deputy Chief Minister, who is responsible for small business and for the Northern Territory Development Corporation, deserves some attention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have seen in those documents the name of the Deputy Chief Minister in his capacity as Acting Treasurer. However, we in this Assembly know

that the Deputy Chief Minister has one special foible: he does not read the things he signs. The member for Koolpinyah learnt that and her attempts to rectify his mistakes availed her nought. She now resides on the backbench. We know that the Deputy Chief Minister is rarely fully aware of what is happening around him and, if he is, he does not understand it. In January, his office issued a confused statement in which he claimed FIRB approval had been given in December and that Henry and Walker's fund raising was held up by Christmas. The FIRB approval was actually given in mid-November, a long time before Christmas. Yesterday he said that Henry and Walker had its money all ready to go before the FIRB very correctly intervened. In a statement issued in January, the minister said: 'We are only giving away \$2.5m'. I wonder how many of his new clients in small business would have like a share of that action.

What of the Minister for Lands? He is the former executive officer with the Confederation of Industry and Commerce. What of his responsibilities in this scandal? He too has travelled the world on this deal. He has tied himself in knots in speeches in this Assembly, crying his crocodile tears as he tries to run with the foxes and hunt with the hounds. He is, of course, very ambitious. He could not afford to be offside with the former Chief Minister and he has been acting as a reasonably successful numbers man with the new one. He is exposed as having put his quest for political power before his own integrity and his personal beliefs.

What about the former Treasurer, now Minister for Mines and Energy? He had a pivotal role in the very early negotiations which were designed to show up Federal Hotels and install the high rollers. He was on one of the overseas jaunts. He was one of the carpetbaggers. With the Treasury cheque book in his hand, he toured the world's casinos. You could imagine the look in people's eyes when these boys from the bush hit town. Word got out about the Northern Territory boys.

Mr Tuxworth: What about your leader?

Mr EDE: He did not have a Treasury cheque book.

Word got out about the Northern Territory boys. There were special low-interest deals with Sheraton and guaranteed returns on investment. After that, there were condominiums - \$300m developments. It is all mind-blowing stuff for an ex-tally clerk off the wharves. They just got a bit carried away. The problem is that, while the ex-Treasurer, now the Minister for Mines and Energy, was having such a ball showing off his fat Treasury wallet, there were plenty of people waiting to lighten it for him. 'But it was all for development', they say. In fact, he just said it then. Of course, we use government funds to get development going. I agree that the pump priming is justifiable. The problem is that, in the Northern Territory, we are now in the situation where every deal requires a bigger prime from the government than the one before. This is quite the reverse of the principle of pump priming to get an industry going. You give the pioneer a good deal and those who come after are given progressively less so that you can withdraw from the marketplace. In the Northern Territory, however, they sack the pioneers and subsidise the replacements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will adopt the view from now on, and make it very plain to anybody who will listen, that development projects which require substantial government guarantees cannot be taken as bouquets from this government. They are brickbats, a material indication that this government has been unable to build up enough confidence among investors for them to be prepared to risk their own funds. They are only prepared to risk government funds. I am not talking about

low-level assistance to industry. I believe that will be justified for some time to come. In cases like the casino, I am talking about guarantees where not only is investment guaranteed but so is the basic return. This is the sort of thing that we see in blue chip government bonds. I should not have to lecture honourable members about various classes of investment. They should know how they vary across the spectrum: high security for low returns to low security with the possibility of higher returns. This government is providing a new class of investment. Unfortunately, only the selected few can get their hands on it.

We see the Chief Minister desperately trying to say that it was all Paul Everingham's fault and that he is squeaky clean. He needs desperately to win this one because we all know that the oft-quoted 19-6 division in this Assembly is not the only set of basic statistics of interest. Of more immediate concern to the new Chief Minister is 10-8: the result of the ballot that placed him on his rather shaky throne. It does not take a genius to see how the effect of that vote is reflected in the current disposition of portfolios and indeed the attitude shown by many to this debate.

The Chief Minister's numbers man will still be in there. We have not heard him yet. I believe he will be in there trying to be all things to all men. He cannot afford to see his man go down just yet. The former Treasurer has decided to pull back to the relative calm of mines and energy while he waits upon events. He did not speak on this subject in the censure motion the other day; he was flushed out a while ago. People might just forget how closely involved he was in the whole deal when the leadership comes up again in a few months. The current Deputy Chief Minister is in a difficult position. He is torn between his need to show himself as a loyal deputy and his desire to have another crack at the top job. We see this confusion in his press releases on the casinos. He makes positive noises which have the effect of putting the government even further up the creek.

In conclusion, we have a deal which will bring few benefits and which was put together by a government with no principles. One Chief Minister escaped just in time. This one says that the rat has left the ship. His potential successors - a motley lot - are positioning themselves and sharpening their knives. It does not, I am afraid, augur well for the government of the Territory over the next few years. During the debate on the acquisition of the casinos, I said that the passing of that bill would prove to be a watershed, the beginning of the end for this government. I hope that the Territory is not too severely damaged by the flailing arms of a government already in its death throes before it is even halfway through its term. Mr Deputy Speaker, let it be put down cleanly and quietly and with as little pain for the Territory as possible.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would have thought that more of the 19 members opposite, many of whom are made up of such determined, born-again free-enterprisers, would have been more than happy to contribute to a debate of this sort. I see the Chief Minister cutting a rather lonely figure on the front bench today. That is not particularly surprising because of the extraordinary shame that the behaviour of the government in this regard has brought upon not only itself but on this entire Assembly.

The reason I rise in this debate is to make the observation initially that there is little defence even in the government for the outrageous conduct of its affairs. Time and time again, we have these people leaping to their feet saying what wonderful managers they are. They are the people who can kick along the Northern Territory economy yet here we have one of the worst debacles that any

government in Australia has witnessed, certainly in my memory. If there is somebody here who can point to a worse example, I would be interested to hear of it. I hope that, before the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has to rise to make a contribution, he can perhaps dig up from his memory such an occasion. Certainly, I cannot.

The only possible comparison that could be drawn would be the so-called Khemlani affair which was so damaging for the Whitlam Labor government. Of course, honourable members will recall that. But let us be quite clear about the difference between that and what has happened here. The clear difference is that there were only suggestions that the then federal government would borrow large sums of money overseas. Here we have a direct example of a government plundering the public purse.

I will admit, quite freely, that I rise merely as a humble backbencher to address this particular issue. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, our shadow Treasurer, I have not been intimately involved in following all the curious turns and twists in the 12-month history of this very sad debacle. As I say, I rise to speak in this debate as a humble backbencher who is made sick by the thought of the public purse being plundered in this way. I am quite sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I am joined not only by a vast section of the electorate out there and a vast number of members of the Country Liberal Party but I am joined by a number of the 19 people who purport to be the government of the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I could take up a considerable amount of the Assembly's time today to describe for what better purposes the money that has been given away could have been spent but I want to place on the record my revulsion, firstly, at a viable private enterprise being acquired in this way. Let us be in no doubt about the viability of that enterprise. The fact that Federal Hotels' operation was viable has been attested on both sides of this Assembly in the course of this debate and in previous debates. If a viable private enterprise were acquired by a Labor government, Mr Deputy Speaker, can you imagine what would have happened? Can you imagine the hue and cry if a Labor government had acquired a viable private enterprise? The honourable member would have been salivating at the mouth deriding us as communists and worse. It sounds from the comments that are emanating from the mouth of the recent but honourable member for Jingili that he is joining us and I trust that he is going to come good with some high dudgeon in this debate.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member for MacDonnell will be heard in silence.

MR BELL: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My first point is that these people acquired a viable private enterprise. They then compounded this outrageous act by taking money from the public purse to pay for it. That is extraordinary. The figures indicate that Federal Hotels were paid \$49.5m and the new Northern Territory Property Trust is only coming good with \$45m. You will have to excuse me, Mr Deputy Speaker, if those figures are not quite exact. As I said, I have not followed the ins and outs but I am familiar with sufficient of the broad principles involved in this to be able to contribute intelligently to this debate and I look forward to similar intelligence from the honourable members of the government. We have 2 extraordinary and outrageous acts: firstly, acquisition in the terms I have described and, secondly, plundering the public purse in this way.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in addition to the fact that I could have found a large number of uses for the sort of money that has been squandered in this operation,

let me conclude by saying that the government's behaviour in this regard will not be forgotten. As long as this government purports to be the government, this whole casino acquisition exercise will be an albatross around its neck and its fate will be the same as that of the ancient mariner.

Mr HANRAHAN (Flynn): Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for MacDonnell was quite right when he said that the behaviour of this government will not be forgotten. How true! This government has proceeded along a course of action that has been the subject of much debate in this Assembly. It is not my intention at this stage to go over the principles and the reasons why Federal Hotels' casinos were purchased. Let me say simply this to the honourable member for MacDonnell: I believe that most of the actions taken by this government were vindicated by a statement to the shareholders and Board of Directors of Federal Hotels by the Managing Director at its last annual general meeting.

This government has proceeded to encourage development for the benefit of the people of the Northern Territory. It is true that Yulara, the Sheraton Hotel, the Beaufort and Performing Arts Centre have redeeming clauses and guarantees from this government. But what is appalling in the unanimous comments from members opposite is that, as a matter of principle, they would have done absolutely nothing. They would not have proceeded in any way, shape or form to encourage development and investment in the Northern Territory. Where would we have been then, Mr Deputy Speaker? For the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, where would the jobs have been that are so important to the children of the Northern Territory?

This government will stand forever by its actions and will continue at all times to encourage investment on reasonable terms within the Territory. I would not hesitate to say that I would take the Leader of the Opposition up on his bet that, in 5 years, we will be standing firm and every single enterprise undertaken and backed by this government will be a financial success and will be of benefit to the people of the Northern Territory. I will see you in 5 years' time.

Mr Bell: Oh, that was deep.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member for MacDonnell will refrain from interjecting.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to start by taking up a comment made by the Attorney-General concerning the relativities review and the Commonwealth-state financial relationships. I want to make it very clear to the government that it can no longer get away - if in fact it has before - with this argument about the Labor Party in the Northern Territory not assisting the government in its efforts to obtain a fair financial deal from the Commonwealth. Last December, our final bargaining peg was taken away by the electorate of the Northern Territory in its wisdom. The responsibility is now completely in the government's hands on this very important matter, particularly in the hands of the new federal member, Mr Everingham. It will be very interesting this time next year to be able to compare and contrast the success of the previous federal member, Mr Reeves, in gaining federal assistance and federal moneys for the Territory and the success of the current federal member, Mr Everingham, in doing the same job in the next 12 months. And let it be clear that, if the results are not as good, and I am not predicting in any way they will not be, it will be on the head of the government and on the head of the new member. Of course, if the results are better, the same will apply. Let us not be carried away with this nonsense that the Labor Party in the Northern Territory has this magnificent bargaining power in the south. It does not have it. If the Labor Party ever had it, it certainly disappeared as a result of that election.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to go over the scenario painted by the Leader of the Opposition about what would have happened if Federal Hotels had been left here and what has happened in terms of incentives with the new casino operators. As he said, Federal Hotels' operation was a completely private investment activity and there was no government money involved at all. In contrast, to get the new casino operators here, there was a compulsory government acquisition of Federal Hotels' property and a government holding company was established to manage it. There was no government assistance to Federal Hotels in any manner, shape or form except a monopoly on poker machines which, I guess, is some government assistance and, of course, the new operators have that as well. In contrast, the new operators were given initial bridging finance of \$21m and a contribution of \$2.5m to the purchase price as a long-term loan which is supposed to be paid back in 15 years depending on how it all goes. There have been interest deductions from tax and, as well, there is an indemnity on private borrowing and a guaranteed return on investment plus, of course, the famous redemption clause.

Then we come to the tax rates: the 20% tax rate under Federal Hotels and the 15% tax rate in Alice Springs versus an 8% tax rate for the first 5 years and then a very complicated tax rate which I shall come to shortly. Mr Deputy Speaker, when you look at those arrangements, it is clear that the government has gone to considerable effort to get these new operators in. As I said yesterday, the bottom line in all this is what will be the return to the Northern Territory government. When we first started talking about the return to the Northern Territory government, the time line was about 5 to 10 years. The time line now is 15 years. That is the time line that the Chief Minister used in his speech. What, Mr Deputy Speaker, are we going to get out of the casino after 15 years? On his figures, we will get an extra \$30m in gaming tax. His figures indicate that, under Federal Hotels, we would have received \$166m and under the new operators it is anticipated that we will get \$196m. There are a couple of things to say about that.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, it is a fairly risky business projecting 15 years forward. Many things can happen in 15 years and probably will. We can only make pretty broad assumptions anyway. Secondly, accepting for the moment this figure of \$30m, it then becomes very clear that we are not talking about \$30m in today's terms. We are talking about \$30m extra in the year 2000 over the 15 years leading up to the year 2000. Because of that, we must then use a discounting principle to find out in real terms in today's dollars how much extra money the Northern Territory government will receive out of this expensive arrangement in the next 15 years. It is at that stage in the document that the Chief Minister became somewhat cute. He talked about the need to discount. He did not give the figure which he arrived at after going through the discounting process which, at any rate, is between 6% and 12%. I do not know why he chose the upper limit of 12% when he could quite easily and quite legitimately have gone to 13%. He did not give that figure. But on the rough indications that we have been able to make, and not having all the information, in real terms the advantage to the Northern Territory by this arrangement by the year 2000 will be about \$5.7m in today's money.

Mr Tuxworth: How did you arrive at that? Tell us how you got to that point.

Mr SMITH: You will get your turn. In 15 years, we will get, at a discounted rate, about \$5.7m. Assuming that the assumptions were correct, that means an extra \$0.2m to \$0.3m a year. That is not very much at all.

Mr Tuxworth: Put arithmetic calculations on the table to show that.

Mr SMITH: You had your opportunity to do that. You did not do it. We have done a very simple calculation. I cannot tell you the basis of it off the top of my head but it is quite simple.

Mr Tuxworth: What about proving it?

Mr SMITH: I do not have to prove it; you have to demonstrate that I am wrong.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Millner will be heard in silence.

Mr SMITH: On our figures, the figure is \$5.7m. Yesterday, I had a guess and said it would be about \$7m but I am now advised it is less than that. I am talking about the advantage of this deal in today's dollars. There will be a very small advantage to the Northern Territory over that 15-year period. We have established that to our satisfaction. We then look at the other side of the ledger: what has it cost us in extra costs? The extra costs that we can identify are as follows. There was the \$2.5m involved in the purchase of the casino that was an outright gift. We will not get any of that back. There was \$800 000 that the Northern Territory government paid for mortgages, leases and interest to Federal Hotels in the holding period. There were \$500 000 on various items such as legal fees, valuations etc which would not have been required if this whole operation had not taken place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you deduct all those costs from the \$5.7m that I mentioned, over 15 years, we will have a very small real advantage if in fact there is a real advantage at all. It is interesting to see what sort of real gain there would be if we went beyond the government's 12% figure and worked out the figure on 13% discount rate. That would mean that the government's benefit, in real terms, if you went to 13% or 14%, which is a quite legitimate argument, would be even less. It would be easy to come up with a set of figures which would indicate, on the information that we have been supplied with by the government, that there is no real advantage in the deal that they have entered into at all. The Chief Minister, in his capacity as the Minister for Mines and Energy in 1981, when he tabled his Green Paper on mining royalty policy for the Northern Territory, said: 'A basic requirement of a system of taxation and government charges is that it should be capable of transferring adequate resources from the private sector to allow the government to carry out its functions'. Mr Deputy Speaker, quite clearly, that has not happened here. Quite clearly, on this matter, the government has not come up with a basis of taxation which will enable it to do that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will turn briefly to the Myilly Point angle. We have been consistently critical of this government, both in this debate and in previous debates, about how, through its inexperience or naivety or whatever, it gave the people it was negotiating with the upper hand in the negotiations. It is quite clear from the actions of the operators in this whole process that they have had the upper hand and, to be crude, have been able to screw a very good deal indeed out of this government. One would have thought that the government would have learnt from that. In terms of the Myilly Point negotiations, it has already given any proposed developer a very good head start by saying that the government has to get something off the ground within 5 years or face the prospect of the whole pack of cards of the present casino operation falling down around its ears whilst the casino operators have the option to leave town. What an incredible advantage for a prospective developer on the Myilly Point to know that he has an opponent who has to have these negotiations signed, sealed and delivered within a certain period of time. The

government should not have entered into such an arrangement because it gives too much advantage to potential developers. Again, we have a situation where the government is starting a bargaining situation behind the 8-ball. It is like having one hand tied behind your back in a boxing ring. That is the situation the government has put itself in on its negotiations over Myilly Point.

We have a situation where, because of that, we are likely to get the developer of Myilly Point having a large number of government guarantees to persuade him to sign the agreement so that the government does not have to break any of the guarantees it has given to the casino project. It is like a house of cards. The house gets higher and higher and you wonder when it will fall. The guarantees get greater and greater on every project; they are all interconnected. Sometimes it is a bit like a balloon: if you stick in a pin, it will all collapse. That is the sort of feeling you get about the inept way the government goes about negotiating big deals. I say it once more: the government has put itself behind the 8-ball on Myilly Point, before serious negotiations have even started, by revealing to all and sundry that, by an agreement with the casino operators, it has a 5-year time scale in which to get the thing moving. What a bonus! I bet the developers, whoever they are, are rubbing their hands with glee and that they are already planning strategies to make the negotiations with the government last as long as possible so that, when it gets close to the end of the 5-year period, they will be able to go their hardest. I do not blame them either. If the government cannot negotiate better than that, it deserves all it gets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I conclude by going back to where I started. The bottom line is what the benefits will be for the Northern Territory. The government has chosen the time line of 15 years. I have demonstrated pretty effectively that, even over that extended time line, there is a very real doubt that there will be an economic benefit to the Northern Territory from the mess that the government has got itself into.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been an interesting debate from the point of view that a month ago the Leader of the Opposition was running around the Northern Territory demanding an inquiry and calling for the Assembly to be reassembled.

Mr B. Collins: An election!

Mr TUXWORTH: Let's have an election while we are at it. We could not pass up one of those.

I gave 24 hours notice of the documents, dragged the debate on yesterday and nothing happened. If we had not dragged it on today, still nothing would have happened. When you listen to the diatribe that has come out this afternoon, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is pretty obvious that the members of the opposition have been playing their political game. They are not interested in the facts, the reality, the benefits to the Territory; they just want to have a little bit of political fun. We on this side of the Assembly, who are always trying to do things for the Territory, are accustomed to half the country trying to stop us. These people just happen to be amongst them and represent another challenge for us to overcome.

There were some really interesting comments this afternoon. One came from the Leader of the Opposition who referred to privately-owned casinos which should be allowed to do their business and casinos that the government had no right to stick its nose into. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition

and his colleagues, they may be privately-owned casinos but they have a very important financial monopoly and they have very important social responsibilities. For those 2 reasons, casinos in any part of this country, and probably in any other country, will always have close government involvement and monitoring. That is a fact of life that will never change. To suggest that the Northern Territory government is sticking its beak into the operations of the casino is just so much twaddle.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to touch on one other point before I move on to some of the issues that have been raised in the debate. The Leader of the Opposition was a bit upset that I was weaseling out of the deal and that I was not accepting my collective responsibility. Let me set it straight. I am a member of the Cabinet. I accept the collective responsibility and I accept unreservedly responsibility for any decisions or recommendations I made to my colleagues about the resolution of the casino arrangements.

Mr B. Collins: You should resign.

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member opposite suggests I should resign. If I resigned every time one of those guys said something, I would spend my whole time writing out resignations. The truth is that I am not the resigning type and I will overcome the problems that these people put before us and the Territory will benefit every day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a couple of other interesting things came from the Leader of the Opposition. He said that looking 15 years ahead is not on and that 10 years is too far out. Mr Deputy Speaker, maybe they are in the wrong place or we are in the wrong place but, if we want to develop the Northern Territory and we want to make those development decisions on the basis of this year, next year and maybe the next election, we will finish up with no development in the Northern Territory because you cannot do things on a 1, 2 and 3-year, decision-making curve. As a government, we have to look 5, 10 and 15 years ahead and accommodate entrepreneurs and developers with that sort of time frame. If developers saw us trying to do things in terms of 1, 2 and 3-year decisions and immediate returns, they would think that there was something wrong with us.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have enormous investments of \$20m-plus in the port and we have our eye on 10 years ahead for getting our return and seeing prosperity develop as a result. In concluding the pipeline arrangements, the Minister for Mines and Energy is looking at the year 2020 and 2030. How are we ever to develop the Territory if we do not look that far ahead? If members opposite cannot see that, there is very little we can do for them and there is very little that we will ever have in common. But those are the facts of life.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred earlier to the government's prime objective of wanting to get rid of Federal Hotels and to weasel out of the deal. I think there are a couple of points that we should put into perspective and I will raise Federal Hotels' name here, and not in a derogatory fashion. The hard, cold facts were that, with the investment in Alice Springs and Darwin and the agreement between Federal Hotels and the government, Federal Hotels could not make a profit. It was that simple: it could not make a profit.

Mr Smith: Why didn't you reduce the tax?

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member asks why we didn't reduce the gambling tax. I shall come back to that.

Federal Hotels could not make a profit. It was undercapitalised, the burden of interest was so great that it was unable to meet its interest commitments and there was no capacity for it financially to complete obligations that it had with development and marketing. It was unable to go out and market something when it was finding difficulty in paying the bills. I do not have any problem with that. Federal Hotels is not the first business in this country to have ever found itself undercapitalised and unable to meet its commitments. That was unfortunate.

From the government's point of view, we were looking at the long term. We were looking for sales in South-east Asia, the influx of tourists, continued growth and development and Federal Hotels' financial position just did not allow it. Further, there was a genuine concern that, if the Federal Group got into financial straits, where would that leave the casinos? Where would that leave the Northern Territory government? Where would that leave our community? Where would that leave our tourist promotion activities? Where would all the jobs for the people working in them be? It might not have hurt us at all but, on the other hand, it could have been catastrophic. We moved from that point through the business of sale and acquisition and the rest of it is history.

I would like to come to the point about concessions. The point was made this afternoon about the enormous concessions that were made to the new operators. Federal Hotels came to the Northern Territory with some very generous concessions on the part of the government at the time. They were designed deliberately to give Federal Hotels a chance to get on its feet, move into the next 5 and 10-year frame and bring the tourists to the Territory. Those concessions allowed Federal Hotels to operate in temporary premises for 3 years at very low overheads. It had lower tax rates for its initial period and that was designed so that its investment in the new projects could proceed. There were no taxes in Alice Springs initially and the later 20% tax in Alice Springs was ultimately reduced to 15% because of the plight of the operation. The government understood because it was looking at the long haul. We were not there for today's buck and to hell with tomorrow. Tomorrow's kids are going to get their jobs from the long haul and not from today's quick buck.

Those concessions were very important. The honourable member asked why we did not reduce taxes and let them have it for nothing. What would that have achieved? The operations in Alice and Darwin would have become viable and would have been able to meet their commitments but the Territory community would have got nothing out of it. The money-lenders would have been totally recompensed but what about the future? There would not have been any future for us because we would not have had the money to invest in other projects and no future for them because they would have been flat out paying their way. I mean no disrespect to them at all. We were looking for the long haul and tourists coming from Asia by the thousands with gamblers amongst them.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that our tax structure was unreasonable and that we should have had a tax structure like the royalty regime. The tax structure that has been designed for the casinos is so close to the royalty regime that it just does not matter. The principle is that, when things are good, everybody shares in it and, when things are not so good, we all carry some of the responsibility. Both of those tax regimes are aimed at the benefits in the long haul.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made some pretty extravagant claims about the value of taxes in 1985 dollars that would be available to the Territory in the year 2000. It is absolutely impossible for any person to make those assessments and do those discounted values without the benefit of the

information that we promised in the speech: a private briefing on the trading figures of the company and the proposed budgets. Everything he put forward this afternoon has to be hooch because he did not have the interest to come forward and say: 'I would like to see your computer models and your programming and the way you arrived at \$30m tax benefit to the Territory in the long term'. When he takes the interest to have the briefing and have it tracked through the models...

Mr Leo: A private briefing.

Mr TUXWORTH: The reason for the private briefing is that the figures that he would be seeing are commercially confidential. They are the business of the company and should be held by any of us in confidence.

Mr Leo: How do you know that he is wrong?

Mr TUXWORTH: Everybody has to know that he is wrong. He pulled the figure out of the sky.

Mr Leo: You are saying he is wrong.

Mr TUXWORTH: Absolutely.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Chief Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr TUXWORTH: Perhaps honourable members would like to avail themselves of the confidential briefing. The reason that it has to be confidential is that the base line...

Mr Ede: That figure can't be confidential. The net present value of the benefit.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, let me track that through for the honourable member. The figure that you arrive at in the year 2000 or 2010 has to start somewhere. You come all the way back to the 1984-85 budget line that is the private business of the company.

Mr Ede: We are not asking for that.

Mr TUXWORTH: You cannot get to the figure at the end unless you start with it. That is the whole point.

Mr Ede: We are not asking you to provide us with the details. Tell us what the benefit is in...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Stuart will remain silent.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I went to great lengths to explain to the honourable member that that would be available to him on a confidential basis. He is free to take advantage of it if he is interested. They will not take advantage of it because they do not want to know.

All I can say to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that the actions of the government are based on a long-term commitment to tourist development in the Northern Territory because we believe that that industry has the most potential for the Northern Territory. There are 12 million people to the south and 50% of

them have the potential to come to the Territory as tourists. There are 1 billion people out there and that is where our future lies. That is why our commitment to the tourist industry is so great. Without the infrastructure, we have no potential at all to provide beds for those people, to feed them, to take them to Kakadu or send them to Yulara or whatever. That is a fact of life. The commitment by the government to provide infrastructure is without reservation and we will succeed. I accept that, all the way along the line, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will do whatever he can to prevent us. The thing he has to remember is that we are the winners and we will do him like a duck. There is no doubt about that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said what a terrible thing it was that we had 5 years to conclude the arrangements for development and how any developer who came along would be able to take us to the cleaners. He has omitted one consideration: there may in fact be 3 or 4 potential developers who are interested. He cannot conceive of that. His powers of perception and conception are pretty limited and I do not hold that against him. The reality is that that is possible. I believe that we will conclude the deals for development. We will make the announcements at the right time and I have no doubt that the people of the Northern Territory will be very happy with the arrangements that will be concluded. They will be done as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, let me say that I am quite happy for honourable members opposite to walk around the Northern Territory for the next 3 to 5 years calling me a crook, a fraudulent person and an incompetent. None of it matters a jot because we will be measured by the results. When we go to the polls next time, the results will be coming out of the ground and the score will not be 19-6; it will be 23-2.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 27 February 1985.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising to add my contribution to the address in reply debate today, I would like to refer to the last sentence of the Administrator's speech to us on Tuesday. In that last sentence, he said that this government will continue the fostering of growth through individual initiative and enterprise. I think that was the most important part of the Administrator's speech. The earlier parts of the speech demonstrate that the government is certainly fostering the growth of the Northern Territory through the individual initiative and enterprise we have in the Northern Territory at the moment and that we hope to attract in the future.

I will start by commenting on what the honourable member for Millner said regarding our unemployment figures. He commented derogatorily on what he called our high unemployment figures. I would like to point out to him that it is my observation that most of the unemployment in the Northern Territory is imported unemployment. I am not commenting on whether or not these people deserve a job; I am just commenting on what I regard as facts. We may have an increase in unemployment here and there may be a decrease in unemployment down south but it is simple to understand that there is a migration of unemployed from the south to the north. If I was unemployed, I would certainly do that myself. If one is unemployed, it is much better to be in the Northern Territory. The climate is kinder for a start and, if one really wants to work, the employment is here. The housing situation, of which I know something because I was the Minister for Housing, is certainly much more advantageous than in any of the states.

I would like to point out to the honourable member for Millner a particular case of a constituent of mine in the rural area. I always believe not only in making intelligent comparisons but also in making particular comparisons and particular observations. This particular constituent is a young girl who had had some secretarial training. She applied for a job. One of the first things she did was to make herself presentable for this job. She presented herself well and she got the first job she applied for. This young girl had no obvious prospects of work before she applied for the job, except the training she had had and her own good sense in presenting herself properly. She was prepared to work. She was in the job for 6 weeks. Through personal problems, she left the job. She left the job, walked into another job immediately and had the offer of another job. As well as that, she told me that she had made an application to do another part-time job and had been successful. This was last weekend.

Mr Speaker, I put this forward to honourable members as a fact. It is certainly quite true. If people are looking for work and, more importantly, if they want to work, there is work for them in the Territory. I speak from some experience as an employer of 1 or 2 people over the years. When I advertised simple jobs which did not require much skill, many people applied for them. After a few years of interviewing people, you get a bit of experience with this. You can pick those who are prepared to work and those who are not prepared to work. It is not because I have not given all sorts a go. I have not stuck strictly to employing only men or only women, only young people or only old people. Over the years, I have given different people chances and it has been my experience that, if people want to work, there are jobs for them.

Mr Speaker, the Administrator touched on 2 matters which interested me particularly: local government and an electricity distribution scheme. I will touch first on local government. This has been debated in the Northern Territory since about 1977 when we were still under Commonwealth government administration. It has been of interest to people in the rural area. It was first raised as a subject of debate after Cyclone Tracy by a particular group in the rural area, the Darwin Rural Landholders Association. It has not been sought by the people in the rural area since that particular meeting. It must be understood by honourable members that, historically, settlement in the rural area has been by independently-thinking people who wanted nothing to do with the over-control of an urbanised lifestyle. That is why they moved to the rural area. This thinking was strengthened by the federal takeover in 1973 of 32 square miles of freehold land. Many of these people of necessity went to live in the rural area. Those who were not affected by the acquisition have nevertheless felt very strongly about it. The feeling of the people in the rural area has also been affected by Cyclone Tracy. I touched on that before and I will not reiterate what I said previously.

Mr Speaker, I have heard all the arguments put forward by urban people when I have asked for simple services for the people in the rural area. There are 3 main arguments put forward by those people who feel that we are getting more than our fair share of the goodies. First, they say we choose to live out there so we must live with it. Secondly, they say we do not pay rates so we cannot expect services. Thirdly, they say we are all a lot of bludgers on the government by even wanting the simplest of services.

I will answer those arguments. First of all, we do choose to live out there. It is a pretty good place to live. I place myself among my constituents. We live in the rural area where we have put our money into local investment. We have put our life and our investment into a total commitment to the Northern Territory.

Mr Perron: What about the rest of us?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: You will get your turn honourable minister. My constituents are not big people; they are little workers. They have made their commitment to the Territory either by living there, by building their houses there or by setting up a small business. They have also built their own houses, and I have touched on this matter before. There are some very unusual architectural styles in the rural area. I really appreciate driving around. If somebody wants to see something unusual, he should go for a drive in the rural area.

At a conservative estimate, there are about 8000 people living in the rural area. We will assume that those 8000 people are made up by 4000 couples. That makes 4000 couples who have housed themselves in the rural area. If those people asked for government housing, the cheapest housing the government could give them would be a Housing Commission flat. Last year the lowest price for one of those flats was about \$53 000. Arithmetic is not my strong point so I stand to be corrected on this but I think I am right with my noughts. That is \$212m that those people in the rural area have saved the government by building their own houses and living out there. So much for being bludgers.

Mr Speaker, the second argument is that we do not pay rates. Until the recent redistribution, the people in Berrimah were part of the rural area and part of my electorate. They certainly did pay rates for a number of years and received very minimal services. They paid almost the same rates as the people living in the Darwin municipality. It was in my tenure as member for Tiwi that I was able to arrange with the then Minister for Community Development, now the Chief Minister, that these people have their rates reduced. That was a great boon to them.

Continuing on with the argument that we do not pay rates so we should not expect things, it has been said that people in the rural area magnanimously have been given reserves and dumps. We have some very nice reserves in the rural area. We have Fred's Pass Reserve and the Berry Springs Reserve. We now have a reserve at Humpty Doo. The government has given us quite a few thousand dollars for the upkeep and management of those reserves but the groups themselves have contributed many more thousands of dollars in labour and materials. These reserves are used not only by the people in the rural area but by other people as well. The dumps are used by other people, especially the Howard Springs dump. It is pretty easy to identify rubbish and some rubbish dumped there was coming from the industrial area of Winnellie. It has been said that the reserves were provided in the rural area and, therefore, we should pay rates. I think a comparison can be drawn with the Marrara sporting complex. It is a very grand sporting complex which the government has built. However, the people of Marrara do not pay for it.

With the supply of water and electricity, the user pays for the service. It is not a handout. We do get a service in respect of the construction and maintenance of our gravel roads. Our rural gravel roads were okay until they were destroyed by the extractive minerals industry. Every road that services part of the extractive minerals industry is in a mess. They have become impassable in the wet and they become nearly impassable in the dry and certainly very dangerous. They have had to be bituminised. Because we have bitumen roads in a few places is no reason for levying rates on the rural area. It must be laid firmly at the door of the extractive minerals industry. Again, I would like to see the user pay in this instance. The user who causes the need for upkeep should pay for the formation and maintenance of these roads. Only 1 or 2 of the people who work in the extractive minerals industry live on these roads; they live in other parts of the rural area. Most of the principals do not even live in the rural area.

We come to the third accusation that is levelled at people who live in the rural area: we are all a lot of bludgers living off the government anyway. We are not bludgers; we are workers. As workers, we pay tax. My constituents pay their share of the tax bill. This goes to city councils; it does not come back to the rural area. It goes to other councils in the Northern Territory and Australia. I could name a few groups of people in the Northern Territory whom my constituents consider to be bludgers. I will not hurt the sensibilities of members because I know honourable members have expressed an interest in certain of these groups or organisations.

There is an overwhelming majority of rural people who have been interviewed, who have spoken to me personally, who have expressed their views at public meetings over the years and who want no form of local government. They want to maintain the status quo and I think the Minister for Community Development is quite aware of this. Reading the report that I have on my desk, it is clear that most of the people want to maintain the status quo but, if local government is introduced, they want it to be on their terms and to be unobtrusive and as economical as possible. At the same time, they believe that every other community in the Northern Territory which is not paying for services similar to those supplied to the rural area should also be required to pay for those services.

I would like to bring to the attention of the Minister for Community Development the Darwin Rural Advisory Committee Report's consideration of the Berrimah rates area. Although these people are not in my electorate now, I still have sympathy with them. I consider they have been done an injustice over the years in having to pay the rates bills that they have paid. At the third meeting of the advisory council, a paper was presented by the honourable minister who was on the committee at the time. I ask him if he will follow his own recommendation and charge the people in Berrimah a lesser rate until the whole subject of rural rates is clarified. Local government for the rural area is a very vexed question and, before a decision is taken, many side issues must be settled.

The Administrator also touched on the electricity reticulation schemes that the government has introduced. I would like to bring honourable members up to date on this. Prior to 1978, there was a guaranteed accounts scheme in the rural area. It was a case of people in a particular subdivision getting together and putting forward a group submission. When this submission was put forward to the Commonwealth in those days, the proposed subscribers had to guarantee to use a certain amount of electricity. We were in on such a scheme in the late 1960s or early 1970s. We had to guarantee to use a certain amount of electricity every year together with other people in our area.

From November 1978 to September 1984, the Northern Territory Electricity Commission approached the Planning Authority to inspect plans of new subdivisions. If these subdivisions were within 3 km of existing major electricity lines, the electricity would be made available under a group scheme. The cost of the electricity in a particular area was worked out and divided by the number of people applying for it. At that time, the government very generously gave those people a \$2000 credit towards their electricity reticulation. In some cases, it cost people very little. Unfortunately, there were few people actually living on the blocks. When these people got together with the owners of the vacant blocks, it became very apparent in many areas that the owners of vacant blocks were not the slightest bit interested in entering any group scheme. When the electricity cost was worked out on a cost per block basis, it may have been a very reasonable amount. However, when the owners of vacant blocks expressed no interest in the scheme, the price per block was so

great that the people living there found it quite unrealistic to have the electricity put on. For some time, this inequality had been apparent to the government but, like local government, it was a very vexed question and people put forward different schemes to deal with it. NTEC considered these and tried to come up with something that would suit the pockets of as many people as possible. To cut a long story short, the government came up with the \$5000 scheme whereby such people could have electricity put on for the payment of \$5000 if they lived within 3 km of main lines. Some enthusiasm and some disenchantment has been expressed about this scheme. I will be very interested to see how it is going in a year's time because that will be a fair test of whether it has been successful or not.

Recently, the government has come forward with another policy to supply electricity to people in the rural area and this applies to people further out from my electorate and also people in other parts of the Territory. It is an extension policy of supplying electricity to people who live within 5 km of an electricity distribution system. It takes into account minor and major consumers. It takes into account subdivisions and how the payment shall be made. The payment is more or less the same as in the first \$5000 scheme with certain exceptions in respect of major consumers.

People who live outside the 5 km limit may enter into private negotiations with NTEC regarding the supply of electricity to their properties or businesses. The matters that will be considered in relation to such applications are: the pioneering nature of the potential consumer, the present fuel cost to the potential consumer, the presence of other potential consumers along the route of the line, electrical loads, energy demand and requirements for major reinforcement of electricity systems.

NTEC has shown the way for other suppliers of services to the rural area. I would like to see a comprehensive plan put forward by the Water Supply Division in relation to water reticulation for the rural area. I will not go into that now because I would like to elaborate further on it.

Again, I would like to see how the electricity distribution scheme will work during the next year and judge its success or otherwise. I think it will be a success from what I have heard around the traps in my electorate and other places.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, 12 months ago, several honourable members present delivered their maiden speeches to this Assembly. On that occasion, most of us touched on our aspirations for our individual electorates and, no doubt, showed an abundance of enthusiasm for what we might achieve on behalf of our constituents. His Honour the Administrator has outlined a number of major areas which illustrate clearly the continuing success of the Country Liberal Party government and honourable ministers will underline our commitment to ensuring that our direction does not deviate from our target of the ongoing development of the Northern Territory for the benefit of all Territorians.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to discuss a few matters which have been highlighted to me during my work in the electorate of Wanguri. One of the major concerns in my electorate is the rapidly approaching expiry date on the lease of land on which the area known as Tracy Village is located, an area of 18.65 ha on lot 5868 Town of Nightcliff. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that I have said all this before. In fact, I have been raising this issue each year since 1976 and will continue to do so, year by year, until such time as the Commonwealth government, through the Minister for Defence, takes notice.

Honourable members will recall that, at this time last year, I explained that the Darwin City Council lease from the Commonwealth Department of Administrative Services expires in March 1991, now just 6 years away. They will also recall that I expressed my concern at the lack of action on the part of the federal government. The then Northern Territory Minister for Lands and the then Minister for Health both wrote to the Minister for Defence asking, firstly, to arrange the transfer of the area of land to the Northern Territory government and, secondly, for the provision of a second access road to the Royal Darwin Hospital through the land via Lee Point Road. Suffice it to say that his response was to maintain the status quo.

With the rapidly developing areas of Palmerston, Howard Springs and suburban Karama, it borders on the criminal that an ambulance has to come from those areas, negotiate major busy intersections, and then scramble along Henbury Avenue when several minutes, and possibly lives, could be saved by going along Lee Point Road and across RAAF land to the hospital. Mr Deputy Speaker, need I emphasise further the necessity for a second access road in the event that the only entrance to the hospital, which is over a tidal creek, is closed? I should also repeat that the facilities have a capital improvement value in excess of \$2m. They include Tracy Village Club which has some 1100 active members, a community hall, a child-minding centre, various shops, a swimming pool and the Pandanus Holiday Centre. We have an urgent need to provide recreation and tourist facilities in the northern suburbs and, for that matter, the Northern Territory. Imagine these facilities being bulldozed in 6 years' time. We would not only find it impossible to relocate the facilities for financial reasons but also because no further land is available on which to relocate.

Tracy Village Social Club wishes to develop further ovals on the land adjacent to the club but is held up because of the limited tenure. There is an urgent need for the East Darwin Sports Club, which is affiliated with the Tracy Village Sports Club, to have training facilities and new ovals for cricket, baseball or soccer. One reason given by the Minister for Defence for not extending the lease or granting the land to the Northern Territory government is that 'increased interference from additional traffic on Lee Point Road is a major impediment to the agreement'. Tracy Village has existed on the site since 1975 and will continue to do so until at least 1991. If there has been no reported interference to the radar system since 1975 - and just imagine the increase in road use and the use of various electrical equipment at the extended social club and caravan park - then why will the extension of the lease or the handing over of the land cause the problems claimed by the Minister for Defence? I ask honourable members to ponder for a moment. If the radar and radio equipment can be virtually sabotaged by merely driving a few vehicles along Lee Point Road or turning a toaster or 2 on, then should it be located where it is in any case? I call upon the Northern Territory Ministers for Health and for Lands to make personal representations to the federal Minister for Defence for his urgent attention as this matter is critical to the future of the northern suburbs.

Representations have been made to me by my constituents and staff members of the Royal Darwin Hospital on a matter of grave concern to them although I must say it is something to which I had not given a great deal of thought. I refer to the appointment of a hospital chaplain. I am informed that most major hospitals around Australia have such an appointment and these chaplains can play an important and necessary role in the lives of patients and, in some cases, the families of the patients. There is a need to conduct Sunday services, to give crisis counselling to patients, to administer appropriate rites to the dead and comfort to the dying, to assist with any social, emotional and mental problems, to comfort and give strength in cases of suffering, loneliness or alienation and

to give spiritual advice as required. A resident chaplain, available on site during emergency situations, can give valued advice and opinions to the nursing and medical staff and thereby add a different perspective to patient outlooks. The present situation where, in an emergency, a lay preacher is often the only person available to assist, cannot be tolerated. I must add that a large room is urgently required where both congregational and private worship can take place and also private counselling can be obtained.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that the Minister for Health supports the proposal of a chaplain in principle and hospital executives have met with members of Minister's Fraternal to discuss the matter. We must be mindful also of the needs of patients who do not practise traditional religions. Any service which is established should neither discriminate against nor favour any particular group. However, this is one situation in which there should be no procrastination. I look to the Minister's Fraternal to come to terms with any minor parochial considerations so that the Royal Darwin Hospital can provide yet another first-class service.

I turn now to a third matter: the provision of an independent living centre in the Northern Territory. Mr Deputy Speaker, a steering committee has been formed to move towards incorporating the independent living centre of the Northern Territory. I will read the objectives of the association in its draft constitution. Firstly, it will provide an information and advisory service on aids and equipment to disabled people, their families, health professionals and those working in related fields. I am not trying to be smart, Mr Deputy Speaker, but let me add that, for fairly obvious reasons, it is trying to find a word that will replace 'aids' in the title of this organisation because it has proven to be a little embarrassing. Its second objective is to provide a comprehensive display of aids and equipment to disabled people, their families, health professionals and those working in related fields. Thirdly, it aims to provide special aids for disabled people which are appropriate for the Northern Territory; fourthly, to appraise aids and equipment for disabled people and to give advice to manufacturers and suppliers of such items; fifthly, to conduct educational programs in matters relating to disability; and, sixthly, to undertake other activities which would support the achievement of the stated objectives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will give members some further background on an independent living centre. An independent living centre provides an information and advisory service on all commercially available products which may enable people who are disabled or elderly to be as independent as possible in the domestic environment. The centre houses a wide range of commercially available products so that people can visit, obtain information and advice about products, try them out and generally make an informed choice about which product will be most suitable for them. Products are not manufactured, hired or sold at any independent living centre. The name is registered in each state and territory in Australia and may be used only with the approval of the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled National Committee of Independent Living Centres and Aids.

This committee was established initially in 1978 to develop a national catalogue of aids to be used by all independent living centres. Currently, centres are operating in all states and territories throughout Australia, with the exception of the Northern Territory. In the Territory, we have no surgical suppliers which increases even more the need for the establishment of an independent living centre. Currently, all aids and equipment are ordered from interstate by selecting from individual brochures. Like the wild west days, isn't it? Obviously, this method of selection has many problems associated with

it because each disabled person's needs are different and therefore each piece of equipment needs to be individually tailored for and tested by the disabled person concerned. It is not always possible to select the best or most appropriate aid for a person simply by looking at a picture or specifications. There is a limit to the range that people can select from brochures. A waiting period of up to 6 months can be experienced from the date of ordering to the time of delivery. The type of premises required to establish a fully comprehensive display is an area not less than 300 m² plus approximately 80 m² to house the information service staff, office storage and a meeting room. Established centres in Australia are housed in buildings which range from a garage, commercial premises, former nurses' homes, redundant schools to small hospital wards. Although it may be considered an advantage to start an independent living centre near an existing rehabilitation facility, it is suggested that it should be seen as a separate entity with its own entrance, parking area and so on. It is felt that this is particularly important if disabled people are to be encouraged to visit the centre which must be seen to be impartial and independent.

The ideal facility for this type of centre in Darwin would undoubtedly be a modified house such as those currently provided by the Northern Territory Housing Commission to disabled people and their families. The major advantages of having this type of facility include substantially-reduced capital expenditure as it would not be necessary to renovate premises extensively to accommodate the various types of equipment displayed. Each room would display only those aids appropriate to that particular type of room. The special modifications and fittings provided by the Housing Commission could also be tested by disabled people. In the long term, this would provide significant cost savings with regard to all future specialised housing developments. Architects, builders, allied health professionals and others working in associated fields would also benefit from being able to see exactly what is required in relation to providing building, access, modifications and equipment for disabled people.

The initial staffing requirement would be for one occupational therapist experienced in the field of physical rehabilitation and one clerical assistant with typing skills. Both would be full-time positions. With regard to equipment, all items on display including wheelchairs, walking aids, lifting devices, driving aids, bathing aids, toilet aids and information on architectural fixtures and fittings etc, would be on loan from suppliers and would be the responsibility of the staff of the centre to maintain the product in working order and to ensure that they were used correctly. Suppliers to the Territory have indicated that they would be willing to provide equipment on loan to the centre. Transportation of equipment would have to be negotiated but no difficulty is envisaged in this respect. Freight costs in fact may be reduced owing to an increase in quantities. I can see that the funding for this type of centre necessarily requires a degree of negotiation between the Territory and federal governments. My commitment, and I hope I have the support of all honourable members, is to expedite those negotiations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will touch briefly on another matter whilst I have the opportunity. We have heard a lot of criticism of parents recently which has been fired, of course, by the incidence of juvenile crime. As the father of 3 children, a former policeman, a member of the Task Force on Juvenile Crime and I suppose, as a concerned member of the public, I have pondered the reason why children start down the treacherous path towards crime. Where does parental control start to deteriorate? A paragraph in the Northern Suburbs Primary Schools Newsletter may well have identified an area where all of us who think it will not happen to our children might stop and think. I will quote a paragraph headed: 'Sleepy Children'.

Staff are becoming concerned by the number of children who are tired at school. During discussions with children, it is apparent that a significant number are staying up to watch television shows that do not start until after 9 pm. While the decision as to what shows children should watch is the parents' decision, the school wishes to express its concern that late television viewing and other late night outings for children during the week appear to be increasing and that the lack of sleep for many pupils is apparent and is having an adverse effect on their schoolwork. It would be appreciated if parents, under normal circumstances, could ensure that their children have 9 to 10 hours sleep at night.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is not hard to imagine the scenario of a child dozing instead of paying attention in class. I may be exaggerating but it is not hard to imagine.

Mr B. Collins: Just have a look around the room here.

Mr DALE: Yes, but you are the only juvenile.

Teachers are becoming frustrated and reacting towards the child not handling his work, not liking his angry teacher and therefore not liking school. He starts wagging school and there he is on the tragic path. I saw a child of about 3 years of age standing next to his mother in the front seat of a car recently. Of course, she had her seatbelt firmly fastened. I had occasion to speak to the lady a little later and asked her why she did not have her child safely buckled up. Her reply staggered me. She said: 'You are kidding. There is no way that I could make him put the belt on. He would scream his head off'. Mr Deputy Speaker, we parents must look at ourselves. It can be our children who become juvenile offenders. Let us start with a little discipline which should lead to self-discipline, which should lead to a sense of responsibility, which should lead to fewer juvenile criminals.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have inherited a number of new responsibilities this year and many of them I have much to learn about. Perhaps as a result of living where I do, I have had a long-term interest in the fishing industry. I have noted for some time that most of the product caught on the gulf on the eastern coast of the Northern Territory unfortunately finds its way to Queensland and Western Australia to be processed. It is one of those matters that needs to be addressed if the Territory is to develop in terms of downstream processing of products that are produced in the Territory and it is one that I will be pursuing the government on this year. Unfortunately, as I understand it, there is the northern fishery and that is a complicating factor in organising the fishery in the Northern Territory. However, I believe that much more could be done towards the Territory reaping more benefit out of the fishing industry than selling a few gallons of diesel and perhaps half a dozen eggs if a boat pulls in. I believe there is much more potential for employment there. As I said before, it is something on which I will be pursuing the government, and indeed the minister, this year.

I do not come to Darwin perhaps as much as most other people. I live a long way away but I have been hearing a number of rumours about the various facilities at the Darwin wharf and the concern amongst a number of people associated with the management and workforce on those facilities about their management and whether or not they are applicable for the job. For instance, the immediate application of the Ro-Ro facility is somewhat diminished by the loss of the Darwin Trader and the Townsville Trader. However, I have no doubt that it will have a place in the Territory's port future. However, I believe

there is a need continually to monitor its operation, the way it is maintained and to try to overcome problems associated with it.

There is another problem, of course, associated with the wharf and that is the dumb barge and the need to reconcile the industrial problems. I refer to the present dumb barge operation that a gentleman has started. That needs to be reconciled for the sake of the port, and it needs to be reconciled quickly. I do not know how far down the road the minister is on that, but I can see that inevitably any industrial conflict will cost the Territory one way or another. Also I would ask the minister whether or not it is really necessary to proceed with the proposed gas-fired power-station on Channel Island. It would seem to me that it is locking up a very large area of the harbour which potentially could have a greater use in future. Whilst I appreciate fully the need for the gas-fired power-station - I look forward to the gas line coming from Alice Springs to Darwin and, optimistically, to Nhulunbuy as much as anybody - but I wonder whether it is strictly necessary to fence off a very large section of the Port of Darwin for that use now that the reason for doing that has diminished given that there will be no need to import coal.

I have received some electorate inquiries about the application of the uniform licensing and survey laws in relation to fishing that have been applied in the Northern Territory. Most people would agree that it is a real bonus and they should have been standardised throughout Australia some time ago. However, the method of application seems to be a little arbitrary, to say the least, in a number of cases. I have been assured by a number of people who have had many years of experience in the fishing industry that, because they have some language problem - they may be migrant people or older people - they have had difficulties. Whilst it is recognised that they may not be able to adhere strictly to some written application in the various courses they must pass, they are allowed at the moment to participate in a verbal or oral test to assess their eligibility. As I understand it, those eligibility requirements and the various oral tests they have to pass are structured in such a way as to render them virtually useless. Those persons who have for many years fished the waters around here are finding it almost impossible to obtain licences.

The Administrator spoke of the progress that has been made in another area of primary production: the beef industry. It is something that I would imagine we all recognise that we do well in the Territory. We manage to grow cows fairly successfully. To that end, the B-TEC program and the government's participation to date in it must be applauded. There have been hiccups and problems but certainly the progress there is to be applauded. The stock improvement program that is under way is to be applauded too. However, I have yet to see any program on or any direction being applied to the industry in terms of downstream manufacturing so that the product can be processed to a stage further than the meatworks.

The former member for Sanderson did a survey of large retail stores in Darwin and she found to her surprise that the biggest single item in terms of cash turnover was Pal dog food. That is an incredible cash outflow from the Northern Territory for a product that we do at least produce. I have no doubt that some carcasses leave the Northern Territory to be canned in other places and sent back up here to be sold at fairly high prices. I appreciate that a cannery is perhaps a little beyond us at the moment because of the amount of power that it would require. But I am sure that there is a lot more that could be done to inject some enthusiasm into pet food manufacturers to try and have their product more readily displayed. That would create a number of jobs and reduce the Territory's huge outflow of capital.

Another matter needs to be addressed in the meat industry. Industrial problems necessarily disrupt the economy of any community. There are industrial problems in the meat industry which must be overcome. There needs to be new management practices put in place by the operators. I am quite sure that the unions would be all too willing to participate in any new management practice. There are a number of different options. How they are approached will probably require much negotiation. But it needs to be approached constructively if the industry is to achieve the efficiency that it will require in the future.

Another shadow portfolio that I have inherited is community development of which the major aspect is local government. I come from a community where there is no local government. I was interested to hear from the minister that he proposed that Palmerston should have a local administrative structure similar to what Nhulunbuy has; that is, the community would be basically organised by administrators appointed by the department. I can assure the minister that, while it may have some economic value, the community itself would find it a very difficult situation under which to live. I would suspect that those administrators would find their task increasingly difficult, realising that a number of people in the community, justifiably or otherwise, have a grievance against them. They cannot redress those grievances by the ballot box. I would suggest to the minister that, before he contemplates an administrative structure similar to the one in Nhulunbuy, he should come to Nhulunbuy and talk to the people there.

There is another move in which I have a parochial interest: the 2% tax-sharing arrangement which the Commonwealth and various state governments are talking about. This is the 2% which is taken out of everybody's PAYE tax which is supposed to go to community governments. Unfortunately, there are a number of communities in the Northern Territory which have never benefited from that. I believe that that is about to be redressed. I am sure that my constituents in Nhulunbuy and the Leader of the Opposition's constituents in Jabiru will look forward to the outcome of those negotiations. Hopefully, they will be positive negotiations.

Much has been written about the problem of juvenile crime in the northern suburbs of Darwin. This is another community development matter. It is not a problem in Nhulunbuy but I do sympathise with people who, in one way or another, are victims. It must be heartbreaking for parents to see their children in front of a beak. I am sure there must be ways to redress that. I commend the minister on the establishment of his task force to try to deal with this problem. However, without being critical of any individuals, I would question the makeup of that task force. Apart from the lone female member, the rest of it appears to be made up by fairly average European, middle-class males. There is very little cross-cultural or cross-socio-economic representation on that task force and that will inevitably mean that the community will question whatever recommendations it makes. Perhaps it is too late to change the composition of the task force but I hope that it receives representations from as broad as possible a cross-section of the community.

This year, I will continue to pursue the matter of the supply of services in my community. I thank the minister for his letter. This is strictly a parochial matter. It probably does not apply anywhere else in the Northern Territory. It is the matter of the terms and conditions under which the supply of electricity is allowed to be sold in my community. I will continue to pursue that matter. I would hope that the minister, given that he is both the Attorney-General and the Minister for Mines and Energy, will be able to provide before the end of this year some guidelines or at least some terms and conditions under which that practice is allowed to continue. NTEC supplies

electricity generally throughout the Territory. Certain procedures which it must follow are very clearly laid down in legislation but, unfortunately, we do not have the benefit of that legislation in Nhulunbuy. There needs to be some terms and conditions for the supply and sale of electricity in my community.

Another matter I intend to address at this sittings is the freight inquiry which was conducted last year throughout the Northern Territory. Unfortunately, for one reason or another, there was very little debate on the inquiry. I can assure the minister that retail goods in Nhulunbuy do not necessarily reflect the prices displayed in Woolworths which is the only supermarket in the community. As he is aware, it is also the only business in town which has a freight subsidy paid by the mining company. Perhaps the freight inquiry could have spent its time a little more productively by looking at other prices in the community because I can assure members of this Assembly that those prices displayed in Woolworths certainly do not reflect the prices generally in the community.

Mr Speaker, there is one glaring matter which I imagine the Leader of the Opposition will address. I have no shadow responsibility for this matter. There was no reference to it in the Administrator's speech. I hope that the transfer of responsibility of the Women's Affairs Unit from the Chief Minister to the Minister for Community Development does not necessarily mean a downgrading of the role of that unit. Unfortunately, that is the impression that most people would have gained from the Administrator's speech. I hope that that assumption is incorrect. I expected to hear some reassurance in that speech. Women have certainly made gains within our community over a number of years. The rights and responsibilities of all members of our society have been gradually recognised. But a number of women, and a number of men too, feel that it is a slight that the Women's Affairs Unit was moved from the Chief Minister's control to that of the Minister for Community Development. I thought there should have been some recognition and some reassurance in the Administrator's speech. Unfortunately, there was not.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to say that Darwin is a very large community compared to the one that I come from. It is a long way away - 700 km. The people in my community perhaps have very little to do with the Northern Territory. They do not even think that the Northern Territory government has very much to do with them. By inviting ministers and members to my electorate, I have tried to involve the community in the workings of government and to involve this government in my community as much as possible. I will continue to do that for as long as it is necessary. Nhulunbuy has needs; there is no questioning that. It is not just the township of Nhulunbuy. There is a very large Aboriginal component within my electorate and their needs are very real. Their requirements are real. They are moving very rapidly into a society that very few understand. I have moments when I become very frustrated and frightened about the potential for the future.

I asked the Minister for Education to come to my electorate and visit Aboriginal schools that have become increasingly important to outstation people since the demise of Dhupuma College. I ask him again to visit those outstation schools. They are appalling; there is no other way to describe them. If those constituents of mine who, in the education stakes, have started behind the 8-ball are not allowed to improve their education or are not persuaded to improve their education, then they will continue to fall further behind. Sooner or later, Nhulunbuy will close down. The mine will close down; that is inevitable. It will not be today or tomorrow but in 30 or 40 years' time that that mine will close and with it will go most of the population. What will the European people have contributed after being there for that 30 years? They will

have created a dependence in the original inhabitants on introduced technology, introduced social values, introduced laws and introduced medical requirements.

It will be a shame if we leave a great big nothing. That is why people will need to work in 30 years' time. Aboriginal people choose to work now but they will need to work in 30 years' time, just as European people need to now. That is inevitable. They will need to work and there will be work there. They will require the various technological advantages that we have, whatever the advantages of our technological society might be. They will require all those things in 30 years' time. If there is no way to support that, we will simply create a collection of desperate people with absolutely no roots and nothing in sight for them. Indeed, their homes will be destroyed and they will have to leave. They will have no choice. That is why I would ask the government to consider that part of the world. There is a need for alternative projects and alternative employment, not so much for the adults there now but certainly for the children. That is something that needs to be developed. One way that I believe it can be developed is by using primary production or fisheries as a base.

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

Mr HATTON (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on the address in reply. His Honour outlined in his speech a number of initiatives being undertaken by this government which are directly associated with the functions of my Departments of Lands, Primary Production, Ports and Fisheries and Conservation. I would like to take this opportunity to outline a number of the initiatives in my departments and to expand on some of the points that were made by His Honour.

At first glance, one might take the view that the range of portfolios that I have is fairly large and diverse. However, if one takes a closer examination, one will find there is a high degree of interrelationship between those portfolios and we have a unique opportunity to develop a coordinated approach to land use. It also provides a comprehensive grouping of administrative arrangements in the Department of Ports and Fisheries to develop our relatively untapped marine resources and to coordinate the administration and development of fishing, marine transport and ports. This in turn will aid the development of effective sea transport trade links, particularly with our near northern neighbours in South-east Asia.

Through the work of the Department of Lands and its Northern Territory Planning Authority, the Northern Territory has and is developing very effective and forward-thinking urban planning for a number of its centres. Since self-government, we have seen the introduction of many streamlined and updated approaches to urban tenure and urban planning. This has extended to the development of structure plans for major urban centres to provide broad planning for several decades into the future. The determination of the Darwin structure plan has already been put in place and the department has been working strenuously to complete plans for the towns of Alice Springs and Katherine. The Katherine structure plan should be available for display and public comment within the next month. Following receipt of public comment, that structure plan should be finalised by the middle of this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the comments that the member for MacDonnell expressed about Alice Springs. It may be a good opportunity to outline what has been occurring in Alice Springs. As the honourable member outlined in his speech, there is a problem with the shortage of available land in the Alice Springs area. It is true that part of the reason

for that shortage is the decision which we quite correctly took not to allow the Mt John valley to develop as an urban residential area. That land is too valuable. In the long-term future interests of the town of Alice Springs, it would be inappropriate to have that development proceed. Nonetheless, with Alice Springs being such a fast-growing community - I understand it is one of the fastest-growing communities in Australia - considerable pressure has been placed on the availability of land.

The Alice is in many ways a unique community. Its history and the mystique about Alice Springs arising from books such as 'A Town Like Alice' and other stories of the Centre have led that community to cherish its history and to maintain the character of the town as much as possible. But with a fast-growing community, it becomes very important to plan very carefully and to analyse which direction that community should take. That in turn causes conflict when there is a very heavy demand for land.

The Department of Lands has been engaged in a number of studies in that region. For the benefit of honourable members, I will outline some of those. In respect of Larapinta valley, a study was carried out by Gutteridge Haskins and Davey. That was completed in October 1984 and the contract for stage 1 was awarded in November 1984. Subdivisional approval has been given and works are due to commence this month. That will yield in the order of 115 R1 lots and 4 R2 lots. Stages 2A and 2B have been released and tenders for those close on 15 February. We are expecting announcements next month of the successful tenderers. The 2 developments in that section should provide 480 R1 lots and significant medium-density development.

Larapinta stage 3 has been accelerated beyond the original program. Documentation for the release of 3A has been compiled and invitations to purchase a development lease will be called at the end of March. The potential yield of this development is a further 150 lots. I should note that it is proposed that no single developer will be offered more than 1 lot in each of 2A, 2B or 3A. This will provide a good level of competition in the provision of land and in the pricing because it is a very tight land market. Regarding future stages, consultants have completed opportunity and constraint studies over the entire Larapinta valley and it is estimated that it will be capable of accommodating approximately 6500 people when it is completed.

Other land developments are currently taking place. In Burke Street, an area was sold on 3 August last year which will yield 15 lots. There will be 11 R1 allotments in Braitling at the corner of Dixon Road and Head Street. These were sold by auction in November last year. The Floreat Plumbing subdivision in Dixon Road will release 184 R1 lots and those developments should be completed by the end of March.

We are pressing as fast as we can to accelerate land development where we know that developments are occurring. That will provide a considerable input into the existing housing market. If we can keep up that pressure, and we certainly intend to, we hope that we will be able to create a reasonable balance. Our estimate is that, by the end of next year, that would be the case. I would not like to mislead members by suggesting it would be over and done with in a few months. But I will say that the department is opening as many stoppers as it can to provide land in the Alice Springs area.

The structure plan itself is proceeding. The Undoolya structure plan was carried out by Pak-Poy Willing and Partners and an interim report was received in January. The final report is expected next month. A CBD study for a projected population of 50 000 has been awarded to Gutteridge Haskins and Davey.

The work has commenced and is due for completion in June this year. The estimated cost of that project is \$55 000. The Undoolya-White Gums groundwater study is being carried out by Gutteridge Haskins and Davey. It is due for completion at the end of 1985.

Alternative areas for future development were mentioned by the honourable member. We are not quite sure what he was referring to there. We assume he was referring to the draft structure plan which is being prepared by the Department of Lands. The draft was due for circulation in March this year. Recent decisions have been taken and proposals offered in respect of the the location of the sewage ponds in Alice Springs and these are significantly affecting that draft structure plan. As a consequence, it will not be available for public comment until April. One would anticipate that a structure plan would be completed by the middle of this year. It will then enable us to move even beyond the Larapinta valley development proposals and into the other options open to us in the Alice Springs area to meet the demand for land. I can assure the honourable member that land release in Alice Springs is a matter of high priority. I might indicate also that, in the northern region, the attention of the department is being very heavily directed towards the needs of the Katherine community which is finding itself under potential pressure for land availability as a consequence of the decision to go ahead with the Tindal development.

In addition to urban planning, however, there is a growing realisation that, for the Northern Territory's agricultural, horticultural and pastoral potential, combined with tourism and mining, there is a need to adopt a much more organised approach to the planning and development of rural Northern Territory. My departments are already working together at officer level to develop proposals on how they can identify optimum land utilisation and develop appropriate rural and primary industry related land tenure systems in order to provide flexibility to take advantage of opportunities in rural areas and to develop appropriate rural planning strategies for the Northern Territory. Our government is now well placed to bring together much of the information necessary for this process.

The extensive development of the computerised land information system and Mapnet operated by the Department of Lands has the potential capacity to integrate information from other specialist areas. These include soils information and important conservation details currently held by the Conservation Commission as well as property development information, farm productivity statistics etc that are currently held by the Department of Primary Production. Obviously, this task is neither quick nor easy to complete. It will necessitate a high degree of consultation with individuals and community organisations involved in the rural sector. However, if we can achieve this objective, it will provide us with a mechanism whereby we can analyse the value of our natural resources and seek to optimise the appropriate utilisation of those resources to the benefit of the Northern Territory. In conjunction with the marketing, research and investment promotion of the various specialist departments, we may then see the opportunity to unlock the dormant potential of this vast region.

I must note the value of bringing the role of the Northern Territory Sacred Sites Authority under the auspices of the Minister for Lands. The issue of sacred sites, unfortunately, has been the subject of conflict and controversy for some time in the Territory. This conflict and controversy itself has tended to drive a wedge between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Territorians. The issue of Aboriginal sacred sites, combined with the claims by various Aboriginal groups for living areas and transient camps around towns, has led to

exasperation and frustration amongst both black and white Territorians. As His Honour said in his speech, it is our intention to resolve the issues by discussion and consultation. I believe we are moving in the right direction. There is evidence, for example, in Alice Springs that subdivision development has been able to proceed without those all-too-familiar arguments and public outcries that seem to have become part of the way of life in that community. I note, for example, that the Department of Lands, in consultation with the Sacred Sites Authority, has been able to develop successfully the various stages of the Larapinta Valley subdivision development. Through the process of frank and honest discussion between affected parties, I trust that this process can continue in future. It would be wrong to claim that these problems are resolved. But it would be my intention as the responsible minister to meet with Aboriginal organisations and seek a rational solution of the competing demands in centres around the Northern Territory so that we, black and white, can proceed together towards the development of one community in the future.

I have commenced quite fruitful and positive discussions with the Sacred Sites Authority. I think we have a much clearer understanding of each other's position. One thing that arose from those discussions is that we do not seem to be very far apart in our objectives nor in our procedures. I am looking forward to the submissions from that authority in relation to the operation of the Sacred Sites Act and the declaration of sites and other matters associated with those, including some of the administrative procedures.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like now to refer to the Department of Primary Production. We have developed a vision over the years that we should aim to develop a level of self-sufficiency in food. The aim of my department is to concentrate on those things we can do well and, where possible, to promote the export of those products and not to try to compete where we are inefficient. We need to strike a net balance of imports and exports so that the food purchases are not a drain on our economy. I think we should keep that in mind when we are discussing the potential for the development of primary products in the Northern Territory and not simply say that, because they are eaten in the Northern Territory, we should grow them in the Northern Territory.

In respect of the development of foodstuffs, however, I should note for the benefit of honourable members that new horticultural lands are being opened up in the Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine areas. Territory farm products are, for the first time in our chequered history, being sold interstate and overseas on a regular basis. We are looking at the feasibility in central Australia of new crops such as table grapes and dates. The Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority aims at growth in this vital area of our economy. I envisage the future of ADMA as concentrating more on marketing and less on development which will pass to the Department of Primary Production. All of these things mark a change of emphasis in the direction of primary industries in the Territory.

There has always been a concentration of beef cattle production in the Northern Territory because of the large areas of land available and the traditional constraints of development of other industries. One could refer to a wide range of things such as soils, distance, lack of adequate transport links, disease controls, property management, weed and pest control and lack of capital investment. Beef cattle production was based on what could be described as a free-ranging harvesting style of production with cattle originally driven overland to market on stock routes. Although stock routes are still used to some extent in the Barkly and central Australian regions, cattle are mostly transported by road train to abattoirs in the NT and elsewhere. Cattle stations are still mostly between 2500 km² and 5000 km²; indeed, a couple exceed 12 000 km². They sustain a cattle population of around 1.4 million.

This industry has seen extremely difficult times in the last few years. The main reasons are falling prices, rising costs, problems at abattoirs, droughts and the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. B-TEC is now in midstream. The target date for eradication is 1992 but this may be adjusted to deal with problems with the campaign. The welcome consequence of B-TEC is that it has emphasised the need for changes in NT cattle production methods from free-range styles to a controlled, closely-managed style. We need much better management skills, better cattle control, fencing, grids and more pasture improvement. Tail tagging before cattle are moved to slaughter will be a requirement as from 1 March. There is no doubt that all these improvements are necessary and that the Territory lags behind the rest of Australia in this regard. The problem is that these changes are compressed into a few years rather than the 15 to 20 years that should have been taken had the changes occurred naturally. B-TEC has also indicated the need for better administrative methods. There will be more emphasis on economic assessment and the need to streamline the administrative groupings. As well, there should be more consultation between the industry and the administrators. There is no doubt that the industry has been concerned about the high levels of destocking that have resulted in a serious decline in herd numbers and have had a profound social impact. The government is striving to improve communications among the people involved in B-TEC.

The meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council this month produced a new north Australian B-TEC subcommittee of the national B-TEC committee of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. In addition, we have formed a Northern Territory B-TEC Consultative and Planning Committee. This committee consists of various groups including the Department of Primary Production, the Conservation Commission, NLC, CLC, Central Australian Aboriginal Pastoralists Association and others. It will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Primary Production. Through this committee, the emphasis in the B-TEC program will change from destocking to other forms of control that will avoid the demands for compensation and additional assistance measures. The government is also working towards a one-stop-shop idea for the B-TEC with funding, part D assistance measures and the rural adjustment scheme all under one control; namely, the Department of Primary Production.

There is also increasing interest in the buffalo domestication program. The B-TEC program results in some wild stock being slaughtered but suitable stock tested, and found to be free of TB, can be used as breeders. Needless to say, buffalo are well suited to top end conditions. In order to service various aspects of the industry, some abattoirs offer Halal slaughter under supervision of Moslem slaughtermen although, as the member for Nhulunbuy mentioned, we are having problems in the abattoirs, the meat processing sector of the industry, particularly because of heavy industrial disputation that has been occurring as a consequence of the unions trying to avoid, like King Canute, the decisions of the Arbitration Commission to vary that award and do away with the outdated, antiquated, destructive tally system that has plagued the meat processing industry for decades. Unfortunately, both the industry and the unions are using the Northern Territory as the spearhead of this particular campaign and our industry is suffering to some extent as a consequence.

Efforts are being made to control weed problems in the Territory, some of them clearly the result of inadequate attention or resources in the 1960s. The Department of Primary Production, together with the CSIRO and other groups, is working on the development of various biological control methods. These need to be supported by other measures such as herbicides and mechanical removal where necessary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if I continue on the multitude of things occurring in primary production, I will completely run out of time. There are a couple of other points that it is essential that I make. One is in relation to the developments occurring in the Conservation Commission and I will take the opportunity at another time to deal with them in depth.

His Honour noted that the government has developed a 3-pronged strategy for the development of tourism throughout the Northern Territory: additional accommodation in major centres and resort locations, improved access for visitors, especially additional airline flights for both international and domestic tourists, and the development of additional attractions, services and facilities. It is that third prong that is a primary responsibility of the Conservation Commission. The success of the organisation in the development, maintenance and improvement of those facilities is developing the resource foundation on which our tourist industry is built. Through the development of recreational parks, national parks, roadside stops and the wildlife research that is being undertaken, the Conservation Commission is providing the fundamental data and development on which the success of the tourist industry depends.

Finally, the new Department of Ports and Fisheries is the department which will provide the next major industry, in my opinion, and that is the fishing industry. Obviously, I will need to deal with that later on.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, to touch on a few areas within my own portfolios, I would start by saying that the Territory has made some significant changes to its laws ever since we have had the opportunity following self-government. Honourable members will regard the Criminal Code as being perhaps the most substantial revision and update of law. However, we have had also what we would regard as progressive liquor laws in the Northern Territory. The Motor Accidents Compensation Scheme is pretty unique in Australia and, whilst it has the odd problem with it, it is in fact very advanced legislation. Our land acquisition laws were modelled directly on the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission some years ago and I think are well ahead of those of most of the states.

I will give a brief outline of some of the areas we are looking at for the future. The Justices Act is a most important act of fundamental law and a complete review of that act is proposed. Preliminary work is under way and it is hoped that it will result in a modern act suited to the Territory's present needs in the magistrates court. The present act dates back to 1928 and has been the subject of numerous amendments over the years which have made it difficult to comprehend. As with the Justices Act, the Local Courts Act is in need of a comprehensive review. The NT Law Reform Committee completed a report on the act during 1984. The report included a number of proposals for amendments to bring it up to date and increase efficiency in the operations of the local court.

It is proposed that legislation be introduced to amend the Coroners Act following a detailed departmental review. It is hoped that the amending legislation will streamline procedures and help reduce the backlog in that area. The National Crimes Authority was mentioned by the Administrator in his speech. We will be passing the necessary legislation for the National Crimes Authority to undertake its very valuable work in the Northern Territory. In the area of commercial arbitration, a bill for uniform legislation with all the states will be introduced into this Assembly this year. The bill will modernise the existing mix of statute and common law which contains a number of gaps and uncertainties. The new legislation will provide for a comprehensive code for

commercial arbitration. A bill amending the Status of Children Act will be introduced this year to provide that children born as a result of artificial insemination or in vitro fertilisation will be deemed to be children of the consenting parents. Presently, in law, they are the children of the genetic donors.

A bill is being prepared to correct faults in the current Commercial and Private Agents Licensing Act. It is aimed at streamlining the procedures and providing for the renewal of agents' licences. In addition, penalties under the act will be increased to more realistic levels. A bill to amend the Registration of Births Deaths and Marriages Act will be aimed at removing some of the inequities in the present act such as an existing provision that a married woman can only change the surname of children of a previous marriage to that of a new husband with the former husband's consent or a court order. That ought to be pretty controversial stuff. The proposed bill will also enable the revision of some commonly used forms under the act. As part of a cooperative exercise with the states, the Territory intends to introduce legislation permitting search warrants to be obtained in the Territory in respect of offences against the laws of a state and for items seized to be sent to that state. That should give honourable members some idea of the sorts of things that we expect to look at as far as the law is concerned.

I turn now to matters concerning my portfolio of mines and energy. With mineral production now worth \$716m annually, mining is expected to continue as the Territory's major industry. Almost \$100m of the production figure is spent in the Northern Territory. Gold was the beginning of the Territory mining industry and it will continue to play an important role. Thus, as the historical Nobles Nob mine in Tennant Creek ceases production, 4 new gold mines are beginning. These are Argo, TC8, North Flinders and, the biggest of all, the Enterprise mine at Pine Creek. Whether or not any of them will end up producing 35 t of gold, as the Nob did in its 40 years, remains to be seen. But more gold will assuredly be discovered and further mines developed.

On the energy scene, at long last, the Commonwealth has agreed to the release of further offshore areas for petroleum exploration with an announcement as recent as last week. Most areas released are in the area of the Ashmore and Cartier Islands, the scene of BHP's recent oil discoveries at Jabiru and Chalice. NT waters areas have also been released. We expect this to lead to a considerable increase in exploration activity with Darwin as the base. The biggest energy development in NT history, of course, is the gas pipeline from the Amadeus Basin through Alice Springs to Darwin. This will provide gas-powered electricity generation not only for Darwin but for Tennant Creek and Katherine as well. As honourable members know, Alice Springs is already generating electricity almost exclusively on gas. The best news of all as far as the gas pipeline is concerned is the knowledge that we will be able to work our way off the Commonwealth subsidy for electricity which we receive currently. I think it is in the order of \$55m to \$60m per annum. Obviously, the Commonwealth is as anxious for us to phase out that subsidy as we are. Gas will provide the means.

Other benefits of the gas pipeline and gas-powered generation in Darwin will be a more secure source of energy than coal would have been. Power costs should rise more slowly in the future as a result of a more stable and known energy source. There will be spin-offs for industrial and small business development. There will be businesses in Darwin, and probably in Katherine as well, which will be able to use the gas in a more commercially-direct sense as a result of the pipeline coming here. Importantly, the news of the gas pipeline and its assured construction has provided incentives for further

exploration in central Australia. As a demonstration of that, the Palm Valley reserves have now been upgraded from 55 Pj to 300 Pj since the incentive of a ready market has been provided through the announcement of the pipeline. It means that, for the first time, people are going into central Australia looking for gas whereas to date all the gas that has been found has been found in the course of oil exploration. Let us hope that there is much more there yet. As the Administrator mentioned in his speech, the government proposes to connect as many small centres as possible to the main power-stations. In the next couple of years, lines will be built from places like Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs and Darwin to areas which currently are generating electricity themselves with expensive diesel generators. We will spread the distribution network as wide as we can.

Work is also continuing on interesting alternative energy experiments in the Northern Territory. They do not seem to receive much publicity these days and I will do my best to crank that up. I understand that the solar ponds in Alice Springs have entered a new phase and a division of the national Department of Energy and Resources is proposing to conduct what is regarded as a very significant seminar in Alice Springs on solar ponds in Australia because the one being experimented with in Alice Springs is considered to be the most advanced in the country. They believe there is sufficient information gathered now virtually to build commercial solar ponds. That would be an enormous fillip to alternative energy development. Also a hybrid solar/wind electricity generation experiment at Tennant Creek is proving that it may have some commercial application in the future.

A major legislation exercise will be the provision of a new act for the control of waters. The present act dates back to 1938 and initially dealt solely with surface water resources. Later amendments took in groundwater, pollution and drainage and the protection of water courses. The new act will cover all of these matters and bring the legislation up to date, taking note of the latest developments in water resource management. Significant progress has been made in all aspects of flood plain management, especially on flood warning and public education. Recent regular flooding of the Todd River in Alice Springs highlights the importance of this work and it will continue to be given priority. A challenge remains, Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would be well aware, to resolve the complex groundwater problems in Alice Springs itself and I hope to announce shortly action the government proposes to take to alleviate some of the problems.

Several states have moved to bring all occupational health and safety matters under the compass of a single act rather than their being covered by several separate pieces of legislation, as we have in the Territory. We are looking at the implications that this has for the Territory with a view to bringing all these matters under one act ourselves. I understand that the report into workers' compensation, in fact, made some recommendations in this regard and I can assure honourable members we will look at them very seriously. The Territory's Director of Industrial Safety is represented on the newly-formed National Occupational Health and Safety Commission and will keep us up to date with national developments in this field and, of course, contribute from the Territory's point of view.

The major move in industrial safety, however, is not in the field of government regulations but in the education of industry itself. This is the thrust of the work that will be done by our safety inspectors impressing on industrial management both the advantages of, and the means to achieve, effective self-regulation in relation to safety. We believe that industry can be helped to accept more responsibility in this area. The case this week in

Alice Springs of the possible inadequacy in the design or fabrication of small petrol containers highlights the need for the Dangerous Goods Act which will be brought into operation in a matter of days following the promulgation of regulations under the act. This will give government the power to act on such matters. Honourable members will note, when they see the dangerous goods regulations, that they are very comprehensive, very detailed and will fill many gaps that exist in the Northern Territory as far as the handling, storage, packaging and transportation of dangerous goods and substances are concerned.

Lastly, I would like to touch briefly on 2 matters outside my portfolio areas which I think will be significant for the balance of this session of the Legislative Assembly. The Administrator mentioned that the government was close to having a bill for a new Local Government Act prepared for introduction. This totally new act, drawn up virtually from a blank sheet of paper, is the result of several years of work, which I was involved in myself some years ago as a former Minister for Community Development. Most of the work, naturally enough, has been done by officers in the public service and in local government itself in the Territory. At present, local governments are unduly constrained by the existing legislation and it is time they were cut free of much of the red tape that they have to contend with. I think that some of our requirements for local government bookkeeping and so on are almost a nonsense. Obviously, others recognised that and that is why it was agreed that the Local Government Act should be totally overhauled.

The other area which I believe the Territory is turning a corner in is that of horticultural production. After years of what many people have seen as wasted effort, it appears to me that sufficient knowledge of our soils, weather, pests and plant species has now been assembled to enable our farmers to produce top quality crops regularly and in sufficient quantities to place the Territory increasingly on the map as a food producer. I am delighted with this. I have been one of those who have never acknowledged the view often expressed that the Territory would never get anywhere with agriculture, particularly in the north. I have never accepted that. I believe that we started undertaking agricultural development seriously in the north of Australia probably 70 or 100 years after the states and we are simply that much behind them. We now have the benefits of modern technology but I am sure it took decades of research and heartbreak and many broken farmers to realise the potential of the areas that Australia now crops regularly and very successfully year after year because man has that rapport with the elements to enable him to do it. But it was not done in 10 or 20 years; it was done over a long time and we are getting to that stage with our research. As I say, we have the benefits of modern technology, pesticides, fertilisers and knowledge generally, and that will help us do it faster than they did it but we are starting a long way behind them.

Finally, I think that the dark cloud on the horizon - and if it is going to rain, it will rain in the next 6 months from that dark cloud - is the financial arrangements with the Commonwealth. I think that they are under threat. I think this is a shame because the Memorandum of Understanding was not designed to phase out. It has no termination clauses in it and it was envisaged that it would stay in place until such time as the Territory's constitutional situation changed. One presumes that that means at statehood or that the financial arrangements presumably could be altered if the Commonwealth decided to hand over uranium mining to the Territory - uranium being a significant revenue earner which is largely denied us at present - but until such time as there was the change, the arrangements were to stay in place. I fear that the relativities review, into which the Territory was dragged amid great protest last year, will give the federal government the excuse that it has been looking for for some time - a reason to grapple with the Northern

Territory's existing arrangements and change them. Of course, we will watch the scene very closely. As a government, we will spend whatever resources we need to preserve the memorandum. I must be optimistic and hope that it all comes out well. That is the only dark cloud I see. Other than that, I think the Territory has a great term ahead of it and I am pleased to be part of it.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, in making my comments in the address-in-reply debate, it is my intention to cover a number of matters that I believe will be important during the next 12 months in the area of mines and energy. I will then comment on Aboriginal affairs and some local issues.

As part of the reorganisation of the parliamentary Labor Party, the area of mines and energy is now my responsibility. I look forward to the opportunity to become closely involved in these industries which will be very important for the future of the Territory. I also look forward to establishing close working relationships with the hardworking people who are in those industries. Because of the nature of my electorate, I hope to bring to this area an ability to look not only at the legitimate interests of miners but also at the interests of Aboriginal and rural people of the Territory. I hope that I can contribute to establishing workable relationships in this area.

The first matter I would like to speak about today is electricity prices. I express my concern at the proposal to increase electricity prices from 1 February 1985 and to increase those rates by 2% each quarter this year and for the first quarter of 1986. That represents an increase of 19.1% between the rate that applied at 30 January 1985 and the rate that will apply in January 1986. I am concerned that part of this scheme to raise electricity rates is simply to put the rate of each unit of electricity at a level which will allow the government to bring in its new gas-generated electricity at a level comparable with the oil-generated costs. That comparability will only occur, of course, because it has boosted the price of oil-generated electricity. I will be coming back to that issue during this sittings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in the last year, we have seen a number of medium-sized mining developments being developed and some of these will begin to pay significant contributions in royalties through the government's profits-based minerals tax. This is pleasing but I feel that, on the basis of firm experience of the effects of this tax, we should return to an earlier proposal to review those royalties in the light of that experience.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I refer now to the question of the Territory's proposed gas pipeline. I am afraid that, in spite of what we have just heard from the minister, we have not been hearing as much about this project as we used to. I presume, and I hope, that the project is proceeding. As I noted, I have some doubts about just what is happening in the negotiations on this matter. It seems that either the transport costs or the actual gas price that is ultimately agreed to might be a little bit more than some of those optimistic predictions that the former Minister for Mines and Energy, now the Chief Minister, seemed to make every day last year. Certainly, I hope that this is not the case because the Australian Labor Party has a strong and long-lasting interest in the concept of central Australian gas being used to generate power in the Territory. I believe that the original concept was recommended by Mr Jon Isaacs, the former Labor leader in this Assembly. It is interesting to reflect that, while the current government is now very keen to run with this issue, it was in fact only galvanised into action by a proposition put to it by a consortium rather than by its own efforts or long-term vision. The pipeline could have benefits for Territorians and I think that one area the government should pay special attention to is the direct use of natural gas as a heat source for some

industrial processes. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has already mentioned the need for the introduction of industrial rates for electricity use. I believe that this same concept should be looked at in relation to the direct use of natural gas from the pipeline. That is a matter I will be returning to in later debates.

The last matter I wish to raise in relation to mines and energy is the question of rural power supplies. This is particularly pertinent in the Darwin rural area and, while I cannot claim today to be complete master of all the data, I am certainly disturbed by a number of claims that have been made to me that NTEC is seeking to charge block owners an installation fee which will generate total revenue of almost twice the actual cost. I appreciate the concept of average costing and it may be difficult to apply that here. However, the incomplete information that I have leads me to express some concern.

I shall not go into great detail in relation to mines and energy. I am not pretending to be an expert in the field. I am merely highlighting some of the matters that I have heard a few points about that I will be trying to examine in the near future when I hope to be able to organise a briefing for myself through the honourable minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as shadow minister for Aboriginal affairs, I would like to give the Assembly a few of my ideas on the current negotiations in the field of national Aboriginal land rights. Members will be aware that, over the last 18 months or so, there has been much public discussion and comment. Along with this have been more detailed private negotiations between various federal, state and territory ministers and interested parties such as the land councils, mining and pastoral groups and the NAC. At this stage, there is a position paper going the rounds that has gone to the federal Cabinet and now has the status of a preferred position. It is currently intended that this paper will form the basis of further discussions leading to the possibility of legislation in the August sittings of the federal parliament. I know that the Chief Minister has had the opportunity, on several occasions, to hold discussions with the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I would like to encourage members, especially those such as the member for Victoria River who have substantial numbers of people who will be vitally affected by this issue in their own electorates, to look very closely at this document and give us the benefit of their views.

Before I go on, Mr Deputy Speaker, I wonder if I might call the state of this Assembly to your attention. I believe that we do not have a quorum and I think that it is particularly disgusting that, in the first sittings at which we have a new Leader of Government Business that, with the Government Whip tied up in other duties, he has been unable to organise something in that area.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no quorum. Ring the bells.

Order! A quorum is present. The honourable member will continue.

MR EDE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I thank those honourable members who have come to receive the benefit of my words.

It is no secret that I am not a supporter of national uniform land rights. I believe that land rights, as we know them in the Northern Territory, are not necessarily the best way in which to alleviate the very real problems that Aboriginal people have in southern cities and rural towns in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. I am not in any way belittling the problems of those people when I say that, in the Northern Territory and northern parts of Western Australia and South Australia, there is a far higher level of ceremony carried

out as a normal part of people's ordinary lives. There are many parts of the Northern Territory Land Rights Act which are based philosophically upon the recognition of Aboriginal culture. The danger for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is that their needs will be submerged in an attempt to find some sort of a national norm. The resultant legislation could very easily be welcomed by nobody, black or white, southerner or northerner. From comments from mining groups, Northern Territory land councils and NAC members elsewhere, I am afraid that we appear now to be in this situation. I have proposed, and will continue to push for, a national act which sets out basic principles and methods whereby states can be encouraged over a period of time to work out acts which will adequately cover their own particular situation. State and territory acts, as they now exist, would be incorporated in the new federal act giving them the force of federal law. This would go as far as possible to ensure that process continues. In effect, any resiling from the provisions of the federal or state act would require the will of both levels of government. I do not take the line that the NT act is sacrosanct or inviolate but I insist that change be based upon a real knowledge of the basic principles of the act and how it works in practice. Too often, change has been mooted for blatant political motives designed more to thwart the beneficial effects of the act than anything else.

During the life of this Assembly, I will continue to maintain the discussions occurring now amongst closely involved groups to work out solutions to perceived problem areas. Any act can be sabotaged if one of the major parties is willing to go to great lengths to frustrate its operation. It worries me that there have been instances in the recent past where groups have withdrawn from negotiations that were moving quite successfully towards a conclusion under the act. They have done this, not because they were unhappy with what they would achieve in negotiations - they had previously negotiated solutions under the act - but because they thought they could do better in a political forum.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to add my voice to that of many people in my electorate who are calling upon the parties to sit down together and work out negotiated solutions. Most certainly, I will make myself available to assist in finding those solutions. Of course, the issue of land rights is only one aspect of a portfolio as broad as that of Aboriginal affairs. I have had discussions already with the Minister for Community Development, a large part of whose department is devoted to areas covered within my portfolio. I am hoping to be able to have informal discussions with other ministers, such as those for lands, housing and health, on areas within their portfolios. I have had the honour of many informal discussions on areas of mutual interest with the Minister for Education and I hope that these will continue.

I would like to pass on to a few items within my electorate. I do this quite unashamedly because it is not an area which is covered by a very good media network and one of the few ways they have of getting their views before politicians is often through occasions such as this. In respect of roads, I would like to ask the government to look very closely at the continuation of the bitumen out towards Yuendumu. Some work has been done in that area but no work was programmed this year nor any last year. It is an area with a population of well over 1000. The gold mine is starting out at the Granites, a very highly prospective area. An increasing tourist trade is moving through there across to Western Australia. It is also part of the only high-level road route from Alice Springs to Darwin and it deserves a fairly high priority for the continued extension of the bitumen. It has yet to reach my electorate.

On the same subject, I mention the upgrading of the road from the Tanami to Lajamanu. As I have mentioned, I have experienced the problems that very high

loads have in proceeding up the highway. You will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, an area where there are a number of places where the old telephone lines cross the road and these preclude the passage of any sort of high load. The trucks have to go west through Yuendumu out to the Tanami, on to Lajamanu and come back along the route that way. However, as you will be aware, the southern section goes through some very wet areas before it gets into the blacksoil plains which become absolutely impassable as soon as there is a bit of rain on them.

I would like this government to encourage the Western Australian government to upgrade its section over the border. Ours is not too bad when compared to the Western Australian road and again I would like to support moves being made by yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the member for Elsey and the member for Braitling on urging an upgrading of the Tobermorey Boulia Road which is a continuation of the Plenty Highway to the east. I believe that the upgrading of this road will result in a very significant increase in tourist numbers both from South Australia and from New South Wales. It will gradually develop as a greater circle route which will be promoted as rock and reef tours. People will no longer have the experience that I had recently - that extremely boring trip from Mt Isa heading east on a substandard road. The road going out through my electorate is much more interesting as you will know yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is quite attractive to go across through Boulia at the headwaters of the channel country and then through the central Queensland area, the coal towns and across to Mackay and arrive at the reef. The other point is the upgrading of the Stuart Highway. Considerable work has been done on this and I applaud that. However, the area from Ti Tree south is still very much below standard and is quite dangerous.

The next matter that we will have to look at very seriously now is the fencing of the Stuart Highway. The number of accidents that occur and the number of dead cattle to be seen along the road indicate to me that it would be worth doing a cost-benefit study on that project. If we had definite cattle crossings to assist those pastoralists who have their bores and watering points close to the road, with a double set of grids to provide a genuine cattle crossing instead of the cattle extending up and down the whole road, we would do much to improve safety. With the upgrading of the southern highway, there will be a significant increase in numbers of southern people bringing their own cars and caravans. I think it would be fair to say that many of them will not be experienced in the hazards of cattle on the roads at night. We could have a serious increase in the number of accidents unless we can work out some solution such as fencing the highway.

Water supplies are moving along at a reasonable rate. We are getting much more water but there are places like Bonya where it is still completely inadequate. The main emphasis will soon move from the actual bores to upgrading the storage and reticulation systems which are still hopelessly inadequate. As I said before, the absolutely basic minimum must be 20 L of water within 20 feet of where people are situated.

I am very happy to be able to report to the Assembly that, since the last time I spoke on an address in reply, the number of telephones in my electorate has doubled. We now have 10! That is progress! There are still no telephones at places like Ti Tree Station. There are no public telephones at places such as Stirling. I have expressed concern before about the DRCS planning system. From the amount of work that I have done so far, I do not believe that the planning for the numbers of telephones that will be required is adequate. However, I understand from recent discussions that I have had with Telecom that it is now in the process of recruiting people who will go out into the field

on a longer-term basis than the lightning trips that have been made in the past and start developing some firmer plans.

Unemployment in my electorate remains terrible. Some 80% to 90% of the people are unemployed. It is tragic to go into a community and see young people, who have been persuaded to continue their education at Yirrara, come back and find that there is no way they can get employment. There is then a tendency for those kids to indulge in pretty heavy drinking and what they call cruising - charging around the countryside. Before you know it, they are in their mid-to-late 20s and already have a long history of unemployment and it becomes very difficult at that stage for people to change their lifestyle from one of non-working to one of working. I believe that it has to be tackled effectively from the time the student leaves school so that he moves into further training, through TAFE or something like that, and obtains on-the-job experience so that he can become an effective member of the community. The programs at the moment are of a stop-start nature. We will be talking about that later.

One of the problems is the economic model that exists in the Territory. If you develop an economic model, you will find that there is an enormous leakage, as they call it, from the multiplier factor on those communities where a very small proportion of the money that goes into those communities actually stays in the communities through employment and through generating further jobs and a further flow of money. It goes in and it comes straight back out, which is to the benefit of Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine but of very little benefit to the community beyond the initial influx of money. I hope to be able to develop a liaison with the new Minister for Industry and Small Business and to ask him to set up a unit designed specifically to help small business set up in Aboriginal communities. Many of the communities that I have talked to have had problems with the government tendering system. However, it would be of significant benefit to the government, as well as the community, if many of those tenders were let on a local basis in the community. This is something that we may be able to work on over the coming year.

There have been some improvements over the last year in housing. However, movements have been more in temporary housing than in permanent housing. We have received some 25 new houses in the last year but that, in itself, will only handle three-quarters of the natural population growth in the area. In effect, while we are not slipping back as fast as we were, we are still going backwards. At the moment, I estimate from travelling around that some 60% of the people do not have permanent housing and some 20% have housing which is completely inadequate.

Very briefly, Mr Deputy Speaker, and looking towards the future, I hope that I will be able to convince this government to do more work on certain crops which I will refer to at this stage as subsistence crops. This is the development of bush tucker. Looking towards the stage where we are moving away from welfare and on to an economic base within the community, it is unrealistic to talk immediately in terms of market gardening. It is my experience, in this country and overseas, that people do not look at market gardening until they look at those particular items as being of benefit to themselves in their own daily life. The first step has to be towards a level of subsistence gardening. When people are fulfilling their own needs adequately through their subsistence gardening, some will then realise that a little extra of some crop may be saleable and they can start to augment this subsistence economy with a cash economy. I refer specifically to the bush potato, Mr Deputy Speaker, with which, no doubt, you are familiar. One particular variety recently received a bit of coverage in the national press where it was stated that it was so rare that it

had not yet been named. For the benefit of members of the Assembly, it has an Aboriginal name, but no one had asked what it was. It is a particular type of potato, the plant of which grows to a diameter of some 80 feet. The fruit itself is up to 1 foot to 1 foot 3 inches in diameter. It is a delicious fruit and I believe from what I have heard that there is some genetic link between it and the New Guinea sweet potato. We could have a crop which has all the benefits of the New Guinea potato and is also drought resistant.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not know what the motive was in giving me this chair. I am forced to do what the honourable member for MacDonnell does and stand behind it. I suspect that it is the training chair for the Speaker because it is second only to the Speaker's chair for lack of comfort.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is pleasing to hear of the continued development strategies for the Northern Territory that were announced by His Honour the Administrator in his speech to this Assembly. No one will deny the achievements of this government over the years since responsibilities were handed to it. This present government, under the leadership of Ian Tuxworth, has already shown its ability and determination to think clearly with a new-age attitude - and I know that that is a very popular description of the thinking of the Territory government - and put its proposals into concrete development. It is a pity that we did not have more new-age thinking. In my electorate of Victoria River, the opening of new mining ventures, the projected proposals for tourist developments, the freeing up of land for agriculture and the ADMA project - and I could go on - are all signs of the commitment to development and preparedness to stick the collective neck out that this government has shown in order to achieve a viable and fulfilling future for all Territorians.

Tourism has been a significant area of development and there is no need to name the projects that are now up and running or even those in the planning stages. We all know about them; they are obvious to us all because they are mentioned in the papers every day. If I were to find criticism at all, it is that the larger developments may have in some way smothered the less significant, but not necessarily less important, small tourist developments. It is to be hoped that, in future, the Northern Territory Development Corporation will be able to assist the smaller Territory-based developer to a greater extent. I could name a few people who have had difficulty obtaining finance in the Territory to develop small tourist enterprises and would have been assisted greatly by the chance to obtain some funding from the NTDC. In many of the lesser-known tourist areas, it is likely that the small local operator will be the only interested developer. It is pleasing to me, as the member for Victoria River, that 2 such places, Stapleton Station and Daly River, were singled out for special mention. The Daly River is a beautiful place which many Darwin people visit.

The stipulation of Aboriginal equity in developments on Aboriginal land is to be applauded and encouraged. I hope that, if we have development in the Daly River area, Aboriginal people are involved in that because it is something that was very close to me. I was very close to a very small and at times successful tourist development there run by the Aboriginal people. I would like to think that that sort of thing will be encouraged in the future.

Primary production is probably the major income-producing industry in my electorate. There are other industries which are not income producing. It is an area of intense interest to me. I am strongly supportive of this government's policies with regard to ADMA and I have few misgivings about the way the authority has developed. My one major concern in this area is that the

contract farmers should be made aware as soon as possible of the price and the terms of purchase of the farms which they occupy. The experience that these farmers have gained and their commitment to Territory agriculture should not be lost because of any laxity on the part of this government.

The crop contract scheme has provided a major boost to farmers in the Territory. Many of these farmers lack nothing in experience of tropical agriculture but, because of uncertain markets and perhaps shortage of ready cash, they have been wary of growing new or bigger crops. I trust that this scheme will be expanded and maintained until agricultural markets are stable. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Primary Production say that his idea of ADMA was that it would develop into the marketing area and that development would be taken over by primary production. It is something that I have been saying for about 12 months at least and I think it is the obvious way to go.

Agriculture and horticulture in any area are at best uncertain as a regular source of income. They are subject to the vagaries of weather, blight and pests. However, I personally have complete faith in the capacity and the tenacity of the farmers in the Territory, particularly those farmers whom I am familiar with in the Victoria River area, and the commitment of our government to put agriculture in the Northern Territory on a sound financial footing. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Mines and Energy say that he felt very strongly this way because I was beginning to think that I was, in some ways, a voice in the wilderness. But it seems that many people believe that agriculture is now up and running. Some people are saying that it still has a long way to go before it will have proved itself. I think that we have reached a stage where we have proved to ourselves that agriculture and horticulture are goers. I think that we need now to put them on a sound financial footing. This of course will add another block in the building of a solid Territory economy.

The release of buffalo breeding blocks under development covenants is another part of the development of primary production and it should in time pay very big dividends. There is no doubt that buffalo do well. I have no doubt that the buffalo breeding blocks in time will prove a very viable and worthwhile enterprise for those people who have taken them up.

For some time, I have been concerned about the way that the B-TEC program has been forced to operate in this country. Because of the size and topography of the cattle areas in the northern part of Australia, the largely uncontrolled herds prior to the B-TEC program coming into effect and the fact that we have been tied to a time limit it is inevitable that both funds and cattle are wasted. The wholesale shooting of cattle left in paddocks, whether through lack of time, money or interest, is having and will continue to have a long-term detrimental effect on the cattle industry. The cost of restocking many of the cleared properties is horrendous. Many will never be restocked under their present ownership. The bull purchase incentive scheme, while a very worthwhile initiative, will go only part way towards alleviating the problem.

There are a number of meatworks in the Victoria River electorate. One at Point Stuart did not open this year and that was partly, if not totally, because of industrial action. There was a lot of trouble at Meneling and other places. Fortunately, some of the operators were able to keep trouble out of their area. But there have been promises made by the unions that the trouble will be there this year. The only thing that will do will be to create bigger problems for the cattle people in those areas. They are very worried about it. Currently, Katherine is a doubtful goer. Point Stuart has gone. The only ones operating in that area now are the ones at Victoria River crossing and Meneling. They are both doing quite well but, with industrial action, we might see those closed as well.

The development of export markets in South-east Asia is a linchpin for Territory development. The possibilities are endless for two-way trade arrangements with our near northern neighbours. The eventual possibilities for the gas pipeline go far beyond the delivery of gas for power to Darwin and other Territory centres. For the first time, we can see with some clarity the possibility of becoming a viable centre of power-intensive industries. The potential for the distribution of gas to other parts of Australia can no longer be overlooked.

The Territory can only benefit from the present attitude of the federal government on Aboriginal land rights. The land rights legislation that we have lived with since 1976 has created friction between citizens of the Northern Territory. I know there are people who deny that there has been friction. I personally have felt that friction. I have lived very close to Aboriginal people and I have many very good Aboriginal friends. But there has been friction; I feel it in myself and I hear about it from others. We cannot deny that friction exists. Any continuation of this friction can only be seen as working against the benefit of all Territorians. The special laws relating to Aboriginal land are abhorrent to people who believe that all citizens should be equal under the law. This government, by its decision not to proceed with a number of Aboriginal land bills that were before this Assembly at the last sittings, will hopefully bring about an atmosphere where inequities and inequalities of land ownership and tenure can be settled through reasonable negotiation.

The scheme announced recently to extend power reticulation to consumers within 5 km of existing grid distribution will go a long way towards assisting people who live on the outskirts of regional centres and have sought this service for many years. I hope that this will be extended to other areas. I can think of a couple in my own electorate. Daly River is one. There is more power available on one Aboriginal community than it needs and it would be very simple to extend it to a number of other people along the river. Of course, Batchelor is another one. I think Batchelor is probably already included in the scheme.

I will touch on the problem of juvenile crime at another time. It does not exist only in the Darwin area. It exists in the Victoria River electorate as well. I would like to talk about that at some future time.

I look forward with anticipation to the next few years of development. I was pleased to see that there will be more consultation between the Department of Mines and Energy and the Conservation Commission. There have been some problems in my electorate in that regard. I think that any consultation between those 2 departments will go a long way to avoiding the sorts of things that have happened recently at Woodcutters.

School truancy is a problem in Aboriginal communities. I do not know whether it is greater in Aboriginal communities than it is in other communities. Certainly, in some of the communities in my electorate, it is a serious problem. It is brought about by all those same things that bring about vandalism, boredom and whatever else. There is very little future in education for Aboriginal people because unemployment is a serious problem. I do not know how we get around it; I do not know how we will fix it. I just think that, in most Aboriginal communities, the chances of Aboriginal people in the foreseeable future being engaged in any sort of worthwhile employment are just about non-existent. As they move out to more remote areas and outstations, it will become more and more of a problem. I do not wonder that they question the purpose of education. It is something that I do not know the answer to but I hope we can find answers.

I want to take up something that was raised by the member for Wanguri with regard to visits of chaplains to the hospital. My experience of the Royal Darwin Hospital is that there are chaplains there every day of the week. Certainly, when I have been at the hospital, I have been visited every day of the week. That was not because they knew I was there but because they have come in in the normal course of events. If this is already happening, there is no need for government to interfere. I think it is being done effectively.

We are still looking for improved roads in my electorate. I hope that the Minister for Transport and Works will take note of this. There are a number of things that need to be done in the near future. I would like to think that we can do something for a particular Aboriginal community for a particular celebration it will have this year. But things are not looking terribly bright.

The communications in the electorate of Stuart have been increased by 5 telephones. I suspect that they have increased by even fewer in Victoria River, except for some of the more developed towns along the highway. They may have picked up a few but in the bush areas telephones have not improved. I still say that the DRCS system will not be completed by 1990; it will be 1995 or 2000 or 2005. I have very little faith that it will be ready unless we really get into it.

With regard to contracts in Aboriginal communities, generally it is the policy of the Departments of Transport and Works and Community Development to give Aboriginal communities first option on contracts in their communities if they have the ability to perform them. That is looked at pretty closely by experts. In my experience with Aboriginal communities, if they have had the ability or the desire, they have been able to pick up contracts and do very well out of them. I commend that. I think that we should be looking at making sure that more Aboriginal communities do this sort of thing for themselves. They should become involved in contracts. Where they do perform, we should support them all the way.

As I said, I look forward with anticipation to the next few years of development. I think it is great that we have a government that is prepared to look to the future with freedom. Ideas are born, developed and come to fruition when a government is prepared to take off its blinkers, and this government has done that. His Honour's speech bears witness to this and I have no hesitation in supporting his remarks.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to raise a point that was taken up last night by the member for Wagaman. I wish to put it into perspective and to advise the Leader of the Opposition of a few salient points.

The Leader of the Opposition is purported to have made the statement: 'I see all the clowns are here. All we need is the ringmaster'. When the comment was first made, he was outside in a public forum. The Deputy Chief Minister was present as were the member for Koolpinyah and myself. The member for Wagaman last night referred to the fact that we are really thick-skinned and that there has been in this Assembly in the past too much proffering of personal insults. That is not the point that I wish to raise tonight because, quite frankly, I do

not agree. We are in here to put up our heads. If we put up our heads, we expect to get them shot off. As the honourable Leader of the Opposition himself has stated on many occasions, that is just part of the job. I do not have any problem with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition outside the Assembly. In fact, what we continually cop is that we are half-smart or too smart for our own good.

However, those comments of the Leader of the Opposition were the comments of someone who this morning proffered to the Assembly the various...

Mr Bell: People in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I would advise the member for MacDonnell to listen to what I have to say because I think in making comment...

Mr Bell: I do not think it is worth it.

Mr HANRAHAN: ... he is doing the Leader of the Opposition a great disservice. The comment comes from the experts of omission. The honourable member's officers are experts in the mix and match and the selecting of statements to suit themselves. The issue that I take with that comment about the clowns and the ringmaster is that, in front of invited guests and every member of this Assembly assembled, the Leader of the Opposition chose to repeat the statement. It was before official proceedings started but certainly within clear earshot of Bishop Wood and Bishop O'Loughlin. It was clearly audible over there.

Mr Bell: It is not contrary to standing orders.

Mr HANRAHAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I make no point about standing orders. The point I make is that the Leader of the Opposition has, on past occasions in this Assembly, vigorously defended the principles of Westminster government. He has on many occasions huffed and puffed in a very hurt and distressed manner about the lack of decorum in this Assembly by members of the government. In making the statement that 'the clowns are present and all we need is the ringmaster', I am quite happy to accept a statement in reply from the Leader of the Opposition that he was referring to the Chief Minister. In fact, I might clearly say that that was probably his intent. But he made the statement while the Chief Minister was present. The point I make is that the ringmaster could have only been one of 2 people if one were to put the statement in context: either His Honour the Administrator or Mr Speaker.

Might I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that it has been joked about. I do not believe that it is an issue that should be joked about. It has been reported publicly and it is a matter of public comment. I am simply saying that, in making the statement in the context that the Leader of the Opposition made it, he could have only been referring - be it voluntarily or involuntarily, I do not care - to Mr Speaker or His Honour the Administrator. I really do see that as a total contradiction. It makes his previous huffing and puffing and vitriolic defence of the Westminster principles rather laughable.

May I finish on this note. The Leader of the Opposition, on many occasions, has offered gratuitous advice to all members on this side of the Assembly. I would like to hear from him exactly what he meant and whom he was referring to as the ringmaster in the context of his statement. I repeat that it could have been only one of 2 people. I do not make the comment because we are thin-skinned. I have said that we have no problem with that at all. You

are here to put your head up and you expect to get punched. But let the Leader of the Opposition explain to this Assembly exactly whom he was referring to and take the consequences.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight in the adjournment debate I would like to raise a problem which has been occurring in Alice Springs for some time and getting progressively worse. Before I do that, I would like to comment on the remarks made by the Minister for Transport and Works concerning the proposed relocation of the sewage farm. I think we should organise a pretty big ceremony in Alice Springs when that occurs. A number of members have, from time to time, commented on the problems there: the mosquitoes and the particularly offensive smell when the wind turns. The Old Timers' Home south of town is particularly affected by that. A number of problems will occur if the entire sewage works is shifted out to the south of town, near Roe Creek. One is that the show society has lucerne under irrigation there. It is making a few bob from that. Other areas of the showground are also being irrigated from that water. I guess that is being taken into consideration. The site that has been announced worries me a little. Whilst it is not a densely-populated area, it is proposed at some later stage to locate an abattoir there. There are stockyards which are set up to conduct sales and there will be an oil refinery out there with quite a number of employees. It will create similar problems for them if the same type of sewage plant is based out there. I raise those issues for consideration. I propose at a later date asking the Minister for Transport and Works some questions concerning this.

Mr Deputy Speaker, years ago in Katherine, one would notice on air-conditioning units and on gutters white stains from the mineral content in the water. Hopefully, that problem has been solved but it is a problem that is now affecting the entire population of Alice Springs. It is becoming progressively worse because of mineral content in the water. I use the word 'mineral' with a broad brush because, according to the government department which analysed the water, it is salt. The government must now look closely at the problem because there is a huge cost being borne by the citizens in replacing various equipment ranging from domestic appliances to car parts.

I have a few items here to illustrate the point. This is an ordinary garden tap. I will pass it around so members can see what has happened at the base of this tap where the valve sits. That tap is less than 6 months old. It has had the base cut out of it. It leaks as though it has been left on. The average cost of such an item in Alice Springs is \$25 to \$30. The average householder has 2 or 3 garden taps and he is constantly replacing those taps as well as the taps inside the home. I snuck some of this material into a government department without telling it much and had it analysed. Mr Deputy Speaker, have a look at that. That is salt taken off the coil of a heating urn in my office which is used 7 days a week. That has accumulated within 6 months. This is a normal, cheap jug element. This jug element is less than 6 months old. It was taken off a jug in my office which is hardly ever used.

Mr Bell: Some people will do anything for publicity. What about your watch, Roger?

Mr VALE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am quite serious. The reason I brought these exhibits up here tonight was not to have them incorporated in Hansard but to let Top Enders know that we really do have a problem. Let me go a little bit further. The salt content of Alice Springs water must be looked at. It affects taps, showers, pipe joints, toilet systems, steam irons, electric jugs, kettles, urns, hot water services, air coolers and radiators in cars. We are already paying a high cost for water. Couple that with the constant cost of replacing

these normal household appliances and it becomes prohibitive. Another thing that has worried me for some months is the dieback in shrubs, trees and lawns. I believe that is possibly the result of the high salt content in the domestic water in central Australia.

All I am asking is for the minister to give an undertaking that he will have his Department of Transport and Works carry out an investigation in central Australia with a view to having a large filtration unit fitted on the southern edge of town to filter the water. In addition, I believe his department should also investigate whether or not this problem started when Alice Springs was hooked into the fluoridation plant several years ago. Whilst we can joke about these things, I have raised this problem because it is a serious one in central Australia and one which requires urgent investigation by the Northern Territory government.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would just like to finish in the adjournment debate this evening what I was saying when I was interrupted this morning. The student in question whom I was talking about proceeded through her 3-year course until she came to a unit called 'Mathematics EDU301'. Her failure in that course caused her hopes and aspirations to crash. As I said, she changed from a bright and confident student with every expectation of employment as a teacher to a weeping shadow of herself and a regular visitor to the doctor for nervous disorders. She became a desperate seeker of information about her status at the institute. What was this unit EDU301 that could have had such an effect on her? It was a low-level computer course including a practical lesson delivered to fellow students. It was a critical point in her academic career. She was judged pass or fail by her lecturer and her fellow students. In the third year of a diploma course, this student failed a critical test which determined whether or not she graduated. The result hinged on a secret ballot of her classmates. Some days later, she was told she had failed and that her fellow students voted, in effect, to terminate her study. She could scarcely believe this.

Later, she obtained a petition containing the signatures of all 19 of her classmates which said that they had all passed her. She appealed against this decision, as was her right. She compiled a comprehensive appeal document and grounds for an appeal were found to be justified by Theresa Ashton, the head of Academic Services. However, this was overturned by Dr Don Dickson, the head of the School of General Studies. Ms Ashton wrote to the student to tell her there were insufficient grounds for an appeal. She said that 8 students passed her and 6 failed her. Now mathematics might not be her strong point, Mr Deputy Speaker, but 8 and 6 add up to 14. What happened to the other 5 students' assessments of her? They were not to be found.

By this time, I had become involved in this matter. I was approached by a constituent, the student's father, to assist in finding out what had gone wrong with his daughter. He could not understand how it had happened and he doubted that his daughter was telling him the truth about her circumstances. In any event, she was deeply distressed and the talk from the Department of Education Studies was about termination or possibly some remedial course, but she could forget about 1984 for employment purposes because she would not get the chance to sit for the critical examination for another 7 months.

I cannot recall the date, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I recall making 3 telephone calls to the institute on behalf of my constituent. That was nearly 12 months ago. The first was to a Dr Holm, whom I knew, and he told me that he was compiling a report which would be placed in Dr Ingram's hands and I was to ring Dr Ingram to find out the result of that report. I rang Dr Ingram about

her failure rating at that stage. The second time I rang Dr Ingram was about the remedial program which she envisaged for the student to undertake. I sought to know the circumstances of the student, what was going to happen to her, some details about the remedial course being considered and whether she would be given the chance to graduate from the course in which she clearly had performed well. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that I questioned Dr Ingram in great detail. I wanted to know everything I could about this matter. I wanted to know how it was possible for any student to progress through 3 years in a Diploma of Teaching course only to be assessed as not having the mathematical skills of a Year 7 child and that at the very end of the course. However, I did not seek to change her grading. No doubt, I upset Dr Ingram and other lecturers in the Department of Education Studies. No doubt, they did not like being questioned and resented my inquiries. But all honourable members would know that representing constituents effectively involves upsetting people, particularly people who believe they are beyond question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this morning, I tabled a statutory declaration of an interview between the girl's father and a lecturer who was involved. I think all honourable members have had the opportunity to read that particular declaration. I would simply like to say that I have known the lady involved in that interview for a number of years and she has devoted a great deal of her life to education in the Northern Territory. In my opinion, she is a very good academic. When the rest of the academic people have taken sabbatical leave and travelled over to America, Europe and Canada, as is their entitlement, this particular lady has spent a great deal of time at Umbakumba showing her dedication to the development of education in the Northern Territory. I do not believe that she should have been placed in a position whereby she had to stand up, in Dr Ingram's absence, to an appointment which was made 2 weeks beforehand but at a time when Dr Ingram was too busy to talk to the father. I think honourable members would agree with me that this demonstrates the attitude of the lecturers of that department perfectly. They felt that they were accountable to nobody at any time and they could not be questioned. They would not be called to account. There was no higher authority and they reigned supreme.

I ask honourable members to place themselves in the position of the parents of the student in a similar circumstance at the Darwin Institute of Technology. I also ask them to place themselves in the position of a member approached by a constituent in similar circumstances. I would suggest that any member who did not take up such a matter would be derelict in his or her duty. If members will not take on issues because they are too sensitive, they should declare here and now, for the benefit of their constituents, which issues they will or will not take on. I would like to see their how-to-vote cards next election. They would look like a used car warranty: 'I will represent you on these, these and these, but I will not represent you on these, these and these'. It would be interesting reading indeed.

I regret nothing of this matter other than that I could not help my constituent and his daughter obtain satisfaction through their approach to me. The advice that I gave them at all times was to work within the system and to utilise the appeals provisions which were available to them. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would do it all again tomorrow. I would fight the mudslinging and the attempt to stain my character and integrity. The allegations raised by the institute lecturers did no credit to them at all. Rather than raise the matter of academic freedom, they have raised the infinitely more important matter of the right of the public to question bureaucratic procedures. The public elects its parliamentary members to represent them. It does not elect academics to play God.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Dr James and his friends do not think that this matter should be raised in the Legislative Assembly at all. In a letter dated 25 February 1985 and addressed to the Minister for Education, Dr James said: 'With respect, may we point out that the Assembly is not an appropriate forum. Its expertise and independence are too readily called into question on such matters'. In other words, he said honourable members do not know enough to talk about this issue or even to hear about it and, in any case, their integrity is dubious.

Let me quote from another part of the letter: 'As far as Mr Coulter is concerned, it is our view that he should have approached the principal of the college and not individual staff. If he had observed such a procedure, his conduct would have been unexceptional'. In the dictionary that is on the Clerk's table, Mr Deputy Speaker, you will find that the word 'unexceptional' means 'perfectly satisfactory or adequate'. What Dr James is now saying is that I did not do anything wrong except that I approached staff and not the principal. That is a far cry from the beginning of the public debate. As you will recall, Dr James and his colleagues accused me of bending the rules and trying to change the grades of a student. Again, I would remind you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that Dr James and nobody else started this issue. It seems to me that my accusers are pedalling backwards so fast that they are in danger of disappearing altogether.

To continue the story of the student, she duly underwent a remedial course and sat for the EDU301 examination again in November last year. Documents from the institute showed that she was awarded a pass in late November. However, she was not told that she had passed until mid-February 1985, and that is a matter of concern to the Minister for Education. My inquiries some 12 months ago were in April and she had sat for the exam in that year in November as well. Yet they were still deciding whether the student had passed or not in April of the following year.

She was employed, conditionally, as a probationary teacher pending the arrival of her marks and I understand the principal of her school is delighted with her teaching abilities. Mr Deputy Speaker, that is the story of this so-called political interference. I could speak at length on other matters concerning this student which personally I find most disturbing but that is probably something for the Minister for Education.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would commence by briefly suggesting to the member for Braintree that there is a very good seating process available for taps like that. I have used them a number of times in the bush myself. At the time I used them, I would not have been in contravention of the Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Act but they come in very handy. It is a tap and a seat that can be screwed in. It is only half-an-hour's work even for an extraordinarily unhandy handyman such as myself.

Unfortunately, I cannot respond to the idiocy of the Leader of Government Business with quite the same jocularly. Mr Deputy Speaker, I would pass over it if it were not such extraordinarily unprincipled hypocrisy. Unprincipled hypocrisy has evidently become the hallmark of the honourable member for Flynn. His capacity for thoroughly unwarranted self-satisfaction generally is so extraordinarily repulsive that one likes to make as few comments about it as possible. I say 'unprincipled hypocrisy' on the basis of his comments. He attested in debate today that he was not interested in principles and he has demonstrated that sufficiently frequently in this Assembly. His hypocrisy, of course, is to round in those tones on the Leader of the Opposition for a comment that I do not think was taken badly by anybody. If it was taken badly by

anybody, perhaps the honourable member could quietly advise the Leader of the Opposition in order to make good any offence but I doubt that it gave offence to anybody.

There are 2 matters I wish to raise in the adjournment today. The first refers to a subject that has been aired to some extent in the media in relation to the gazettal of a special purposes lease for the storage and disposal of dangerous goods in my electorate at the 16-mile stock reserve, north of Alice Springs, on Bond Springs Station. This was gazetted on 22 February 1985. For the benefit of honourable members, it is over Northern Territory Portion 2410.

There are a couple of important questions that need to be asked in this regard and I would appreciate it if the Minister for Lands could provide those answers for me. Ordinarily, I would have raised these matters during question time but, in the 3 days of sittings so far, because of the outrageous behaviour of the government in the intervening period, we have not had the benefit of question time. In regard to this particular matter, I have 3 questions.

The first relates to the reason for the change of the issue of this lease from Northern Territory Portion 1948 to Northern Territory Portion 2410. I am advised that, in fact, the land first chosen by the Department of Mines and Energy for this particular purpose was Northern Territory Portion 1948 rather than Northern Territory Portion 2410. I would appreciate hearing from the honourable minister exactly why that change was necessary. I note in the annual report for 1983-84 of the Department of Mines and Energy that, in the few paragraphs on its operation in the southern region of the Territory, it mentions that 'investigations were carried out to determine a site for a disposal area for deteriorated and unwanted chemicals'. The report went on to say: 'A location north of Alice Springs was identified and efforts were begun to acquire'. Some questions need to be asked about the administration of this. If the Department of Mines and Energy was considering that area and subsequently there was a gazettal of a different portion of land, I think the minister has a responsibility to let us know exactly why this change was required. That is my first question.

The second question is whether the minister was aware that a claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act has been in place for 4 years over Northern Territory Portion 2410. I am interested to find out whether he was aware that a number of families have been preparing a claim under the Land Rights Act for this area. I hasten to add that I have no desire to accuse the minister of bad faith in this matter. I take at their face value comments that he has made in this Assembly saying that he wishes to make negotiations in this regard much more amicable than they have been in the past. I mentioned yesterday that I welcomed such an approach and that I hoped that it was possible for it to continue. I suggest that, in this regard, the honourable minister would do well to find out the exact reasons why this particular lease was given over an area which had been claimed under the Land Rights Act.

If he was not aware of it, and I am prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt, he has an obligation to find out what is wrong with administrative processes that allow gazettal to go ahead to that extent when there is a claim under the Land Rights Act. Of course, if he was aware of it and he is attempting to subvert the operations of the Land Rights Act, that would be very sad and quite clearly contrary to the aspirations that he has outlined in this Assembly for himself and for the government. It should be mentioned that they were of course the tactics of the previous government. If those tactics are behind us, well and good.

For the benefit of the absent but honourable minister, I think it is worth pointing out to him that, before he was a member of this Assembly, there were some quite outrageous activities of the previous government in this regard and I would refer him to my comments in regard to the attempt to subvert the Lake Amadeus Land Claim by alienating Northern Territory Portion 1097. However, we will regard that as history at this stage but I would adjure him again to consult the Parliamentary Record for his own enlightenment.

There is a second matter that I wish to address. I see that I have only a very short time to do it in, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I will attempt to adumbrate a difficulty in relation to the drilling for gas in the Finke Gorge National Park. I was spending a most enjoyable couple of days in my electorate travelling along the edge of the Krichauff Range from Wallace Rock Hole to visit a number of outstations when an old man said to me that they were drilling for gas up in the creek and that perhaps I should go and have a look at it. Taking his advice, I did so and travelled up the road by the creek for a few kilometres where I saw a rig operating. I did not stop and talk to anybody. Everybody about seemed to be fairly busy and it looked as though the last thing they wanted to do was to receive a visit from the local member.

I thought nothing more of it driving back out and continuing on my electorate duties. I was surprised to hear that, subsequently, it became an issue of some considerable public importance. Being the conscientious local member that I am, I decided to investigate more closely what the difficulties were. I discovered a quite surprising situation. The Finke Gorge National Park, Mr Deputy Speaker, you may be surprised to discover, is in fact not one national park but 2. One section of that national park is held under section 5 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act and another section is held under section 12 of that act. What of that, you may very well ask, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am sure that Wagaman does not abound in national parks but MacDonnell does and I was surprised to find this surprising duality. Of course, in the strict terms of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, the gas drilling in Ellery Creek is not illegal. There is no requirement for parks held under section 5 of that act for plans of management to be in place before mining or exploration can be carried out. That is surprising. I wonder how many members opposite were aware of that. We hear frequent comments about the importance of tourism but very little about the need to conserve the very things that visitors come to the Northern Territory for.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in case you think I am drawing a long bow, let me remind you that the beautiful Palm Valley and Cycad Gorge are in the same area of that national park as the area which was being drilled. No plan of management is required. It would be quite easy to drill in that particular area. A ministerial decision is all that would be required. I see I am running out of time. There are a few further points that I would like to make in this regard. I will continue my remarks at a later stage.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to talk about some unfortunate comments by the absent but nonetheless honourable Leader of the Opposition and the behaviour of his party stalwarts in relation to a transient camp on Rocklands Drive in early January this year. Darwin City Council records will show that I have taken steps over a period of at least 6 years to take appropriate action to have the campers relocated to a more suitable area such as Bagot or Kulaluk. In that time, I have never created an atmosphere where anybody could allege that I have tried to create racial tension.

During the past 8 months, incidents allegedly created by people living in the camp were certainly coming to a point where I could see that feelings were

white hot and somebody would be hurt. I therefore took what I believe was appropriate action and I spoke to the then Chief Minister, the Commissioner of Police, the Minister for Health and a person representing the Department of Health, Dr Ella Stack, who was of course Lord Laylor of the Darwin City Council when I previously raised these issues. I spoke to the manager of the Daisy Yarmirr Hostel which is opposite the camp. I spoke to campers and to Mr Richard Baugh who, I believe, is the community adviser at Kulaluk. I also spoke to residents along Rocklands Drive. I sought information from the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and advice from a number of residents, which I will cover in a moment.

A number of incidents occurred at that time. I will cover them in a quotation from the NT News in a moment. These incidents led me to believe that more definite actions had to be taken. I spoke to the now Chief Minister and other ministers who had some responsibility in relation to this matter. Officers were asked to negotiate with the campers and entice them to move from the site. Eventually, on about 12 January, they moved to a site along Lee Point Road - into the electorate of Leanyer, I might add.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on Wednesday 19 January 1985, the NT News carried a story regarding the camp and allegations by a resident:

She said her family had been exposed to disgusting and frightening acts by the Aborigines in the past 4 months.

'My daughter was molested in our own home when an Aboriginal walked through the back door and forced her outside. Fortunately, my husband stopped him before anything serious happened. She is terrified now and has to sleep with her light on. My other daughter was so scared we arranged for her to live with my sister in Palmerston last week. Next door to us a couple in their 60s have had clothes stolen off their line and seen Aborigines from the camp urinating against their front fence. They often carry on drinking and making a lot of noise at night which has attracted both the police and ambulance'.

As a result of those incidents, one Aboriginal person was taken to hospital. I believe all of the steps I have taken, both as an alderman on the Darwin City Council and in my present position as an MLA, to have been right, ethical and certainly not racially discriminative. Mr Deputy Speaker, you can understand my absolute amazement when the Leader of the Opposition was interviewed on TV the night that that article appeared in the newspaper. He was firmly stuck in that chair behind his untidy desk - and I am sure that that is often done for effect - and not out at the camp site or in Rocklands Drive talking to the people involved. He was stuck in that ever-reliable seat that we see him on in every TV interview. He said during that interview words to the effect that it was my fault that the campers were there and that therefore I had contributed to the reported incidents. He added that, because some of the campers had been his constituents and had been at the camp since coming to Darwin, I had been wrong in not advising him of their presence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition would be much more able to speak with some knowledge of these matters if he were to get out amongst the people rather than sit at his much-photographed desk eagerly waiting for members of the media to burst through his door and say: 'Look, Bob, the government has just done so and so. What do you have to say about that?' That is his way of running an opposition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me go on. The morning after that great TV contribution, I was to learn that his ethical gremlins, in typical ALP style, had already been at work. At 4.30 pm on that same day, a message was left on my telephone recorder at my electorate office. The tone of the voice, to say the least, was aggressive. I quote: 'My name is' - and I will not mention the name - 'I am a concerned constituent living in the electorate of Wanguri and I would like to speak to Mr Don Dale, who is the member for Wanguri, about the reports of Aborigines terrifying residents along Rocklands Drive. It is obvious that Mr Dale is not in his office at 4.30 on a working day, but I would appreciate him returning my call, when it suits him of course. Could he please ring me on' - he gave a telephone number - 'I live at', and he gave an address.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on hearing the message, my secretary became upset and tried to contact the concerned and aggressive constituent on the telephone number and there was no answer. She even went to the address and found that nobody was at home. At 7.30 pm that night, she finally contacted the person. His demeanour was in keeping with the tone of his voice earlier in the day and, on his insistence, he gave her a telephone number and confirmed at least twice that that was his place of employment. At 9 am the next morning, she rang that number and there was no answer. At 9.05 am on the same day, the concerned constituent called my office and, when my secretary mentioned that she had been trying to contact him, he replied that the number was not really his work number but that he had just made that up. He did not want me to ring him at his place of work. He once again rather aggressively stated that he would ring me later that day.

It is interesting to note that this person's name was not on the electoral roll. Putting together all the facts presented to me, I thought I could smell a well-aired odour. I therefore rang a certain number, told the lady on the telephone my name and asked her for the concerned constituent by name. There was a pause - a pregnant pause, I might add - and then I was asked to hang on. After a rather lengthy wait, finally she came back and told me that he was in a meeting and would get back to me. He did get back to me later and, after congratulating me on my powers of deduction, he made the point, firstly, using the royal 'we', and then, with embarrassment changing to 'I', that he believed that I was trying to gain political brownie points by inciting racial discrimination. Yes, the telephone number I rang was that of the Leader of the Opposition and the person I spoke to was one of his staff.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this side of the political fence is often accused of racial discrimination. This incident is typical of the cancerous behaviour of members of the opposition and members of the ALP. How do I know that this member of the honourable Leader of the Opposition's staff is a member of the ALP? I relied on the honourable member himself for that information. He was on an ABC morning radio show recently defending himself from another knife man within his party. I refer of course to the best person the ALP had to contest the Jingili by-election, and dare I say the very brief shadow minister for housing and conservation, Mr Barry Cavanagh. The Leader of the Opposition said: 'I do like my staff to be active members of the Labor Party and they all are'. Well, if that is not discrimination in employment, what is?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon I would like to speak on 2 matters of concern to me. Neither of them involve my electorate; they involve my previous electorate, the electorate of Tiwi. I refer to the actions of officers of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service at the Kakadu National Park. I am basing my remarks on what I consider to be reliable information although I have not been able to check it myself. But I believe it to be true. I am speaking in relation to the recent crocodile

attack on a southern visitor to the Northern Territory at the East Alligator River.

I would like to say at the outset that this particular lady has my sympathy for her horrific accident. However, I consider that, by her foolish actions, she put herself in a situation where really a bushman or woman would not have much sympathy for her. She also allowed herself, or she was allowed, to put her life and possibly the lives of others at risk. I believe this lady was staying with ANPWS rangers and they knew where she was going. I think it is extremely foolish that a seasoned bushman would allow an uninitiated person to go where this lady went at that time of day, particularly at this time of year. I have an appreciation of the bush and natural things. Coupled with this appreciation is what I consider to be a lot of common sense and, in most cases, a rather strong sense of survival. I think other people who are used to the bush would also consider it very foolish of this particular person to place herself in that place at that particular time which resulted in the crocodile attack.

I may be wrong about what I heard but I do not think I am wrong. I heard of the subsequent actions of officers of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and I think those actions are to their detriment. They point up the difference between the people who work for the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and the people who work for the Conservation Commission. As the previous Minister for Conservation, it is my belief that, if it had been left to the Conservation Commission - and I feel certain that its advice was requested - it would have tried to catch this crocodile alive and make other arrangements for its relocation, probably at one of the crocodile farms in the Top End. However, it is my understanding that the ANPWS rangers attempted to shoot this crocodile but were unsuccessful in killing it. I do not know whether they knew which particular crocodile they were shooting at. I would suggest that there might have been a bit of guesswork there. However, I was informed that they shot and wounded one crocodile but, because they were not certain that that was the offending crocodile, they shot and wounded another crocodile. If this information is correct, it certainly should be looked into. I do not regard that as proper behaviour for rangers in that position. I hope it is not correct. I have some respect for the rangers who work for ANPWS although I do not think they can hold a candle to our Conservation Commission officers. Nevertheless, I do have some respect for them. If they are doing this to our wildlife, I think it reflects badly on them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have more to say about the ANPWS and its behaviour in Kakadu. For the life of me, I cannot see why certain people down south connected with the ANPWS advocated to have Kakadu stage 2 declared and are advocating now for Kakadu stage 3 to be declared when they cannot even control the noxious weeds in Kakadu stage 1. I refer particularly to infestations of *Mimosa pigra* and *Salvinia molesta* in Kakadu National Park.

Salvinia has been in the Magela Creek for a couple of years now. Insects may have been released in certain areas elsewhere to control its growth but my information is that there does not appear to be any biological or chemical control of *Mimosa pigra* in the Magela Creek area. For the information of honourable members, *Mimosa pigra* is a class A noxious weed south of the 14°S latitude. A class A noxious weed is one that, in the opinion of the minister, it is necessary to eradicate. It is sensible to eradicate it south of the 14th parallel but there is no point in trying to eradicate it north of that parallel because it is in such large quantities. A class B noxious weed is, in the opinion of the minister, one that it is desirable to control the spreading of. *Salvinia molesta* is a class A weed in all parts of the Northern Territory. The ANPWS is getting another large chunk of the Northern Territory in stage 2 of

Kakadu and wants stage 3 of Kakadu National Park. It has a greedy, grab-all attitude and yet it cannot do proper housekeeping and look after the noxious weeds in stage 1.

In contrast to the conduct of the ANPWS, we have the conduct of our Department of Primary Production. It has been asked for advice from time to time by ANPWS and this advice has been given, as it is given to other landholders. However, when this advice is given to other landholders, I think more attention is paid by those people to the control of noxious weeds.

I have some personal knowledge of controlling noxious weeds. For about 14 or 15 years, we tried to do it without chemicals but we were unsuccessful. We have had to use chemicals. We do not like using them but we have had to use them as well as mechanical means. It is quite a job; it takes a long time and is expensive. However, primary producers and others who have noxious weeds on their properties are expected to do something about the problem. I seriously doubt the intentions of the ANPWS in facing this problem.

The Department of Primary Production has undertaken biological control of *Mimosa pigra*. Travelling along the Arnhem Highway, it is obvious to the observer that our government department is doing something about the infestation of mimosa on the Adelaide River floodplains. It is obvious that there is some biological control and some chemical control. Along the Arnhem Highway, near the South Alligator floodplain area, which is in Kakadu Park, mimosa will take off like a rocket pretty soon as it is already there, I believe. Our DPP officers introduced a seed weevil some time ago to help control mimosa and they have had some success with it. They are about to release an insect which will have a defoliant effect on mimosa. They are the only 2 obvious noxious weeds. I wonder how many more there are in large quantities in Kakadu National Park? They might not be so obvious to people travelling through but they are there, nevertheless, ready to break out at any stage.

I attended a meeting at lunchtime of the Sessional Committee on the Environment. We were brought up to date on certain matters relating to water release from the Ranger uranium mine. This was water of a quality that would do no harm to the environment. Instead of crying no to a release of water from Ranger mine, it would suit the environmentalists better to consider the advantages of releasing this water downstream. It would go down Magela Creek and anybody who knows anything about salvinia realises that it does not flourish in active, churned-up water. It flourishes in still water. At this time of the year, the still water is not where the boats can go up and down the Magela but in little pockets over near the banks and the trees. If this water were released, it certainly might flush out some of this salvinia. However, we do not know where it would go.

If the Commonwealth insists on keeping control of parts of the Northern Territory, it would be better if it looked to its housekeeping and the future for new generations of Territorians. We do not want our children or our grandchildren to go to Kakadu National Park in years to come and find it completely infested with noxious weeds.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has chosen to return to the Assembly. I was concerned earlier that perhaps I might be speaking to an empty opposition bench. I am quite sure they would not want to pay members on this side of the Assembly the discourtesy of not being present while we are speaking.

This evening, I would like to talk about the problem of juvenile crime and the problems of youth, not only in Darwin but right throughout the Northern

Territory. As I indicated in my maiden speech, I was able recently to identify an epidemic of juvenile breaking and entering in the Jingili electorate and, for that matter, right throughout the northern suburbs of Darwin. Subsequently, I held discussions with the Chief Minister who, together with the then Minister for Community Development, Daryl Manzie, initiated what has now become the Task Force on Juvenile Crime. I believe, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you are also a member of that particular body. The first battle, that of drawing attention to the problem and initiating government action, has been won. The next battle is being fought currently by that committee. I believe that it will recommend solutions which will allow us to address the problem successfully.

In his Australia Day flag-raising ceremony address, His Honour the Administrator, Commodore Johnston said: 'I truly believe that, in 1985, it is our adult responsibility to increase our support for youth, to show all youth, and particularly the unemployed, that we care about them and to make it clear to them that they are very important to us and vital to the future of our country'. He further quoted a delegate to the 29th meeting of the 1981 National Youth Council of Australia who said: 'The problems faced by young people have a dramatic effect on their self-esteem even though the problems are beyond their control. A lack of understanding from the community can lead to a loss of purpose, apathy, emotional and physical problems in young people'. These are words of wisdom and I believe that we would be very wise to heed them.

The problems associated with juvenile crime are many and varied. There are many reasons why young people turn to petty crime such as breaking and entering. Likewise, there is no single solution but there is a range of solutions all designed to address each particular problem area. Statistics indicate that the majority of offenders are aged 14 years and under. From there, the rate of offence declines fairly rapidly as age increases. Yet these schoolchildren were responsible for almost \$1m worth of theft in 1983-84. That is not a bad effort for a bunch of kids who are living at home and carrying out their activities under the very noses of their parents. Perhaps we have a Fagin in our midst out there somewhere. The responsibility for this problem must surely lie with the parents, in some cases irresponsible people who allow their children - some of them as young as 8 or 9 - to roam the streets until all hours of the night. It is quite common, Mr Deputy Speaker, for police to find these children hanging around pinball parlours and takeaways until 2 am or 3 am.

The problem is not just that some parents do not know or care where their children are or what they are up to, but that the young children are coming in contact with older ones and being misled through that contact. We must attack this problem firstly by providing counselling services for juveniles and for parents in the hope that both might respond, change their lifestyle and become more responsible citizens. Doubtless, the success rate will be low but, if we are able to modify the behaviour of some, then it will be worth while. I recognise that this is a difficult area. Some say that it is a no-win situation. I do not believe that; I believe we must try.

Having provided the services I have described, we must address the issue of parental responsibility. There are 2 areas: firstly, that of neglect, of not providing adequate supervision of their children; and, secondly, that of responsibility for restitution of the value of goods stolen or damage inflicted by these children. Currently, those convicted of such offences generally receive light fines and or a bond and are back on the streets within hours and folk heroes amongst their peers. This government must bite the bullet on this issue and legislate to make parents liable for neglect of their juvenile children and for restitution of costs incurred by the victims.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me read some comments that were made on 8DN talkback on 27 February 1985. These are comments taken at random from people who telephoned in. One person said: 'The name and address of offenders should be published at the discretion of the magistrate'. Another said: 'Publish the name and address of the parents'. Yet another said: 'Perhaps there should be a restitution clause included in the Juvenile Justice Act'. Another caller was asked by Col Krohn if householders were preparing to take the law into their own hands. She said: 'Yes, many people are'. Another person said: 'There is no sympathy for the victims, only for the criminals. Currently, names of juveniles cannot be published because it may hurt the feelings of their parents'. That person suggested publishing names and addresses of parents and instituting proceedings for restitution for damage, loss and so on. Another said that the community was not responsible for the children, the parents were. They are the comments expressed over 8DN talkback from concerned citizens in the community.

Having dealt with the issue of parental responsibility, let us accept the fact that, at the moment, we have numerous kids out there with time on their hands and very little to do with it. Where do they go? What do they do? Why do they end up in trouble? Firstly, let us have a look at where they go. In most suburbs, there are no after-hours, education-sporting-entertainment-type facilities. There is no movie theatre. Certainly, we have the Nightcliff Youth Centre, Casuarina High School Youth and Community Centre and now the Sanderson High School facility and, of course, there are a number of other facilities as well. These are well used but, in most cases, not by the children who have the problems. These children congregate around the pinball parlours and takeaway food shops because that is where the entertainment is that they are hooked on.

Several years ago, there was a furore when there was an attempt to open a pinball parlour in the outer northern suburbs. Boney's had then recently opened in Nightcliff. Parents, MLAs and other groups were up in arms over the issue and, subsequently, it was stopped. I agree with that decision. What has gone almost unnoticed is that now almost every takeaway shop throughout the northern suburbs of Darwin has several machines. We did not solve the problem; we merely prevented them from being located in one shop. These children are addicts, not necessarily to drugs or alcohol but to pinball machines. Some people might comment that adults play pokies and cope all right although I am quite sure that a number of adults are addicted to pokies as well. The difference is that adults generally have incomes that provide the wherewithal for their indulgences. Children do not. At best, they are provided with a small amount of pocket money. Those of us who play poker machines realise that it is only the lucky ones who win and play on. The majority quickly use up their money and move on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, how would a child, who is addicted to playing pinball machines and who has just used up his pocket money, feed his habit? You do not have to be a child psychologist to work that out. You have only to read the daily papers to find such reports as: 'Kids in crime'; 'statistics show onus on the parents'; 'war on juvenile crime'; 'irresponsible parents blamed'; 'busy time at children's court sittings' and so on. These children feed their habit by breaking and entering in our community. They are looking for cash or goods which can be turned into cash easily.

Because of the nature of our society, a large percentage of our population is employed. We have a majority of 2-income families who must leave their homes unattended for most of the day. These unattended homes provide the opportunity for juveniles to carry out their foul deeds. We must attack this problem by removing the cause, and I refer to the pinball machines. I am well aware that such action would cause an outcry from the owners of premises housing these

machines, from those irresponsible parents who want to get their kids out of their houses and from the children themselves who wish to be entertained. Nevertheless, we must take this decision but not without regard for the need to replace them with facilities which provide activities of a more constructive type. The government must address itself to the needs of our young people and provide places where the young can meet during the afternoon, evenings and weekends. These premises should contain sporting equipment, libraries, video-machines and, by all means, pinball machines but their use should be free of charge. These premises should be staffed by full-time social workers and assisted by volunteers. The staff must be rostered to work after normal hours. We cannot expect to solve our problems if our social workers are not available when the offences are occurring and the children need them. The government must provide active support for existing youth groups who are currently carrying out part of this work - and there are many of them out there. Cooperating with these people will go a long way towards solving the problem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I turn my attention now to the Juvenile Justice Act which appears to require some modification with regard to the revision of penalties. Frequently, we see our young criminals convicted and perhaps given a light fine or a bond. In many cases, they return time and time again. They are being recycled because either the law does not provide the magistrates with sufficient scope or they choose not to take advantage of the strength of law available to them. Penalties for offences committed by juveniles need to be revised. The law must provide the magistrates with sufficient scope to punish offenders adequately. Indeed, they have a responsibility to do so. Nevertheless, there may well be a strong case for revision of the act to provide for community service work orders. These require the offender to carry out physical community work. Nobody wants to see juveniles locked away in institutions, least of all myself. However, I am sure there would be few objections to offenders being made to work in the public eye to pay for their crimes. In fact, I believe it may well be a greater punishment for them to work where people can see them rather than their being committed to an institution.

The final issue I draw to your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, is the need to develop further our system of institutions suitable for accommodating juveniles. Whilst most will agree that committing young people to detention in an institution is undesirable, at times it is unavoidable. Currently, we have only one such facility in the Northern Territory and that is Giles House in Alice Springs.

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

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am compelled to respond to the remarks of the previous speaker. I must say that, after hearing his comments, I am very pleased that he has not been nominated for the Task Force on Juvenile Crime. I must pay compliment to the attitude that has been taken to the task force in contrast by the honourable member for Wanguri. Unfortunately, I have not been able to observe the honourable member for Wagaman in action yet because he missed the first meeting.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a grave error to make comments that indicate that it is such a simple process and that, by punishing the parents, locking up the kids, providing the kids with more things to do and closing down the pinball parlours, we will solve the problem. If it were that simple, it would have been done years ago. For 2000 years or more, people have complained about kids and said: 'Let's blame the parents. Let's sort it out'. The fact that we have not been able to resolve it by blaming the parents indicates, in my view, that it is not that simple.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will give you 3 examples. One is that of a constituent who came to me and said: 'What do I do about my 14-year-old son? He stays in all night until we go to bed and then, unbeknown to us, on many occasions, he nicks out through the window of his bedroom'. I am sure that that is not an uncommon situation. What do you do in that situation if you are a parent? You put a security screen on. All right, he goes out through the door. You lock him in his bedroom or chain him to his bed. That is the logical extension of the sort of argument the member for Jingili is running. Mr Deputy Speaker, there has to be a better way to address that sort of problem than to say: 'Chain the kid to the bed'.

The second example is a case that occurred quite recently in which a few young children were involved. The young children were from a single-parent family and the mother had a pretty severe drinking problem. What do you do in that situation? The easy answer again is to take the kids away and put them in foster care for a while. I am not sure that that is appropriate because I do not know the circumstances of the family well enough. The kids could be well looked after in the sense of being fed and supervised properly on most occasions. Something may have happened in this particular instance. We need to have a much closer look at it than the general observation that has been made by the honourable member.

Then we come to the question of pinball parlours. It is quite often said that people steal from houses to go to pinball parlours but I have never seen any evidence produced to support that statement. In fact, I guess it is one of the questions that our committee should address. My impression, from talking to people, particularly the police, is that they do not see a direct connection between stealing from houses and going to pinball parlours either. I may well be corrected on that but, at this stage, when there are no statistics to demonstrate it, we cannot close down pinball parlours because we have a feeling that they may be part of the cause of the problem. The problem is much deeper than that and we are not going to be helped by glib answers and comments made in this Assembly or in other places.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

URGENCY

Education Amendment Bill (Serial 99)

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a letter from the Chief Minister requesting, pursuant to standing order 153, that I declare the Education Amendment Bill 1985 to be an urgent bill. The letter reads:

Pursuant to standing order 153, I request that you declare the above bill to be an urgent bill. Passage of the bill will formalise the various changes in post-school education announced by the Chief Minister in December 1984. Any delay in the passage of the Education Amendment Bill 1985 through all stages during this sittings will hold up the transfer of accreditation powers and thereby cause hardship to Territory students. Further arrangements for the Commonwealth-funded Associate Diploma in Teaching in Aboriginal Schools will be jeopardised resulting in the loss of employment opportunities for approximately 30 Aboriginal staff.

I have considered the request of the Chief Minister and, pursuant to standing order 153, I declare the Education Amendment Bill 1985 to be an urgent bill.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mr D.D. Smith OAM

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, as this is the first full business sittings of the Assembly since the death of D.D. Smith, I wish to propose a formal motion of condolence. I move that this Assembly expresses its regret at the death on 7 July 1984 of David Douglas Smith, an elected member of the Legislative Council for the Division of Stuart in the Northern Territory between 8 December 1962 and 30 October 1965, and places on record its appreciation of his meritorious service to the Legislative Council and the people of the Territory and tenders its profound sympathy to his widow and family.

Mr Speaker, David Douglas Smith lived in Alice Springs for 58 years. 'D.D.' or Did, as he was affectionately known, was involved in Territory development at a time when our pioneering forefathers worked under extreme conditions and were literally choked by distant bureaucracies. He was one of the truly great men who laid the foundations for the Territory of the 1980s directing the Commonwealth Department of Works from the 1930s through to the post-war era. Did Smith first came to Alice in 1927 with the Commonwealth Railways and was in charge of rail surveys. He became the first resident engineer for the Commonwealth Department of Works in 1928 and, during the late 1930s, surveyed the track that was the road between Alice Springs and Darwin. Spurred on by the prospect of war in the 1930s Did Smith constantly overran his roadworks budget which brought him into considerable conflict with Canberra. He encouraged politicians and businessmen on the possibilities for development in the Territory and was an active force in the Northern Territory Development League. He was a community-minded man and for years assisted such organisations as the CWA, scouts, girl guides and the Bath Street School. From 8 December 1962 until 30 October 1965, he was the elected member for Stuart in the Northern Territory Legislative Council. In March 1983, he received the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the community.

Mr Speaker, Did Smith was accorded a state funeral and this motion of condolence places on the parliamentary record our tribute to a truly great Territorian.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I wish to speak to the condolence motion moved by the Chief Minister. I do so, Sir, as the member for Stuart in the Legislative Assembly, a seat this true pioneer and old time Labor man, David Douglas Smith, occupied in the Legislative Council from December 1962 to October 1965. Although I have followed D.D. Smith's footsteps in this respect, I dare say I would find it rather difficult to accomplish as much as he did for the Territory. The headlines in the newspaper article which covered the funeral of David Douglas Smith on 11 July 1984 summed up this great Australian in a few words: 'A small man who made a large mark'.

D.D. Smith made a significant contribution to the development of central Australia and the Territory through his enthusiasm, dedication and commitment, both in his professional work and in his involvement with the community. He was not only a very tough man who endured tremendous hardships and conditions in the course of establishing roads throughout the harsh country of central Australia but also a caring man who recognised and accepted his duty to contribute time and effort to the community in which he lived.

Born in Perth in 1897, D.D. Smith came to Alice Springs in 1926 at the age of 29 as an employee of the Commonwealth Railways. He resigned his position when the Commonwealth Department of Works first set up operations in Alice Springs in 1928. He became the first resident engineer for central Australia and virtually ran the whole department, shouldering the administrative and technical work as well as his own duties.

We must appreciate the conditions this pioneer engineer worked under. He lived and worked from tents in those early days and expended tireless energy orchestrating the building of roads throughout the Centre for which he earned great respect from everyone in that area. In the late 1930s, D.D. Smith surveyed the road which was to run between Alice Springs and Darwin. His commitment and strength of character was evidenced by his determination to straighten and widen the track because he sensed the approaching war and recognised the vulnerability of our northern coastline. In so doing, he overspent the budget without obtaining prior approval from Canberra for which he was criticised by Canberra and praised by generations of Territorians. He was largely responsible for much of the work on the first real road to Ayers Rock. He is also recognised for setting out most of the original town of Alice Springs.

Like many other pioneer Territorians, D.D. Smith became involved in the cattle industry when he took on Mount Allan Station about 260 km north west of Alice Springs. This property has now been purchased by the traditional owners who are running it very successfully with the assistance of his son who is also named D.D. Smith.

D.D. Smith is not just remembered for his engineering achievements. He was also known for his involvement in community groups and services. He helped establish the scout and guide movements in Alice Springs and helped start the first pre-school in the town. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1983 for services to the community. The large mark D.D. Smith made in central Australia is indelibly printed in its history and development. The tribute of awarding D.D. Smith the honours of a state funeral was entirely right and proper. His achievements in helping the development and progress of the Territory will always be remembered.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the condolence motion moved by the Chief Minister for the late David Douglas Smith who was born in Perth in November 1897 and died in Adelaide on 7 July 1984. David Douglas Smith was well known as D.D. from one end of the Northern

Territory to the other. In the words of the Reverend Fred McKay, who conducted D.D.'s funeral service, he was a man of small stature who made, and will leave, a big mark in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, other speakers have detailed his earlier life in Western Australia and then later in Tasmania prior to his arrival in Alice Springs. I will devote some of my time to recording at least some of his many achievements in central Australia and elsewhere in the Territory. D.D. Smith arrived in Alice Springs in 1926, 3 years before the arrival of the first train from Oodnadatta. During his first 2 years in Alice Springs, he worked with what was then known as Commonwealth Railways. He was in charge of surveys with the railways and conducted many surveys, including possible railway lines between Daly Waters and Queensland, Dunmarra and Wyndham, and one that was lesser known, a survey route from Bourke to Borroloola. Independently, he continued during these and later years to push for the construction of a rail line between Alice Springs and Darwin.

In 1928, D.D. became the first resident engineer when a branch of the Commonwealth Department of Works was opened in Alice Springs. Included in his broad range of duties was responsibility for roads, rail, animal industry, Aboriginal affairs and power supply to the small pioneering town of Alice Springs and the huge area of central Australia. D.D. Smith could be accurately described as the father of the Northern Territory's roads system because it was during his years as resident engineer that an embryonic Territory roads system was established. In those days, roads were no more than graded tracks because of the lack of men, money and machinery. Nonetheless, those roads became vital to the opening up of the Territory. In fact, they were to become the life blood of the Territory. The most famous of these roads was, of course, the Stuart Highway. It was the anticipation of war that encouraged Smith to straighten and widen the track. In doing so, he became famous or infamous for his constant budget overruns and his battles with Canberra-based bureaucrats. But it was a road the nation and her allies would come to appreciate within a few short years. This road was sealed during the war years. Under the supervision of D.D. Smith, it was sealed in record time.

In addition to this and many other roads, he is also credited with grading the first access road into Ayers Rock. I wonder if he ever envisaged the volume of traffic that the Lasseter Highway carries today or will carry when the sealing of the South Road is completed next year. In those early days, Smith lived in, and conducted an office from, tents on a site in Alice Springs, which is now appropriately named after him. D.D. Smith Park is situated on the corner of Hartley and Parsons Streets.

As well as his involvement in the Territory transport system, he was a foundation and active member of the Northern Territory Development League, an Alice Springs-based organisation whose membership included the late Dick Ward and Eddie Connellan. Smith encouraged businessmen and politicians to visit the Territory to see for themselves the potential for development. In addition to his huge workload, Smith still found time to devote to many community organisations, including the CWA - of which strangely enough, he was at one time secretary - the boy scouts, girl guides, the Hartley Street School - popularly known by many former pupils as Hartley Grammar - and he was on the establishing committee of Alice Springs' first kindergarten. Together with his son, Did, he took up a pastoral lease at Mount Allan, north west of Alice Springs, which is owned and operated today by Aborigines. After his retirement in 1960, he was elected to the Legislative Council as a Labor member for Stuart, on 8 December 1962, and served until 30 October 1965.

Mr Smith is survived by his widow, Dylis, sons, Ben and Did, who live in Alice Springs, a third son Graham, who lives in Whyalla, and two daughters, Helen Clyne, who lives in America, and Margaret Murray who lives in Queensland. At the time of his death, D.D. Smith had lived in Alice Springs for 58 years, and it is a great pity that men such as Smith could not have lived for another decade to bear witness to the fruits of their energies, their early labour and their vision of the vast potential of the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, in the words of Jim Robertson, who spoke at Mr Smith's funeral: 'His deeds have outlived him and, by the grace of God, this country will have many more like him in the future'. To his widow Dylis, and to his children Ben, Did, Graham, Helen and Margaret, I join with the Chief Minister in extending my sympathy.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I would like to add my comments to those of the previous speakers. I did not meet D.D. Smith until 1981. I had been living in the bush until that time. It was only upon my election to this Assembly that I became aware of D.D. Smith and his part in the Labor tradition in the Northern Territory.

I want to place on record today what I gleaned from subsequent conversations with D.D. Smith. In addition to his obvious and courageous activities as an engineer and his ability to cope with isolation and the distant bureaucracy, I detected in the man a fundamental belief in human dignity and in the equality of all men. I think that there are relatively few people who have contributed to the Northern Territory in quite the full way that he did. As the Chief Minister remarked, it was unfortunate that D.D. Smith was elected only to the Eighth Legislative Council on 8 December 1962. I think that public life is a little the poorer because his contribution to public life, in a strict political sense, was so brief.

I note that the member for Braitling referred to the pioneering efforts of D.D. Smith in road building in the Northern Territory. It might be worth suggesting in the context of this condolence motion that, in seeking as we do from time to time for appropriate names to be used for roads and highways in the Territory, perhaps his might be borne in mind, given the highly important pioneering work that he carried out. I cannot help wondering, with something of a wry smile, if D.D. Smith would not be a little surprised to hear that the road he originally cut in to Ayers Rock now bears the name of the Lasseter Highway. That is idiosyncratic for reasons which I previously addressed in this Assembly.

I said earlier, Mr Speaker, that D.D. Smith belonged to a proud Labor tradition that included people such as Jock Nelson and Dick Ward and that, underneath that, there lay a fundamental belief in human dignity and equality. I do not think that was better demonstrated anywhere than in the views and attitudes that I heard him express personally in relation to Aboriginal people. I refer not only to his views and attitudes but also to his practical achievements in working closely with Aboriginal people and the current position of Mount Allan Station to which reference has already been made. I believe that that bears practical testimony to his work in that regard.

In those terms, Mr Speaker, I wish to address this condolence motion and express my regrets to his family and my appreciation for his work in public life in the Northern Territory.

Mr SPEAKER: I invite honourable members to signify their assent to the motion by standing in silence.

Members stood in silence.

PETITION

Development of Myilly Point

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 1476 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to the development of the old Darwin Hospital site. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable Speaker and the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully petitions your Assembly to take action to ensure that the old Darwin Hospital site and nurses' quarters be not used for the proposed purpose of private development of casinos, hotels etc, but that this site be dedicated for truly public purposes such as educational, recreational and cultural uses and that Myilly Point residential area remain as is with the historic houses being restored for public tourist use, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Pornographic Material

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 62 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to pornographic material. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully shows our belief that, because it causes serious harm to the community, the Legislative Assembly should make illegal and should not legalise, regardless of how the material is classified, the possession, sale, hire or supply of any publication or video tape, video disc, slide or any other recording which consists of or contains a pornographic visual image or from which a pornographic visual image can be produced being an image which displays: (a) degradation of any man, woman, child or animal; (b) scenes of explicit sexual relations or showing genitalia detail or unduly emphasising, prolonging, repeating or dwelling upon real or simulated sexual activity; (c) sodomy, bestiality, sadism, masochism, mutilation and any other form of sexual perversion; (d) the use and effect of illicit drug taking; (e) blasphemy, indecency or obscenity; (f) unnecessary, excessive or unduly prolonged or repeated violence, horror, crime, crudeness or coarseness; or (g) matters that are likely to cause offence, distress or harm to any reasonable, mature person. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 105)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr HATTON (Lands): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to correct a technical omission in the procedures detailed in sections 10B and 59A of the Crown Lands Act whereby the Registrar-General is required to register a memorandum on the title of a pastoral lease relating to the addition or excision of land. Before addressing the provisions of the bill, I wish to foreshadow to honourable members that I will be seeking a suspension of standing orders to pass this legislation through all stages at this sittings. I should say also, Mr Speaker, that I have discussed this matter with the member for MacDonnell who is the opposition spokesman for lands, advising him of this proposal and have offered to the member the services of the Department of Lands to brief him fully on the details of this bill should he so desire prior to its being proceeded with on Thursday.

Section 10B of the Crown Lands Act was amended in 1982 to simplify the procedures whereby land constituting an uneconomic area could be added to a pastoral lease without the formality of surrender of the existing lease and the issue of a new lease which would incorporate the additional land. Subsections (6) and (7) of section 10B describe how this amendment is achieved by the process of requiring the Registrar-General to register the additional land by way of memorandum on the existing title. The concept of this amendment was adopted from a provision within subsections (8) and (9) of section 59A of the act which had been introduced in 1972.

Unfortunately, there was an unknown flaw which was exposed only recently by the Registrar-General. It is highly probable that a pastoral lease will have a mortgage registered against the title. If this is the case, the mortgage is deemed to refer only to the original area of the lease when the mortgage was registered and cannot include the additional land. Technically, this would mean that, if a mortgagee wished to exercise his right under section 24BA of the act and take possession of and sell a mortgaged pastoral property, he may not sell that part of the property over which a mortgage is not registered in his favour. This is an absurd situation and, naturally enough, the Registrar-General holds a firm view that, in the case of a section 10B action or, for that matter, action taken under section 59A, any mortgages should be discharged before the memorandum is registered as prescribed and the mortgage be reapplied to the amended lease. This unforeseen cumbersome requirement, especially where there are multiple mortgages, defeats the purposes of sections 10B and 59A which were designed to remove unnecessary steps in the operation of the sections.

Action taken recently to rationalise the boundary between Mt Bunday and Annaburroo pastoral leases, under the provisions of section 10B, were unnecessarily complicated due to the difficulty of tracking down mortgagees to give their consent to the addition of uneconomic vacant Crown land to the properties. All parties concerned expressed their dismay at the unreasonable time that it took to complete the discharge of existing mortgages and the lodgement of fresh mortgages for addition of land that is only a fraction of the value of the pastoral properties. In the immediate future, additions of land to Annaburroo and Elizabeth Downs Stations are to be registered under section 10B of the Crown Lands Act and the transfer of an area of land from Marrakai to Annaburroo is to take place under section 59A. Other similar transfers are to be undertaken at a later time. The same problems are inevitable unless simple

amendments are made to sections 10B and 59A which will allow an existing mortgage to include the land added on to a pastoral lease or not include land excised from a pastoral lease. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Territory Insurance Office Annual Report 1983-84

Mr TUXWORTH (Treasurer)(by leave): Mr Speaker, in accordance with section 33 of the Territory Insurance Office Act, I present the annual report and financial statements of the TIO for the year 1983-84. The year's results disclose that the TIO made an operating profit of \$2.4m in its direct general insurance business which, in terms of the size of the premium income, was a commendable result. However, this profit was more than offset by a loss of \$3.4m in its inwards reinsurance business. The result was an overall loss of \$960 000 for the year and this compares with a loss of \$2.2m in the previous year.

Mr Speaker, it will be useful to take a moment to explain the terms 'direct general insurance' and 'inwards reinsurance', in case any member is not familiar with them. Direct general insurance is the normal retail insurance with which we are familiar: household insurance, insurance on pleasure craft, fire insurance, the loss of profits insurance etc. It is business that comes directly from clients or through brokers. Inwards reinsurance refers to the acceptance of insurance premiums for other insurers. Insurance companies rarely carry 100% of the risks. Normally, they spread them amongst a number of insurers, often under the terms of a formal agreement or treaty. When such risks are accepted from other insurers, the business is known as inwards reinsurance. When risks are passed on to others, it is known as outwards reinsurance. Reinsurance treaties indicate what percentage of the original risk each reinsurer is prepared to accept and commensurate proportions of the premium income are payable as risks acceded to individual reinsurers.

Mr Speaker, when presenting the 1982-83 annual report in the Assembly last year, my predecessor indicated that the TIO was experiencing an unfavourable trend in claims on its inwards reinsurance business. That trend continued in 1983-84 as the run-off on previous business further impacted the operating results. It was indicated also that the TIO Board had commenced action to cancel or not renew inwards reinsurance treaties as they fell due and effectively, therefore, the decision had been taken to get out of inwards reinsurance business entirely. This process has continued and, at present, there remain only a handful of treaties still current and these will expire during the year. Therefore, the exposure of the office will be limited to the past periods during which the treaties were in force.

It needs to be pointed out that, although the cause of the losses is now almost entirely removed, further losses could still occur in relation to the periods when the treaties were in force. It is the nature of inwards reinsurance that some types of claims take a long time to finalise. These are known in the insurance industry as long tail claims. For example, the full magnitude of a liability claim may be dependent on the outcome of a court proceeding between the insured and some other person. It is not uncommon for such proceedings to take 2 or 3 years to be settled finally and sometimes even longer. Not until then does the full extent of the TIO's liability, if any, become known. Because of the undesirability of allowing this run-off from long tail claims to impact the operating results for future years, the TIO Board has prudently decided to include, as an abnormal item in the accounts, a special

additional provision for run-off on long tail business. This will be over and above the loss of \$960 000 on the operations for 1983-84. The provision is \$4.5m and has been determined after lengthy consultations with the TIO's actuary and auditors and after examining the run-off patterns and the sizes of provisions that have been made in the past by other insurers that have experienced problems with inwards reinsurance.

Lest there be any confusion in the minds of honourable members that the cancellation of reinsurance treaties might affect TIO's ability to meet claims, let me emphasise that the treaties being cancelled are inwards reinsurance treaties and not outwards reinsurance treaties. The TIO's outward reinsurance treaties remain entirely in place and are totally unaffected by recent events. The office thus remains fully protected and able to meet all claims fully.

Mr Speaker, turning to the administration of the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act, the adverse trend reported in the 1982-83 annual report continued in 1983-84 and the scheme recorded a loss of \$7.4m. The main reason continued to be the size and volume of claims under subsection (5)(ii) dealing with compensation for pain and suffering. Amendments repealing this provision were prepared during the year but, due to the prorogation of the Assembly, could not be presented until March. Because of the importance of the amendments, it was essential that members of this Assembly had time to consider and debate them. Consequently, they were not passed until June and did not come into operation until after the end of the financial year under review. Since that amendment came into effect, trends are encouraging and it is hoped that further losses can be minimised and the previous adverse trend reversed. This will allow the government to continue to contain rates of contribution at levels which Territory motorists can afford. However, regular and relatively small increases can be expected in line with increases in levels of benefits under the scheme and the movement of costs generally.

Mr Speaker, I would draw honourable members' attention to the comments in the report dealing with road accident rates in the Territory. It is an inescapable fact that the scheme's lack of viability to date has been a direct reflection of the Territory's appalling road accident rates. Not only do we have the highest accident rates in Australia but they are the highest by a wide margin. Road fatalities per 10 000 vehicles are twice as high as in South Australia and 3 times as high as in the ACT. The government believes it has played its part over the years to reduce the road toll by its heavy expenditure on roads throughout the Territory and by numerous programs to promote road safety, and it will continue to do so. The TIO is also playing its part, as are the Road Safety Council, the police force and many other groups in the community concerned with road safety. However, when all is said and done, it is the motorists themselves who have this matter in their hands. So long as some continue to have a careless or irresponsible attitude on the roads, their own safety and that of others will be at risk and the Territory's notorious record of road fatalities and injury will continue.

Mr Speaker, it is to be noted that the TIO continues to be a major force for development in the Territory and its present and planned building programs, amounting to approximately \$20m, represent by far its largest property development program to date. A new office building at Katherine, worth \$1.2m, was completed only last week. Extensions to the TIO building in Alice Springs are under way and a major TIO office project in Mitchell Street, Darwin, will commence in a few months. Together with existing real estate investments, loans and mortgages in the Territory and holdings of Territory stock, they add up to a direct contribution to the Territory's development of \$33m. These investments represent a major and highly desirable recycling of policy holders' funds in the

Territory's development. They reflect the tangible benefits the TIO achieves for the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the report.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will provide a detailed analysis of the report itself on behalf of the opposition. I want to make a few remarks about the impact of the losses which we now know have occurred to the TIO and the things that flow from that.

Last year, I was happy to put on the public record - and do so again now - my acknowledgement of the entirely scrupulous and non-partisan way in which you, Mr Speaker, conduct the affairs of this Assembly. However, by its actions and the actions of some of its members, the Northern Territory government continues to indicate its attitude towards the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. The Northern Territory CLP continues to attempt, on every occasion, to treat this Assembly as a private CLP club and that has been demonstrated once again this morning by that irrepressible minister, the honourable member for Fannie Bay, through his interjections concerning the fact that, because of the motion of condolence and various other things that happened this morning, which cut short the normal period allowed for question time, we were...

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr D.W. COLLINS: The honourable member is not addressing the statement.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will address himself to the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the remarks I am making are entirely relevant because the Northern Territory government not only treats its responsibilities to the Assembly with contempt but treats its very heavy responsibility of managing the financial affairs of the Northern Territory with equal contempt. The Northern Territory CLP attempts to treat the Assembly as a CLP club and, as it has demonstrated only too conclusively over the last 6 months, tries to treat the Treasury as the private CLP piggy bank for the exclusive use of the Chief Minister and Treasurer. Mr Speaker, I am not quite sure how much more relevant I need to make my remarks.

Mr Robertson: Are you implying dishonesty or theft?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister confirmed in question time this morning - and the answer stands on the record - that he was quite happy to acknowledge finally that he had personally, and we now know this for the first time, as the Treasurer of the Northern Territory, directed the removal of funds from the Northern Territory Treasury. The question addressed specifically the \$2.5m which will not be returned. Last year, I raised as a matter...

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): A point of order, Mr Speaker! Again, the Leader of the Opposition is not addressing the matter before us.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will address himself to the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the debate we are conducting at the moment is entirely relevant to the management by the Northern Territory government of the financial affairs of the Northern Territory.

Mr Robertson: TIO's annual report! I know you are illiterate but try it.

Mr B. COLLINS: It had a loss of \$12m of public money.

Mr Robertson: The poorest performance ever, Bob.

Mr Perron: You are really clutching at straws now.

Mr Tuxworth: Hurry up.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, tell them to shut up and I will get on with it.

Mr Robertson: I hope he gets up and speaks. At least he will make some sense.

Mr B. COLLINS: It is interesting that the only contribution to the business of the Assembly that the minister has made during this sittings has been by way of interjection.

Last year, I predicted that the TIO would lose \$14m. I can understand the lack of comfort in government benches opposite. I can understand why they are so sensitive on this issue this morning and would like to see me shut up. I confess I was slightly out. We now know from the statement in the Assembly this morning, and the attachment document, that we have lost \$12m. The inescapable fact is that \$4m of that \$12m has been lost because of mismanagement and incompetence. I can understand the government's desire to gloss over that little fact because, so far, it has failed to address itself to it. Mr Speaker, although \$8m of that sum can be attributed to our losses in the motor vehicle area - and I would be the last one to suggest that that is unique to the Northern Territory - \$4m of that \$12m loss is due to mismanagement and incompetence in the management of the financial affairs of the TIO, through the bad decisions that were taken with reinsurance. That is a matter that has been canvassed in this Assembly again and again. It might be very comfortable and very satisfying for those opposite to leap up and down on points of order in an attempt to stop that fact from being driven home in this debate.

Mr Speaker, we know that the government considers the sum of \$2.5m to be not worthy of comment. It can hand it over because of concessions it has to make, deliberately issue a statement to the effect that that has not been done and then consider it to be a matter of no importance - \$2.5m of taxpayers' money. \$4m has gone down the drain in respect of TIO losses, and that was entirely due to mismanagement and incompetence. That is something we heard nothing of this morning in the Chief Minister's statement. I am prepared to concede that the losses the TIO faces with motor vehicle insurance are losses that we must cop. However, even though it is easy enough for us to pass laws in the Northern Territory restricting the access of Territorians to benefits from accidents, the major problem is that we cannot at the moment prevent claims from being made by people from interstate on the funds of the TIO. That means Territorians will be in the very happy position of footing the bill for the premiums and then being denied access to those common law claims that are available to other Australians whilst people from interstate make those claims on the Territory Insurance Office. That is not a particularly comfortable position. I hope that the government of the Northern Territory is addressing the issue.

Mr Speaker, I want also to say a few things about motor vehicle accidents in the Northern Territory, particularly in respect of some recent statements about 0.05. As far as I am concerned - and I said this publicly at the time -

0.05 will be unnecessary until we start getting fair dinkum about 0.08. I would just like to drive that home to the government. There is a ridiculous philosophy abroad in the community relating to the police operating effectively on behalf of non-drinking drivers, who deserve every degree of protection on the roads, with a view to cutting down the horrendous drain on public resources that the actions of those irresponsible, indeed criminal people, who drink and drive cause. But there is this ridiculous philosophy abroad in the community that, if the police pick you up for 0.08, it must be a fair cop. It is not a question of whether you have broken the law, whether you are guilty of the offence or whether you are endangering yourself and every other road user. It must be a fair cop; there are howls of outrage if it is not a fair cop. It means the police must set themselves up on a highway with flashing blue lights so that people can turn off at the first corner before they get to the roadblock. That happens all the time. The police must give plenty of evidence that they are there. I have no dispute with that particular aspect of it. But then you hear the howls of outrage when, because of their statistics and because they pinpoint areas which have serious accident rates, they set up too close to a pub. We read that in the public press just a short time ago. There were outrageous claims by the publican concerned about some sort of agreement that existed between himself and the then Northern Territory government.

As far as I am concerned, if we are serious about getting drunks off the roads, the police have an obligation and a legitimate right to park their random breath-testing machines in the parking lots adjacent to every hotel in Darwin. I am not suggesting that, if you go to an hotel, you will leave in your car necessarily. You can make those arrangements yourself. As far as I am concerned, I look forward to the day when the random breath-testing machine is parked right next to the driveway of every hotel in Darwin and the police start checking the people who get into cars and drive out the gateway. The logic of that is inescapable. The police should operate random breath tests in those areas which police statistics indicate are serious causes for concern in terms of the accident rate involving alcohol.

Mr Speaker, I have spoken on this subject in this Assembly on many occasions. I am totally unembarrassed about the personal connection I have had with road fatalities in the Northern Territory. I have said honestly that, in 8 years, I cannot remember an accident involving death or serious injury in which alcohol has not been involved. We have heard the statistics again this morning from the government. We keep hearing these statistics: 3 times higher than there, 4 times higher than there and 5 times higher than somewhere else. Although it is getting better, those statistics still stand. We still have the worst road accident statistics of any place in Australia. That causes an enormous financial drain on our slender resources.

Mr Speaker, can I assure the Chief Minister that, when the government of the Northern Territory is prepared to get fair dinkum about random breath tests, instead of the current 'it's a fair cop' philosophy, the opposition will give full-blooded support to the government's actions. We are in a situation of crisis in the Northern Territory. We continue to play with the problem; we are not fair dinkum about it. We know from the losses indicated in this TIO report that we cannot afford it financially and we cannot afford the human misery that is caused by the aftermath of those needless accidents. I would ask the Chief Minister, as minister responsible for police, if he would be willing to conduct some bipartisan discussions with the opposition to try to implement a regime in the Northern Territory which will considerably increase the efficiency of the current breath tests that are being carried out. The Northern Territory government should make it clear that it will unashamedly allow the police to station random breath test stations adjacent to whichever points in the Northern

Territory the police are convinced - because of their own statistics and figures - cause trouble. That way we can finally wipe out this business of drink driving in the Northern Territory instead of simply playing around with it as we are at the moment. If we don't do that, I think we must all share some degree of corporate responsibility for every death and injury that occurs on the roads of the Northern Territory.

Debate adjourned.

SUPREME COURT (JUDGES PENSIONS) AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 89)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Supreme Court (Judges Pensions) Act which contains an anomaly. The act provides that, in the case of a normal retirement, a judge is entitled to a pension provided he has served at least 10 years on the bench. If he has served for any lesser period, he receives no pension at all. However, if at any time he retires for reasons of ill-health, he is entitled to receive his full pension entitlement. Currently, this entitlement is 60% of the judge's final salary.

Mr Speaker, the need for this amendment comes about because the Supreme Court Act provides that the existing retirement age for judges is 70 and it would not be out of the ordinary for a person to be appointed to the Supreme Court who is, say, 61 or 62. This person would be incapable of serving the 10-year minimum period necessary to qualify for a pension. This anomaly came about because, at self-government, the Territory inherited the existing Supreme Court structure and therefore was obliged to follow the Commonwealth Judges Pensions Act in such matters. In fact, the Commonwealth amended its act in 1981 to alter this situation. That amendment provided for the payment of a normal retirement pension provided 6 years had been served. After 6 years service, the rate of the pension is pro rata reaching the full pension after 10 years of service. Through this bill the Territory proposes to do likewise. At the same time, the government considers it appropriate to adjust the pension entitlements for retirement through reasons of ill-health on a basis similar to that which applies to normal retirement by reason of this amendment. A judge retiring for health reasons at any age will receive a pension. Those who can serve 10 years or more will receive the full pension. Those whose respective service, including prior qualifying service, is less than 10 years, will receive a proportion according to the length of their respective service based on the formula of the bill. In order to preserve the existing entitlements of the present Supreme Court judges, there is a provision in the amending bill providing that alteration of the ill-health pension will apply only in respect of judges appointed after the amendment. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate adjourned.

HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 97)

Continued from 26 February 1985.

Mr ROBERTSON (Health): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The amendments set out in this bill are intended to give hospital management boards more control of their own funds and to assist the boards to carry out their supervisory role more effectively. The present act gives the boards authority to raise money for approved use in their hospitals but does not allow the boards to control or to expend such money. I believe that this was an unintentional effect which was not appreciated when the legislation was drafted. This bill will correct the situation. The bill also provides for acceptance of and expenditure of any donations which may be made to hospitals.

The bill makes a further adjustment to functions of boards by providing that inspections of hospitals may be carried out by such number of members of boards as the boards determine from time to time. The present act requires inspections to be carried out at least once every 3 months by full boards and, in practice, this has been found to cause considerable difficulties to members and the hospitals. Boards have not always been able to arrange inspections at the most suitable time because of the unavailability of their members. Because of this, the boards have requested the changes which are now set out in the bill.

Debate adjourned.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 67)

Continued from 29 August 1984.

Mr HATTON (Primary Production): Mr Speaker, I formally advise the Assembly that I now have charge of the passage of this bill.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, at the outset, I would like to make clear to the Assembly and to the minister that the opposition supports this bill. It has arisen from a recommendation of the so-called Martin Report that was commissioned by a previous minister. In fact, that report made a number of observations on the operation of ADMA and, in order to make a long-term evaluation, it has been deemed necessary to extend the life of the authority until 30 June 1990 - that is, for a further 5 years. The Martin Report commented on some of the projects that ADMA has supported in the Territory, including the Douglas-Daly projects, and makes observations about the financial viability of those projects. There has been some advancement in broadacre farming within the Northern Territory. Optimistically, we can hope that, in the future, that type of farming will be contributing in a major way to the Northern Territory economy. At the moment, the Northern Territory's economy has a very narrow base. The broader we make its base, the more we will be able to support further development in the Northern Territory.

The Martin Report pointed out the need for the public to be aware of the degree of support which is given to farmers and the need to keep a careful eye on the degree to which farmers become dependent on ADMA. It would be unfortunate if we developed an agricultural sector within our economy to find that it could be sustained only by continuous government support. That section of the economy needs to be independent and needs to contribute not only to employment but also to the broad financial aspects of the Northern Territory's economy.

The Martin Report also commented on the range of agricultural projects which are currently supported by ADMA. I appreciate that there are financial constraints but, as a general policy, all experimental agricultural projects within the Northern Territory should receive the attention of ADMA. If projects exhibit a potential for contributing to the Northern Territory's economy, they

should be supported by ADMA with the hope that some experimental projects will be able to take their place alongside the more traditional agricultural projects. With those few remarks, I indicate the opposition's support for the amendments.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, ADMA was set up in May 1980. It was envisaged as a 2-stage project. Stage 1 was wisely seen as a pilot stage to prove the viability, at least in the short term, of a few small projects before proceeding to stage 2. The act provided that stage 2 would not be allowed to start until stage 1 was considered to be successful. The legislation has a sunset clause which has forced close scrutiny of ADMA's 5-year term from 1980. That ends in May this year and has prompted this bill. The Martin Report recommendation was prompted by the sunset clause which I consider to be an excellent legislative vehicle. I wish we would use sunset clauses more often to force close scrutiny.

The Martin Report contained a key recommendation that 5 more years are needed before we can be sure, one way or the other, of the effects of stage 1. What does this mean? It means that we are definitely not ready for stage 2 of ADMA. It also means that the pilot stage is not considered to be a failure but one might consider it to be a borderline situation. Definitely, we want a clear result and hope to obtain it within the next 5 years or, hopefully, in a shorter time. I am optimistic, as is the Minister for Mines and Energy, about the future of agriculture and horticulture in the Territory and I hope that clear results will come to hand so that stage 2 may be started well before 5 years have elapsed.

The other option is that, if the financial situation is such that the cost to the taxpayer of ADMA, which I see basically as infrastructure to allow agriculture to develop, is such that we will not make good our financial investment and see a profit then, hopefully, the courage will be shown to close down ADMA. I hope that will not be the situation but it is one of the options that we must look at. I agree fully with the member for Nhulunbuy that, if we are to keep injecting funds into agriculture and it does not return more than is put into it, at least in the long run, then we should bow out. There is no point in trying to produce grain in the Territory if we can buy it cheaper elsewhere.

I realise, of course, that one of our big problems relates to economies of scale. The ultimate goal for ADMA is for it to cease and wind down over time. One of the functions of ADMA is that of marketing. We are entering a computer age. It will not be very long until information on world markets will be available from satellites. The grape or grain prices in Singapore or Sydney will be readily obtainable and buying and selling should be able to be something which the farmers themselves can organise. The danger I see with ADMA is that, as with many of these organisations set up by governments, it will tend to be self-sustaining and become a prop to the farmer. We need to develop a situation where farmers are independent of the support of the government through ADMA and the NTDC. Only then will we have reached the stage where agriculture has become a complete success in the Territory. I believe that, if ADMA is successful, it will work itself out of a job over a period of time. I wish ADMA every success.

Mr MCCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, this amendment to the Agricultural Development and Marketing Act gives me considerable pleasure in that I am able to be here to speak in support of it. For a century or more, people with a pioneering spirit have provided a living for themselves on small and large holdings throughout the Territory. The very isolation of their farms and stations dictated the need to grow much of their own food. One such

holding, about 100 km from Darwin was described by Grenville Pike in a publication issued around 1953 in this way: 'On the good soil near the homestead, they grew rice, sugar, coffee, arrowroot, cotton, tobacco, maize, bananas and a variety of vegetables'. Almost any book that relates tales of the early farmers will tell of the crops that were grown. Described in a number of publications was the Daly River area not so far from the present Douglas-Daly ADMA farms.

There is no doubt that the Territory has been harsh to its farmers over the years. Many have come and gone and only the very toughest and the most determined of the early settlers in the rural Northern Territory met with any degree of success. Many things have changed since those hard times. Motorised machinery has replaced the horse and the hand plough. Roads have been built. Cars that can carry the farmer into town in an hour or 2 have appeared and aircraft which can take in goods, bring in a doctor or carry out a patient in a few minutes are now the normal thing. In some of these places, such as at the Douglas-Daly, telephones are available. Last, but not least, new crops and new strains of old crops have been developed. All of these improvements have turned the tide for agriculture in the Territory. What was once a harsh existence has become no more than a hard-working livelihood. Most of the farmers in the Territory and in Australia thrive on hard work. The seasons are still harsh and I for one am aware of the heartbreaks of farming: seasons, pests, sheer bad luck, poor seed or good seed can be the difference between a poor, a mediocre or a bumper harvest. This is the case in almost every state in this Commonwealth.

Just this year, at the Douglas-Daly farms, there appeared to be the makings of a very poor harvest. In fact, a number of farmers had to resow their crops 2 and 3 times. I was down there one week and, by the following week, the situation had changed considerably. The crop is now looking quite good in most cases. Some did not get in as much as they wanted to, but it is looking pretty good. The seasons in the Territory are probably harsher than in most other parts of Australia but that can be a blessing in disguise because we can grow things at times when they cannot be grown in more temperate regions. More than anything else, new seed varieties are the catalysts for renewed hope in agriculture in the Territory. Many seed varieties tried in the past just could not adapt to the harsh Territory conditions. Extensive work has been done in various parts of the world to develop tropical varieties. The Northern Territory is now a beneficiary of that scientific work. There is still much to be done and the Northern Territory must be in the vanguard, making sure that we have an input into the development of new varieties. It would be useful if further work could be done on sorghum to develop a variety better suited to Territory conditions. In recent years, there has been a lack of interest in sorghum on the part of ADMA and other farmers in the Territory because the varieties available do not provide the yield that is required to make them worth while growing. Some people are still growing it, of course. It seems to do very well here but the return is not very good compared with some other crops.

With the establishment of ADMA in 1980, the Northern Territory government recognised the need to diversify the Territory's economy. It also signified a belief of many Territorians that agriculture could be a significant producer in the Territory. I do not believe that that confidence is unfounded. However, I accept that there is much more work to be done before absolute proof that agriculture is here to stay will be recognised by all.

There have been some problems during the development of the Douglas-Daly farms. There may have been overexuberance in the early stages or it may have been the perceived need to get up and running in a hurry, but I suspect that neither the farms nor the farmers were really ready in the first couple of years of production. Delays were caused by the non-performance of 2 farmers.

Fortunately, that problem has been overcome but the damage to the forward momentum of the project has left some scars. The development of the ADMA blocks at the Douglas-Daly has provided an incentive for other producers, both old and new, to get into the act. The crop contract scheme has been a valuable boost to these farmers outside the ADMA net and, hopefully, will be continued and broadened to encourage more and more landholders with experience to get into agriculture.

It is absolutely essential that agriculture in the Territory increases in both numbers of growers and quality of harvests if it is to reach its full potential. The present small number of farmers and the limited harvest make both growing and selling of crops more expensive. The small size of the industry in the Territory at present makes the cost of importing fertiliser a significant cash drain on the farmer - the smaller the shipment, the dearer the freight per tonne. The selling of small quantities of grain overseas makes shipping cost-prohibitive. The dumb barge operation in the Territory might alleviate that problem if it is allowed to continue. The availability of machinery in the Territory is hindered by the small demand. It is difficult for a supplier in the Territory to be able to provide all the necessary spare parts and back-up service required if he is selling only 1 or 2 machines of a particular kind each year. The industry needs to expand before that situation will improve.

Of course, if agriculture in the Territory continues to grow, it will require the government to provide more infrastructure, such as grain storage, which will involve further cost to government. However, if it becomes big enough, private industry will involve itself in the area as well. The Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority has built up considerable expertise over the last 5 years in developing, marketing and, not least, farming. The 4 farmers presently at the Douglas-Daly have gained a very valuable understanding of the land that they work, the climate that they work in and the crops that they grow. These farmers and the many private growers now marketing through ADMA have a firm belief in Territory agriculture in its many forms. The Territory cannot afford to lose these people. If we want agriculture to continue to develop as quickly as it has been developing over the last 5 years, we must keep the experienced people that we have now.

I am a little concerned that, unless the Department of Primary Production and ADMA decide that they must set a price and a time-scale for the purchase of those farms, we might see the disillusionment of some of those farmers. I think it is imperative that we set a time-limit and a fair price, one that they can afford. I think we will be in trouble if we do not come up with that fairly soon.

I am not saying that we must sell the farms immediately but we must have an agreement that takes into account the length of service of the farmer under the scheme, his track record, the fact that he has put in place much infrastructure himself - machinery and seed etc - and the fact that he has operated with the idea that he will one day own the farm. Those things must be taken into account. I cannot agree with parts 65 and 67 of the Martin Report. Part 65 says:

It is not possible to ascribe a realistic value to the farms at this stage. Eventual purchase price should be based on the maintainable earnings of each farm, calculated with reference to the standard budget to ensure that operating costs are not excessive if and when the viability of the farms has been proven.

Part 67 says:

The farms should not be sold until their income-earning capacity has been proven. Strict covenants that require full cooperation with ADMA should be applied.

With the exception of perhaps the last sentence of part 67, I would disagree with those 2 points. If we want to set a price based on these premises, then there is a good chance that we will lose forever the vast experience of these men from the Territory's agricultural scene. There is little chance of recouping anything like the real value of those properties from the farmers who are now operating them. I do not believe that there was any intention to recoup that sort of money. If the Territory wants a privately-owned agricultural industry, as it will be in time, then it must be prepared to wear some development costs. In the meantime, I suggest that the farmers should be encouraged to diversify. There is much that is wasted at present that could be used. Certainly, I think that there is land on most of those farms that could run cattle. There is a lot of stubble that could be used, even if only for agistment purposes at first. I believe that the farmers should have the right to run their own cattle there eventually. Failed crops could be used in that area. Also I think there is tremendous scope for pasture improvement, perhaps on a small scale initially but that would grow with time.

A number of debatable points were raised in the Martin Report. In some areas, it was lopsided, but the general thrust was that the authority required more time to evaluate the scheme. I would agree with that. There is more work to be done. However, I believe that agriculture will play a very real part in the Territory's economy and that we will provide for many of our own needs and export in significant quantities to South-east Asia and beyond. I was pleased to hear in the minister's response to the Administrator during the address-in-reply debate that he saw ADMA becoming more of a marketing authority and less of a developer. I support that view and I suspect the need for a marketing authority will go far beyond the year 1990. Mr Speaker, I support the bill.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Speaker, in rising to support this amending legislation, I would like to say that the beginnings of ADMA go back further than most honourable members realise. The beginnings of ADMA go back to 1959. I have before me a very old copy of the Forster Report. A press statement was released by the then Minister for Territories, the Hon Paul Hasluck, in Darwin on 25 July 1959. I will read out the terms of reference for that committee and from that honourable members will see that they represent closely what ADMA is doing today. The terms of reference were:

To survey the present state of agriculture in the Northern Territory including the results of experiments and field trials and to report to the Minister for Territories on the prospects of promoting agricultural settlement on an economic basis in the Territory and the major factors to be considered in shaping an agriculture policy for the Territory including the areas best suited to agricultural settlement, the crops most likely to prove economic, the relationship of agriculture to the expansion of the pastoral industry, the availability of land and the distribution and tenure of land, credit and other forms of assistance to the primary producer, marketing opportunities, research and agricultural extension work, water use and conservation.

Mr Speaker, it is clear from the work that ADMA has been doing since its formation in 1980 that it has copied the terms of reference put forward for consideration by the Forster Committee in 1959. Before I go further, I would like to comment first on the members of that committee. There were 3 members:

H.C. Forster, C.R. Kelly and D.B. Williams. C.R. Kelly is known to everybody who reads the Bulletin as 'The Modest Farmer', Bert Kelly, who will be the guest speaker at an Australian Institute of Agricultural Science dinner to be held in the Territory soon. All honourable members and others who attend that dinner will hear something interesting. He is a gentleman. At that time, he had the Territory at heart. I think he has always had the interests of sensible down-to-earth agriculturalists at heart. It well behoves people engaged in agriculture and the administration of agricultural policies to look back occasionally at what Bert Kelly has said over the years.

In the recommendations of the Forster Committee, several things were covered: government policies for rural industries in the Northern Territory, pilot farms, research and experiment programs and government scientific services. As a result of the Forster Report, if my memory serves me correctly, 3 pilot farms were established in the Tortilla Flats area, one of which is still in existence as a private farm. The member for Victoria River commented on the fact that it would be highly unlikely that the government would recoup the cost of development of the farms in the ADMA scheme if the farmers buy them from the government at a later date. Mr Speaker, in this case, those farmers could be said to be in a situation similar to that of the original 3 pilot farmers in the Tortilla Flats area and, when the government has the development of agriculture in the Territory as its sole reason for setting up these farms, it is incumbent on the government to bear the cost of the development. In order to encourage the present farmers and others who will come after them, it is the responsibility of the government to sell the farms to them at a reasonable cost, which I know will happen.

Mr Speaker, when ADMA was set up in late 1980, a portion of Douglas Station was acquired and it was used for 2.5 farms. Oolloo Station was acquired and 3.5 farms were established. Further areas are under investigation. The first 2 farmers, who came from interstate, were on site to plant some crops in the 1981-82 wet season. A local farmer went on to the third farm during 1982 but he left the farm before the 1982-83 cropping season. 4 more farmers were in place for the 1982-83 season but, in that year, the wet season was very poor and there were many crop failures. I think it is to the credit of ADMA that it has continued with the scheme at the Douglas-Daly. The farmers stuck it out even though there was a very poor season that year. There was a dispute with 2 farmers over crop underwriting during 1983. Contracts with these 2 farmers were terminated in November 1983. Long legal action followed and they departed from the scheme in November 1984. Currently, one farm is vacant and will be advertised shortly. The other farm is being operated on a share-farming basis by 2 local farmers who grow peanuts and sesame.

The honourable member for Victoria River spoke about diversification. I would agree with him wholeheartedly. He mentioned improved pastures and cattle. Rice was also mentioned as a crop that could be looked at for the Douglas-Daly. I think it is very necessary to establish solid ground rules of conduct on these farms before other crops are considered. The farm where sesame is grown represents the beginning of the diversification that the member for Victoria River spoke about.

Mr Speaker, as honourable members know, project farmers are protected from loss by crop underwriting and guaranteed minimum price schemes. This underwriting is restricted to a standard cost which is determined by ADMA. It is not open-ended. Crop production statistics bear out that the development of agriculture is well under way with 4 main crops being grown at the Douglas-Daly. This is due to the part ADMA has played. In 1979-80, 780 ha of sorghum were sown. In 1983-84, 2343 ha were sown to sorghum. In 1978-79, 81 ha of maize

were sown. In 1983-84, 1369 ha were sown. In 1978-79, 55 ha of mung beans were sown. In 1983-84, 1109 ha were sown to mung beans. In 1982-83, 328 ha of soya beans were sown; in 1983-84, there were 641 ha.

As honourable members can see, the size of crop areas has increased dramatically. What is more important, due to experimentation undertaken by ADMA and the Department of Primary Production, the yield has increased also. The yield of sorghum has increased from 0.96 t/ha in 1979-80 to 1.74 t/ha in 1983-84. Maize has increased from 1.09 t/ha in 1979-80 to 2.09 t/ha in 1983-84. The mung bean yield has increased from 0.35 t/ha in 1978-79 to 0.64 t/ha in 1983-84. The soya bean yield has increased from 0.72 t/ha in 1982-83 to 1.17 t/ha in 1983-84. Again, that is a dramatic increase in tonnes per hectare which augurs well for the continuation of agricultural development in the Douglas-Daly area.

More important to the end user in the Territory is the amount of produce produced at the Douglas-Daly by the ADMA farmers which is used in local products. The end users are the pig and poultry producers in the Territory. In 1981-82 and 1983-84, there was a dramatic increase in the amounts of maize, sorghum, soya bean and mung bean used locally. Further improvement in the NT grower share of the market can be expected in 1984-85 because of the establishment of additional feed milling capacity in Darwin. I think it is necessary for the sunset clause of the act to be extended another 5 years to give the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority a new lease of life. I think it can only go from strength to strength.

I have been known to disagree with my colleagues in the past on certain matters. I must disagree with the honourable member for Sadadeen who said that he would like to see the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority put itself out of business by allowing the farmers or other people to take over the marketing of products. This would be well down the line of development. With the pioneering situation in the Northern Territory, I think it would be so far down the line as to be practically out of sight at the moment. I envisage ADMA continuing for another term after the proposed term has finished. This is only the start of development in the Northern Territory. Other areas are already being looked at. ADMA has a role to play and not only in the Top End. It has been active a bit further south. I think we will see its involvement in parts of the Territory which have not even been considered for development. I support the bill.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I commence by repeating the words of the Leader of the Opposition who advised me that the Douglas-Daly was some thousands of miles from the extensive electorate of MacDonnell. Whatever its propensities for agricultural development may be, I think it is meet and right for me to place on record that not only is the potential thereof particularly rich but, in many cases, that potential is being actualised. Mr Speaker, I will not be specific about particular development, for example the extremely successful lucerne crops on Orange Creek Station and the considerable interest that has been taken in that by a variety of landholders in my electorate. I could take up considerable time and I believe it would be fruitful to continue the debate in a similar vein. However, I will leave those comments for a later day and, fairly briefly, I will ask some questions in relation to the comments and inspiration, dare I say, of the member for Sadadeen in his contribution to this debate. The far less extensive electorate of Sadadeen is considerably further from the Douglas-Daly than the extensive electorate which I am most fortunate to represent in this Assembly.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first time that I have noticed that the member for Sadadeen has taken a considerable interest in things agricultural. In fact,

I was very fortunate to bid him good morning at the field day recently organised at the Arid Zone Research Institute. I am not sure if I saw the Chief Minister there, in fact, but let me assure him that it was enjoyable and informative. I saw a considerable array of backbenchers there with more time on their hands than they knew what to do with. Suffice it to say, the Arid Zone Research Institute is not north of Alice Springs but south of it and their electorates are a good 1000 miles to the north of the Arid Zone Research Institute.

To come to the nub of the question, I refer to a particular firm that has been negotiating with the Department of Primary Production and the Department of Lands for some considerable time now in order to commence cropping grapes in the Ti Tree area. You will be aware, Mr Speaker, that there has been considerable success with early table grapes that have been produced in that area. From your tenure as Minister for Primary Production, I am sure that you would be well aware of that particular venture and its imminent success. I dare say you are also aware of the interest, activity and investment of the member for Sadadeen in that particular area.

I understand that, over a period of several years, the Department of Primary Production has carried out research on the economic viability of growing early table grapes in that particular vicinity. My understanding is that, after these many years of expensive research, a particular area on Pine Hill Station has been isolated and is to be excised from that head lease for the purpose of growing early table grapes. My understanding of the figures is that there may still be plans to grow some 50 ha of table grapes this winter which would, over a period of several years, grow to an area of 300 ha. Expert agricultural economics advice in this regard informs me that the gross turnover of this area, in time, would come to be something in the vicinity of \$8m to \$12m. I do not think I need to remind you, Mr Speaker, representing an electorate such as Elsey in this Assembly, of the importance that represents for agricultural development in the Northern Territory. In round figures, I think the beef industry is worth something in the vicinity of \$65m to \$70m to the Territory. On the figures that have been projected in this way, that means that early table grapes are likely to represent something like 15% of the value of the beef industry which is the premier primary industry in the Northern Territory. This is of considerable importance to all members here and to the Territory as a whole.

Mr Speaker, the reason why I mentioned the member for Sadadeen in this regard was because of his connections with the early table grapes industry and the development thereof in the Ti Tree region. At the outset, let me be quite categorical about what I am not saying. I am not saying that the honourable member has no right to invest in that way, although many have been so unkind as to ask me how a man who is supported from the public purse in such a fulsome fashion finds time to be involved in primary production to quite the extent that he is. However, along with you, Mr Speaker, I would regard such criticism as curmudgeonly in the extreme.

However, what I am saying is that it has been suggested that the honourable member has put undue pressure on the Minister for Primary Production, the Minister for Lands and public servants within both those departments because he believes that the future of his particular enterprise - which I do not begrudge him in the slightest - may be threatened by the considerable investment that Territory Grape Farms Pty Ltd is likely to put into this area. I would like a clear indication from the Minister for Primary Production so I hope that the public address system extends to his particular warren across the street.

Mr Perron: He is in Canberra.

Mr BELL: I find it difficult to imagine that the public address system extends quite that far. However, if I speak loudly enough, perhaps he will be able to hear me.

I should add that the importance of this particular venture is that it will not only return a gross turnover in the terms that I have described but it will also employ some 25 people on a permanent basis and up to 125 people on a casual basis. My understanding is that Territory Grape Farms Pty Ltd, and the principals thereof, have been operating in the area of Menindee in New South Wales, frequently referred to as a socialist heaven by members opposite. Suffice it to say that this particular company has not only been financially successful in that area but has operated in such a way as to provide jobs for many people who otherwise would be unemployed. Many of those people are Aboriginals and I do not need to rehearse unemployment figures in that area. I am quite sure that I have raised them sufficiently frequently in this Assembly for them to be etched on the brain of everybody, frontbench or backbench alike. It would be sad indeed in these terms if this particular company had not been able to come and work in the Territory. I would like some explanation from the minister when he makes his reply in this second-reading debate as to exactly what sort of representations he received in this way. Have the representations made by the honourable member for Sadadeen delayed this project? If they have, it would be a matter of particular concern. That is the first matter.

The second matter I wish to raise refers to the connection of an electricity supply in this particular area. I am pleased that the Chief Minister has returned to the Chamber because this part of the saga involves him. I am not sure that the honourable member for Koolpinyah is in fact knitting over there. I dare say that, given her concern about the connection of power in the rural area, it will be of some interest to her. My understanding is that there was a connection of power at this particular grape farming area and that it was done quite unbeknownst to the Dahlenburgs who have been working there. My understanding is that servicemen from the Northern Territory Electricity Commission arrived on a particular day saying: 'Where do you want the transformer put?' The Dahlenburgs were most surprised to have this power installed because they had not requested it. I am sure that the member for Koolpinyah, representing as she does, and so fulsomely, Mr Speaker, the rural pioneers - those who work hard and do without for the golden future - will be most surprised to find that the policy of providing power in different corners of the Territory is somewhat less than uniform, shall we say. The relevant minister, the member for Fannie Bay, should now give us some explanation as to whether a request for such power was lodged. That is my first question in that regard. My second question is again with respect to the honourable member for Sadadeen. Exactly what representations did he make to the Minister for Mines and Energy or any other relevant government minister for the connection of power in that way because I understand that his particular properties are very well serviced in that regard as well?

To return to the Dahlenburg farm and its blessing of unasked for rural power, I understand that a letter was written by the Chief Minister to the Dahlenburgs. Whether it was written in his capacity as Chief Minister or in his former capacity as Minister for Mines and Energy, I am not too sure. I understand a letter was written by the Chief Minister to the Dahlenburgs. It said that the cost of running the power down to their farm, power which they did not ask for, had come to \$90 000.

Mr D.W. Collins: Try \$55 000.

Mr BELL: That is very good. I hope the people in Hansard recorded that because, quite clearly, the member for Sadadeen is quite au fait with the

subject. I look forward to his contribution and explanation and those of the backbenchers and a few of the frontbenchers who are also involved.

Mr Tuxworth: What about the attendants? Shall I let them have a run too?

Mr BELL: The honourable Chief Minister thrashed around here all last week and it is nice to see him doing it this week. I am quite happy for this particular matter to be elucidated here and now, provided it is able to be elucidated. However, under duress from interjectors, Mr Speaker, I digress.

My third point was that I wished some explanation for the Chief Minister's letter saying: 'Look, this has cost us \$90 000. We know you did not ask for it but is there a possibility of a contribution?' That I understand was the tenor of the letter. I would very much appreciate the Chief Minister confirming or denying that particular accusation by tabling the letter in this Assembly. I look forward to his response in due course. That is about the sum total of my comments in this regard.

To return to the bill before us, as a representative of an electorate which covers the vast open spaces, areas which will become increasingly rural if ADMA is allowed to pursue its endeavours in the manner it has, I support the bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr HARRIS (Education)(by leave): I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, I do not wish to make any more pertinent comments on this bill. I think it is a shame, and that perhaps the Assembly should reflect on it, that this is the minister's first piece of legislation to pass through this Assembly and, unfortunately, he is not here. I appreciate that ministers have many demands on their time but I would have thought that the passage of a minister's first piece of legislation through this Legislative Assembly would have taken some degree of precedence over whatever other activities he may have. I would like to place on the public record my disappointment that the minister is not here for the passage of his first piece of legislation.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I can assure honourable members that the remarks that have been made by the member for MacDonnell will be addressed at some later stage by the honourable minister. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, the minister was unable to be here. He wanted to take part in this debate and I do not really consider that the comments made by the member for Nhulunbuy are warranted.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I would point out to the honourable minister that the statement he has just made is a complete nonsense. As we all know, the business of how the Assembly operates is entirely in the hands of the government. Like the honourable member for Nhulunbuy, I think it is most unfortunate that a new minister of the government does not see through personally the carriage of his first piece of legislation. The point made by the Minister for Education is nonsense because he knows full well that how the business proceeds through this Assembly is entirely in the hands of the government. The passage of this bill need not have taken place at this moment at all. There was no reason whatever to move the third reading at this stage; it could simply have been deferred for 24 hours. I think that the point made by the honourable member for Nhulunbuy is well made.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I would point out that, when the Assembly adjourned for lunch, the honourable minister was on his feet to make his response to this bill.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent my moving a motion without notice to disapprove those parts of Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 3 of 1984 relating to basic salaries, additional salaries and special expenses of office allowances for members of the Legislative Assembly, which determination was tabled in the Assembly on 16 October 1984.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Disapproval of Parts of Remuneration Tribunal
Determination No 3 of 1984

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, I move that this Assembly disapproves those parts of Remuneration Tribunal Determination No 3 of 1984 relating to basic salaries, additional salaries and special expenses of office allowances for members of the Legislative Assembly, which determination was tabled in the Assembly on 16 October 1984.

Mr Speaker, I want to make it clear from the outset that, with my background in industrial relations, it is with some reluctance...

Mr D.W. Collins: I could tell you a story about that.

Mr SMITH: You will get your opportunity.

It is with some reluctance that I move to disapprove a determination made by an independent wage-fixing tribunal. I have always been of the view that, if independent wage-fixing tribunals are set up, the results should be abided by whether those results are good or bad. I think that the record of this opposition has been that it shares that view. Mr Speaker, this is the first time that the opposition has moved to disapprove a recommendation of the Remuneration Tribunal. Of course, there have been times when Remuneration Tribunal decisions have been criticised heavily and the opposition has accepted that the Remuneration Tribunal is an independent wage-fixing body and its reports should be accepted. For those of us who were here in November 1981, that was probably the hardest time of all. I have very vivid memories of it because it happened in my very first sittings. At that stage, the Remuneration Tribunal recommended a salary increase for parliamentarians from something like \$24 000 to something like \$33 000 - a very significant increase indeed. At that stage, the opposition took the view that that increase in salary was justified and that it resulted from a detailed work study which the Remuneration Tribunal had carried out. Also, it was in line with community movements in wages and salaries that were occurring at that time.

However, now we have a completely different situation. Since March 1983, a quite successful prices and incomes accord has been in operation in Australia. This prices and incomes accord has been very successful in keeping down wage demands from union groups and in reducing the amount of industrial disputation in Australia. There is no doubt about that. The reason why that has happened

is that, in return for cooperation in those 2 areas, the union movement has been given concessions or trade-offs in other areas which have been to the benefit of the whole Australian community.

In my view and in the view of the opposition, what we have in the 11.7% increase awarded to us is a very clear breach of the prices and incomes accord and a breach so blatant that it is inflammatory and has already made it more difficult to persuade the unions in the Northern Territory that the prices and incomes accord has some meaning and should continue. It is very difficult for politicians in the Northern Territory to say: 'You should have wage restraints but we will accept the 11.7% increase'. What makes it even more difficult is that, in the submissions made by both this side of the Assembly and the government, the increase argued for was 4.1% which represented the movement in the consumer price index since the last decision. That case was presented for the government by the Government Whip, the member for Sadadeen, and for the opposition by myself, unbeknown to each other. That reinforces the point that, separately, the government and the opposition assessed the political climate at the time and, in the light of that political climate, came up with the same recommendation to the Remuneration Tribunal for a 4.1% increase. What we received, Mr Speaker, was an 11.7% increase.

Mr Speaker, let us look at the reasoning given by the tribunal in coming to its decision. Basically, it said that it agreed with the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal that 11.7% was necessary to establish a firm and equitable base for politicians' salaries. I have no objections to that if, indeed, it believes that it is a firm and equitable base for politicians' salaries. However, the Commonwealth tribunal, operating in a political climate as does the Northern Territory Remuneration Tribunal, recommended that that 11.7% increase should be introduced in 2 separate sums: a 6% increase on 1 July 1984 and a 5.7% increase on 1 January 1985. But then, what happened, Mr Speaker? The federal government, operating in a political environment and having regard to the political factors and to things like the prices and incomes accord, overruled the decision of its remuneration tribunal. We had the situation where the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal was overruled. Federal politicians have received nothing and, quite obviously, the reason for that is that the Commonwealth government recognises the political realities at this time. Unfortunately, the Northern Territory government has not seen fit so far to recognise those same political realities but, hopefully, it will take the opportunity presented to it today.

Mr Speaker, I will quote an interesting extract from the Report of the Remuneration Tribunal in the Northern Territory: 'The tribunal can see no basis in industrial principle, wage justice or work value terms for politicians to suffer a singular burden of wage restraint not shared by the community generally or their wage peers'. Again, I have no objection to that principle, but what has happened is that it is the community that has been under a very severe form of wage restraint since the beginning of 1983, and in fact earlier, under the wage freeze of the Fraser government. The community suffered under the wage restraint and the politicians in the Northern Territory have not had to suffer that wage restraint, as is evidenced by this 11.7% increase - if we accept it. In that particular instance, the tribunal's recommendations does not make sense. It is the community that has made the sacrifices at this time in Australia's history when we all want to get the economy moving again and when there is a particular and special onus on politicians to show the way in things like wage restraints.

Mr Speaker, another rationale given by the Remuneration Tribunal was that we had a problem with relativities between the Chief Minister and the Chief

Justice of the Supreme Court. If it had gone on to award the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court an 11.7% increase and the Chief Minister something less, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court would have been paid more than the Chief Minister. I accept that that is an unhealthy state of affairs but, more importantly, there are other relativities that have been shot to pieces by this 11.7% increase. I will refer to a few of them. The Chief Minister receives more than the Prime Minister of Australia in terms of basic salary. No one is going to tell me that, however hard the Chief Minister works and however good he is for the Northern Territory, he has a more responsible and a more demanding job than the Prime Minister of Australia. The relativity is not there to grant the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory a higher base salary than that of the Prime Minister of Australia. Quite clearly, it should be the reverse.

As well as that, a backbencher in the Northern Territory gets more than any other backbencher in the whole of Australia. That is staggering enough on its own but it is even more staggering when those same backbenchers have the smallest electorates in the whole of Australia in terms of population and sit for the least number of days of any parliament in the whole of Australia. Again, the relativities, which should be important in this exercise, would indicate that backbench politicians elsewhere should receive more than backbench politicians in the Northern Territory. Instead, we have a situation where we are each accepting \$45 000 a year and federal politicians receive \$42 000 a year. I do not think anyone would doubt that the federal member for the Northern Territory, whoever he is and whatever his political party, has a harder and a more demanding job than a backbencher in this Assembly. That is what Paul Everingham says and I agree with him. I can vividly remember speaking to Mr Grant Tambling when he was our federal member and he indicated that, in the previous 12 months, he had spent something like 200 nights away from home. That is the sort of life that federal backbenchers lead, particularly the ones serving electorates like the Northern Territory. To argue that they deserve less money than a backbencher in the Northern Territory Assembly is absolutely ridiculous. We should do something about it and we have the ability to do something about it right now.

Mr Speaker, I want to make quite clear what my motion does. It moves to disapprove the salary increase and the additional allowances connected with salary that are officially called the 'special expenses of office allowances'. It does not impinge on travel or electorate allowances in any way whatsoever because it is the view of this opposition that travelling and electorate allowances are extremely worth while. Whilst being generous, the Remuneration Tribunal has been most realistic about the needs of Territorian parliamentarians. We have no problems with the proposed increases in relation to travelling and electorate allowances. The success of my motion would not impinge on those 2 areas at all. Further, if my motion were passed, it would not apply retrospectively but from today. Members would not be looking at having to pay back \$2000 or \$3000. Thirdly, the wording of the legislation as it stands at present means that we are arguing for the complete disapproval of the 11.7% increase granted by the Remuneration Tribunal. We do not have the option under the present wording of the legislation to move for a 4.1% increase only. I want to make it clear that, if members approve this motion, they will be approving a return to the salary level that applied before the Remuneration Tribunal made its report.

Mr Speaker, I think the issues are very clear. Quite clearly, the 11.7% salary increase is outside the terms of the prices and incomes accord. It is inflammatory in our present political climate where so much emphasis has been placed on wage restraint and on encouraging unions to abide by that wage restraint. It destroys important relativities that have so far prevailed

between ourselves and politicians in other states. The opportunity is here for politicians in the Northern Territory, for once in their lives, to be statesman-like and present an example to the rest of the Northern Territory and Australia.

Mr ROBERTSON (Health): Mr Speaker, on any reasonable analysis of what the member for Millner had to say, one would find that the majority of people on my side of the Assembly would agree with the majority of what he has said. I have difficulty in attacking the major part of the honourable member's proposition. Quite frankly, the increase given to us as politicians is perceived by the community as inflammatory. One would have to be blind not to realise that. It does more than that: it converts perfectly good Northern Territory dollars into perfectly bad Keating dollars by way of the ridiculous level of taxation which is applied to it because it is a salary component. I agree that, as was implied by the member for Millner, if the tribunal were to look at allowances to cover rises in costs and expenditures and could justify those by way of taxation within the rules of the taxation system, that would be fair enough. What this has done has been damned embarrassing, in my view. I have been highly embarrassed by it, and humiliated in fact. Wherever you go people rightly say: 'What sort of a farce is this 11.7% increase?' Of course, the people we are dealing with have not had the opportunity that we have had to read the tribunal's report and probably do not have the capacity in industrial relations terms to analyse what the reasons behind the grant were. But, to me, it has been a very embarrassing exercise. There are 2 sorts of embarrassment as I see it, Mr Speaker, and I will come to what I think this motion is really all about.

The member for Millner said that, in the 1981 determination, the opposition had regard to the political climate which existed at that time and thought that that increase was okay. Incidentally, in percentage terms, the 1981 increase was significantly larger than this one. What the opposition did then - and what it is doing now, but for different motives - was making an independent assessment of an independent determination. In 1981, a huge increase was quite acceptable. It was an increase from \$17 000 or \$20 000 to \$33 000. It was a huge increase but, in the honourable member's own words, it was quite acceptable in that political climate.

When did the statement from the opposition concerning the disapproval of the latest determination first arise? It is fascinating that it was one week before the by-election for the seat of Jingili. That was when the announcement was first made in the media that the opposition would be moving for disapproval. That was the first time that the pious people opposite mentioned this unholy move in this place. It had nothing to do with their genuine concern about industrial relations or the pious utterances about its being inflammatory in terms of the maintenance of understandings or the accord. In fact, it was a political manoeuvre designed for one purpose and for one purpose only: to assist their forlorn hope of winning that by-election. Of course, they are now stuck with it. The opposition member has said that, in industrial relations, you abide by the findings of a tribunal whether or not those results are good or bad. I quote directly from him. The only thing that went wrong is that the result of the by-election was very bad for the opposition indeed and, for it to maintain any semblance of credibility, it has been forced to play out this farce. On the admission of the honourable member himself, on every occasion the opposition has been quite happy to go along with the tribunal's determinations.

I have no idea at what stage the Commonwealth intervened in its tribunal's system but, on each side of this Assembly, we have consistently said that we would maintain the attitude, as put forward a little while ago by the member for Millner, that we would abide by the referee's decision whether it was good or bad. I would not be standing up in this Assembly and complaining if no increase

had been given to us. As a matter of fact, given the 'political climate' at the time - to quote the honourable member - I would have thought that a good thing because, quite frankly, we are well paid. I agree that it is absurd to suggest that a federal MHR should receive less money than a backbencher in this Assembly - that would be a ridiculous proposition if anyone should be silly enough to put it forward. Nonetheless, we have an act which both sides of this Assembly agree is proper. We agreed that the appointment of Mr Campbell was proper. We have always abided, without question, by the decisions of the tribunal. Each and every one of us, including yourself, Mr Speaker, has been embarrassed by the result that has occurred this time. This side of the Assembly did not, for political expediency, create its own definition of the words 'political climate' - to use the words of the member opposite - to twist around during the last week of an election campaign and then come up with the fraudulent motion which we have before us.

Mr Speaker, I do not like what happened either. We argued for 4.1% and that is all we wanted. We put it to an independent arbitrator approved by both sides of the Assembly pursuant to an act unanimously passed by every one of us here, with the exception of the member who won the particular by-election that this whole thing was about. We do not like it either. The referee has made his decision. If we do not like the decisions that the referee makes, we sack the referee or we tear up the act. We do not fiddle with the independent assessment of a tribunal which we have agreed to unanimously and the determinations of which we have always abided by unanimously.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I commend the honourable minister, as I have done on previous occasions, for the very good job he does in trying to defend the indefensible. Mr Speaker, it is very nice to see him back in harness.

Mr Robertson: Now you'll tear it to bits?

Mr B. COLLINS: Yes. Unfortunately, the argument does not stand up because it was based on 2 false premises. The first was that the opposition had raised this matter purely for the purpose of the Jingili by-election. I have my press releases in front of me. To quote the honourable minister, we raised this a week before the Jingili by-election for the first time. That statement was made not once but 4 times during his speech. The other foundation upon which the argument was predicated was an even more extraordinary one and that is that, in some strange way, acts of parliament are now set in concrete and are never to be changed. 'Tear it up' were the words used. The words used were: 'We voted unanimously for the act and we supported the act so why are we complaining about it now?'

Mr Speaker, in a debate which is to occur shortly, I will vote in favour of a thing we call an amendment to an act. I voted happily in favour of the original bill for that act. The cold hard facts are, and the minister knows them, that we, as public people, have a responsibility to respond to our perception of the reaction of the electorate on issues. That is our job. We also need to provide some degree of leadership, particularly in the areas of industrial relations and wage restraints. In all the areas of political life, there are 2 basic decision-making mechanisms which control our kind of free enterprise society: the law and the marketplace. The 2 interact constantly. Leadership is required very largely of politicians in the area of industrial relations, particularly when wage restraints are involved. Indeed, we voted for the act when it was passed. Indeed, we supported it then. We think now that it needs to be changed. That is why I gave notice this morning that I would introduce a bill to effect the changes that we think are required.

Unfortunately, the minister's arguments, though well delivered, fall down fairly quickly.

The honourable minister also referred to a former dramatic increase in salaries. That is perfectly true. As the honourable minister knows, that dramatic increase in salaries was required because, at the time it was granted - and I remember it well - the members of this Assembly were paid at a rate which was far below that offered to the rest of the community. In 1974, the salary for a member of the Legislative Council was \$7 000 per year. When I came into the Assembly in 1977, that had increased to \$12 000 per year. I personally dropped \$6 000 a year from my previous salary. We acknowledged that, up until that point - and it was simply a factor of the political development of the Territory - it was considered to be a part-time job. Upon the development of self-government for the Northern Territory, it stopped being a part-time job and became the full-time job that it is today.

Mr Speaker, I cannot quote the exact figures but the salary increase referred to was from about \$24 000 a year, which was at that time grossly behind the rest of the community, to \$33 000. The minister is perfectly correct when he says that it was a far greater hike in percentage terms than the current increase. The significance of that change was that it was the final recognition of the full-time nature of the positions in here and it put us on a parity with equivalent positions in the rest of the community. It is really quite fallacious to compare that particular increase to that under debate because the 2 simply cannot be compared.

The rationale used by the Remuneration Tribunal in determining the increases for members of the Assembly was based largely on the same arguments that were used by the Remuneration Tribunal in the federal sphere. What happened in that case is a matter of public record. The tribunal itself determined that the increases should not be delivered at once but that they should be spaced over a period of a year. Mr Speaker, I agree with most of the arguments put by the honourable minister. However, the federal government finally rejected the pay increases completely, as it has a political right to do when the political climate and demands of the day require it. It overrode that decision in the interests of the country, the economy and wage restraint. We have an equal obligation to do that in the Northern Territory.

I would point out that the federal government was in the position then that the Northern Territory government is very largely in now. The federal government had instituted an accord, an accord which has worked very successfully indeed. In respect of the leadership expected of it, it would have put the government in a totally impossible position had it attempted to peg everyone else back to 4.1% but allowed itself almost the equivalent of the salaries increase seen in the Territory. It took the right decision in rejecting it: It had no choice if it wished to act responsibly.

Mr Speaker, we have already seen Northern Territory public servants use total and utter logic, a logic which, from what the minister has just said, cannot be refuted. But it makes no sense whatever for members of the Northern Territory government to say publicly now that a pay increase cannot be justified and will not be given when they are not prepared to take the action which is available to them in the Legislative Assembly. They have the numbers and they can exercise them at their complete discretion. In fact, they can do so in about 10 minutes if they wish to show some leadership. When saying to those unions that an increase of 8% is unreasonable and unrealistic, the government should show some leadership by not accepting the 11.7% increase which has just been recommended. I would not think anyone would have to be too smart to work

out that, while this government indicates that it will not make any move to change the decision of the Remuneration Tribunal, as the federal government did, it has absolutely no argument whatsoever on which to oppose pay increases for the Northern Territory Public Service at an equal level. That is a fact. It does not matter what kind of twisted logic the government tries to apply - that fact stands. It will be a fact of industrial life in the Territory after today if the government does not act responsibly in this matter.

Mr Speaker, during the early stages of the debate this morning, the government indicated by its interjections and behaviour that it considers this whole thing to be a big joke. In the letters that he sent to members of the opposition, the Chief Minister certainly indicated that he thought it was a huge joke. I said before that this government has been typecast. The Everingham government had its particular and recognisable behaviour. This government is recognisable already by one thing: a totally irresponsible attitude in respect of the custody that it has of taxpayers' money and the way in which it spends that money. It has exhibited again and again during this sittings of the Assembly, that it has an extremely laid-back attitude about how seriously it takes the job of responsibly administering the Treasury. Nothing could in fact cement that attitude more into place than the letter that I and all opposition caucus members received from the Chief Minister in respect of these pay rises. Before I read the letter I would just point out to the minister that the first statement that I made in respect of opposing this pay increase was on 16 October, fully 2 months before the Jingili by-election. I would suggest that he have a look at the public records. In fact, I made that statement at the very first opportunity that was available to me after we had received the determination that there were to be salary increases. Mr Speaker, I will read the letter:

Dear Mr Collins,

I note that, in the forthcoming Legislative Assembly sittings, you intend to move to disallow the latest pay rise awarded to Territory members of parliament by the Remuneration Tribunal. I note too that you and your colleagues have had no qualms about collecting this rise since it came into effect. You are well aware, of course, that there are established procedures to deduct this money from your salary. Given your strong feelings on the matter, I am amazed that you have not resorted to those procedures. Enclosed please find a form to deduct the rise from your salary. I shall be delighted to process it through the appropriate channels as soon as you complete it and send it back to me.

*Yours sincerely,
Ian Tuxworth.*

Mr Speaker, I rang the minister's office and complained about it. The letter, with the attached form, was supplied to the press before I received my copy. I had a telephone call from an amused journalist who said: 'I have a copy of a letter to you from the Chief Minister which says...'. I said: 'It would be nice if I had the letter to me from the Chief Minister before the press got it'. I complained about it. Mr Speaker, I was intrigued by this letter because it made references to 'established procedures' and so on for deducting this increase and pegging it at 4.1%. I made inquiries and, not surprisingly, found that no such procedures existed. It was no surprise then to turn the page over and find attached to the letter, not a government form reflecting established procedures, but simply a letter that had been dummied up in the office of the Chief Minister himself.

Mr Speaker, that is something straight out of a trick shop. That was a really half-smart and - if I can use the word - juvenile attitude towards what we considered to be an extremely serious position in which the Northern Territory government put itself in respect of what we knew would be demands from the Northern Territory Public Service for significant pay rises which the government has now indicated publicly it will oppose. Those pay rises would be a full 4% less than the pay rises the government has indicated that its members would accept. The Chief Minister's response to that is to send this half-smart letter, not a form using established procedures at all, but a letter dummied up in his office to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly telling us that the government will deduct a certain amount.

Mr Speaker, the Treasury people I spoke to about implementing that sort of procedure were entirely unimpressed with the suggestions of the Chief Minister and I do not think that this kind of approach to serious matters of economic responsibility reflects very well on either the Chief Minister's competence, in terms of his position as both Chief Minister and Treasurer, or his capacity adequately to carry out the job that he has been given a mandate to do by the people of the Northern Territory. That is not entirely correct either, is it, Mr Speaker? He has not been given that mandate at all; he inherited the job because the former Chief Minister left.

Mr Speaker, we know the reality of the new Chief Minister's hold on his job. We know that the vote that was taken for Chief Minister in the Northern Territory was in fact 10 to 8. I was most amused to see that Patrick Cusack got it wrong. He had it at 12 to 8 which gave the members opposite one more member than they possess in the Legislative Assembly. There were 2 votes in it and we know from the honourable member for Jingili's contribution the other day, that he will help us. The real numbers in the Assembly now, Mr Speaker, would be not 19 to 6 but Dondas 8, Tuxworth 10, opposition 6 and Rick Setter.

Mr Speaker, it is about time that the government showed a far more responsible attitude than it has demonstrated so far towards its economic responsibility in terms of spending the money that is entrusted to it by the taxpayers. It was announced that we had lost \$12m this morning, of which \$4m was lost due to incompetence, which the government tried to brush over. We have lost in the vicinity of \$10m in respect of the entire casino transaction and, as we discovered this morning again, we are likely to lose a good deal more. The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory treats the whole question of establishing the pay rates for all members of the Legislative Assembly, 25 of us irrespective of political party affiliation, as a joke, as something that he can hand out to the press for a bit of a giggle.

Mr Speaker, the opposition supports the existence of the Remuneration Tribunal. One of the commendable things that that particular tribunal has done was to break up the rigid demarcation line that existed between urban and rural seats. Formerly, we had a situation whereby there were urban seats and rural seats that got so much money and so on and, of course, a level of financial injustice existed between people with big rural electorates and those who had small rural electorates. The tribunal has been invaluable in the attitude that it has taken in listening to individual representations, supported by evidence, as to the problems members have in their electorates and the costs involved in carrying out the job that they have to do on behalf of their electors, attending meetings and so on. We support that the Remuneration Tribunal should continue but we think, and I say it unblushingly, that it is time for a change. We think this act needs to be amended, as do so many other acts. We intend to introduce legislation to do that.

If the wages accord had been a failure, one could say that was just nonsense and had not worked. Mr Speaker, the accord has been a dramatic success. We had inflation touching 11% and going through the roof. Unemployment was doing the same thing. We had that frightening thing called 'stagflation', the nightmare of all mixed economies like ours, where inflation and unemployment were both rising together. But, as a result of that accord, a substantial level of wage restraint has been shown over the last 18 months which has resulted in inflation being halved and unemployment, although certainly not reaching the level that we desire it to reach, going down instead of up.

All politicians, not just those in Canberra, have a corporate responsibility to show some degree of leadership in industrial affairs and not to place unnecessary strains on a valuable accord which has contributed greatly to the economic recovery of this country, and certainly not the type of stresses and strains that the Northern Territory government is currently creating. We will introduce legislation to allow the tribunal to continue but to give guidelines on how it should determine basic salary packages so that those packages will not be greater than the rest of the community expects to get. Mr Speaker, is that unreasonable? We want a degree of responsibility and we do not want an absurd situation with 2 levels of salaries for politicians, as suggested by the Chief Minister. We want a responsible attitude on the part of every member of this Assembly to give some lead, particularly, if to no one else, to the Northern Territory Public Service. If we do not take the opportunity to do that this afternoon, in any future negotiations on salary levels between the Northern Territory government and the Northern Territory Public Service, the government will not have a leg to stand on.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, there are a couple of points that I would like to put into perspective this afternoon for the honourable member whose memory seems to have lapsed a little since the last day of the last sittings last year. Mr Speaker, late in the afternoon on that day, the Leader of the Opposition said to me: 'What are you fellows doing with the Remuneration Tribunal's report?' I said: 'We will accept it. We have appointed a tribunal and it has handed down a decision. I have not opened the cover of it but, whatever it says, we will accept'. The Leader of the Opposition did not tell me what he was going to do and I do not think I asked him, not that that is important.

Mr B. Collins: You were not the Chief Minister.

Mr TUXWORTH: No, we were just discussing the matter as it had happened. But the reality was that, if it was such a terrible problem, the Leader of the Opposition that day had 10 hours in which to get his dander up and raise some hell about it, to go out into the streets and the byways...

Mr B. Collins: I had 5 other people to talk to about it first.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said that he had 5 other people to talk to about it. Mr Speaker, would it take you 10 hours to talk to 5 other people about it? Setting all of that aside, if the Leader of the Opposition were sincere, he could have risen that day and said something about it to give his position some credibility. He did not do that, Mr Speaker. He was quite prepared to let it lie.

Mr Speaker, a couple of days later, because of the impending federal election, it became very important to jump up and down about the impropriety of pay rises that had just been granted to parliamentarians because they were so outrageous. He would be the first to agree with us that we all bid for a 4.1%

increase because we felt that that was fair and reasonable. The tribunal said that, in terms of relativity and so on, it thought we should have more, and it gave us 11%. I think it should be made plain that one of the reasons why we appointed a tribunal to consider the issue of parliamentary salaries was that there is no way that we can credibly determine those salaries ourselves and it would not be fair to the rest of the community if we did so. If, having gone to the trouble of appointing a tribunal which has sat for a period of 2 or 3 years to consider the issue of payments to people in this Assembly, we then turn around and put its determination aside, we might as well sack the tribunal and say to it: 'We do not like the figures that you have come up with. It is politically embarrassing for us to take what you have given us'.

Mr Speaker, I would make the point that the action of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition this afternoon in moving this motion would achieve 2 things: it would set aside and invalidate the proposals of the tribunal totally because it is not a minor amendment and it would put aside, in my view, the concept of having a tribunal. If we are not to have it, then let us consider the proposition that we have something else. That position has never been raised. The speakers from the other side this afternoon have not said whether they think we should continue with the tribunal or whether it should have certain constraints placed on it or whether, when we give our submissions to the tribunal, we should say: 'We are asking for 4% and we are telling you that, if you give us a cracker more, we will overturn your decision'. The whole object is to present the case that we think is reasonable and let the tribunal determine what it thinks it is fair for us to receive.

Mr Speaker, I am one of those people who have never put a personal proposition to the tribunal. I will take what it gives me. I will be quiet and say nothing if I get no increase at all. I just cop it the way it comes. Most of the members here feel the same. So really, we are considering whether we want to have a tribunal, whether we want to listen to it or whether we want to put it aside and do something else.

This morning, the member for Stuart asked a question of the Minister for Mines and Energy about the Sessional Committee on the Environment that we have for the uranium province. The Leader of the Opposition interjected by saying: 'If you are not going to take any notice of it, why have it?' I wrote it down as he said it because it was just so relevant. Mr Speaker...

Mr B. Collins: You are scratching today.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am not scratching. We now have a very interesting political situation. The boys must front up to the comrades and explain how they happen to have come into possession of an 11.7% increase in salary.

Mr B. Collins: No, we don't.

Mr TUXWORTH: But they do, Mr Speaker.

Mr B. Collins: No, we don't. You are the ones who have to front up.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, how can they go to a meeting of the comrades and explain to the brothers how they happened to cop 11.7%?

Mr B. Collins: You are not distinguishing yourself at all.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, that is what this is all about. They thought they would get political mileage out of it before the election by showing what Goody Two-Shoes they were.

I sent the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues that letter because I was serious. I accept that some people find it objectionable to receive money, to receive a rise or to have a promotion. They want to be left alone. That is great. If the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues fit into that category, I am not going to argue with them. But there is no need for them to be the captains of the world and to organise everybody else according to their standards. I am sincere when I say that, if the Leader of the Opposition does not want to receive the increase, I do not have any problem. That is a personal matter for him. He can do a couple of things. He can send it to charity. He can write to you, Mr Speaker, and tell you he does not want it. He can write to the tribunal and tell it that he is embarrassed by the increase.

However, as an Assembly, we appointed the tribunal to review the salaries of everybody. The opposition has the right to disagree with it and set it aside. I do not believe it has the right to tell everybody else in the community what to do just because its members think they are the captains of the world, the Goody Two-Shoes and the political hypocrites that they are from time to time. We will not hear of this issue again until there is another election.

Mr B. Collins: You are not advancing your cause.

Mr TUXWORTH: I am not interested in advancing my cause. What I am saying to the Leader of the Opposition is, if he wants to be what he is, then be it. Leave everyone else alone. We will accept what we are given and what we are not given.

Mr Speaker, all I can say to you is that the Leader of the Opposition had plenty of time to raise this issue if he had wanted to. He raised it in a political context to try to get a few votes for a federal election and a by-election. You will notice, Mr Speaker, that the issue did not die down during either of the elections. He would also like to put forward a proposition that totally disregards the activities of the tribunal. If we are going to tell the tribunal that we do not want 11% and that we only want 4%, we might as well tell it that it is sacked and that we have no regard for its deliberations at all. This Assembly passed the legislation. We appointed the tribunal by concurrence, I believe. We have accepted its rulings until now. We felt that they were fair and reasonable. Embarrassing it may be, and uncomfortable it may be, but it is the award that we received. If we go through this year and next year without getting anything, well that is too bad. Mr Speaker, this whole thing is a preposterous political exercise and nothing more.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition has just whispered in an aside, there is one way to stop it being a political exercise and that is for the government to agree to this motion. Any political points that we may have scored would be completely undone by the government accepting this attitude and endorsing this motion.

I want to refer to a comment made by the now Chief Minister in relation to the tabling of the tribunal's report in a sittings last year. The government was so embarrassed by this report that it landed unannounced, together with a heap of other papers, on each member's desk midway through the afternoon. No announcement was made. No courtesy was extended to the Leader of the Opposition before the Assembly sat to tell him what was in it. No courtesy was extended to him during the course of the day before the thing was placed on our desks. It just landed on our desks in the middle of the afternoon of a 1-day sittings, of which we also were not told and, therefore, did not know about. We had a whole course of action planned and many things we wanted to do at that sittings. That ground, too, was cut from under us before we started those sittings. The way

this government has handled this whole thing is just typical of the respect it has for parliamentary practice.

Mr Speaker, we come to the very cute Minister for Health who talks about being embarrassed and even humiliated. It is easy to put up with that sort of humiliation and it is the sort of humiliation that has one smiling all the way to the bank. If he were serious about being humiliated or embarrassed, he would do something about it instead of just opening a separate bank account. He would do something constructive about it.

Then we heard this strange argument that the act is there and we ought to obey the act. Section 9(4) of the act provides that, within 10 sitting days after the tabling of a determination made by the tribunal, the Assembly can move a resolution to disapprove the determination or any part of the determination. The reason why that was put there was to provide an escape clause to this Assembly if, in the Assembly's view, the Remuneration Tribunal came down with something that was embarrassing or humiliating, to use the words of the Minister for Health. I put it to you that we have exactly this circumstance here; it is embarrassing and humiliating. We have all felt that. That is why that section is there. There is nothing wrong with the legislation in that context. It is there.

The government does not have the guts to use the legislation for the purpose for which it has been put there. It is content to make polite noises and say: 'You must keep with what is in the act'. The act quite clearly provides for a situation like this where we are embarrassed or humiliated. There is something we can do about it. That side of the Assembly is not game to do anything about it because it does not have any respect for the public purse and it is quite happy to take the extra money.

Mr Speaker, we were asked what we are going to do about this in future. The opposition has already given notice that it intends to move an amendment to the legislation at the next sittings. The reason why we want to move an amendment to the legislation is that circumstances have changed since it was first introduced in that we have a prices and incomes accord which is working satisfactorily and an official federal government and Territory government policy of wage restraint. Both of those things are new since the legislation was first introduced. We believe it appropriate that this independent wage-fixing body, when it considers its position on parliamentary salaries in the Northern Territory, should be forced to pay due and proper regard to the prices and incomes accord and to the wage restraint principles practised by both the federal and Northern Territory governments. That is the guts of the amendment that we propose to introduce at the next sittings. We believe that to be a perfectly reasonable and sensible practice which, hopefully, will solve this embarrassing and humiliating position that we find ourselves in at present.

Mr Perron: You are the one who seems to be embarrassed and humiliated.

Mr SMITH: I would expect that the honourable member for Fannie Bay would not be embarrassed and humiliated by this. He does not have a record of sharing the common concerns of other members of this Assembly and the general public. He seems to think that he is one off and that he can reject the practices of this Assembly and use his power to do what he wants. However, I must admit that some other people on his side of the Assembly say that they are embarrassed and humiliated and I am sure that they are much more in touch with what is going on in this community than is the honourable member for Fannie Bay.

Mr Speaker, I will go over the ground again. This 11.7% increase is quite clearly outside the prices and incomes accord. Clearly, in the present climate,

it has been an inflammatory exercise. It will become even more inflammatory if, after today, we accept this 11.7% increase. It quite clearly destroys the relativities that previously existed in parliamentary salaries throughout Australia and the only conclusion that we can draw from all that is that it is unjustified.

On the other hand, we have this opportunity today to show that we are serious about the most important economic issue facing Australia today: to get the economy moving, to keep wages down as much as we can and to keep employment up as much as we can. We have the opportunity to show, through this debate and our decision at the end of it, that those things are at the forefront of our minds and that, furthermore, being the public figures that we are, we recognise that we have an obligation not only to talk about these matters, but also to be serious about them and to put our money where our mouth is. Mr Speaker, quite clearly, the government is not prepared to take this step and that will be to the detriment of politics in the Northern Territory. I think the community in the Northern Territory and the public of Australia will feel betrayed by the fact that this government is not prepared to show a very clear example of what should be done at this time.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6

Mr Bell
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith

Noes 18

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Manzie
Mr McCarthy
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Robertson
Mr Setter
Mr Steele
Mr Tuxworth
Mr Vale

Motion negatived.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 28 February 1985.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Northern Territory has experienced remarkable growth and development since the first days of self-government in 1978. Roads, bridges and the Gardens Hill development, which I am sure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would also agree with, are going ahead and all show that development in the Northern Territory is proceeding quite well. However, in rising to speak in the address-in-reply debate today, I would like to refer to another aspect of development that is perhaps less tangible but, nevertheless, equally important and expresses itself in programs and policies which enhance the quality of life of individuals and

groups in our community rather than in the bricks and mortar of construction work.

We are told that the Northern Territory now has a population of 138 900 people, that 11.5% of the families have single parents, that in 50% of families both parents work, that no less than 35% of the population in the Northern Territory is under 18 years of age and that the Aboriginal percentage of the population is around 24%. The Northern Territory population is made up of 45 distinct nationalities and ethnic groups. This is interesting information which builds up a picture of a community which has a young and dynamic population with needs and desires probably unique in all of Australia.

The term 'community development' expresses the government's commitment to the welfare and aspirations of the people of the Territory. The Department of Community Development is responsible for a wide range of functional areas which reflect the government's desire to improve the quality of life of Territorians. These functions include: community welfare, Aboriginal development, women's affairs, local government, community government and consumer affairs. Honourable members will recall that the department has recently undergone a major review of its roles and functions and a number of initiatives have been taken to restructure it. The department has been restructured along regional lines with decentralised management. These 2 steps are designed to ensure that it is responsive to issues and program delivery at the local or regional level.

In order to maintain the direction now being taken, it has been necessary to embark on a comprehensive employee training and development program. Initiatives in this area include: skills training and development, organisational change in planning workshops and an ongoing assessment of organisation and management development which is necessary to achieve the overall objectives and aims of the department. Officers with a wider range of management skills and expertise have been recruited and the latest computer technology has been acquired. This will allow better access to information for planning, program evaluation and decision-making.

Mr Deputy Speaker, before I outline some of the important programs and initiatives, either in hand or planned, you would be aware that the Chief Minister announced last December his new administrative arrangements. These included the transfer of the Office of Aboriginal Liaison to the Department of Community Development. The Office of Aboriginal Liaison has been integrated within the department and will assume all responsibilities for Aboriginal development. The government is undertaking a major review of its role in assisting Aboriginal development in the Northern Territory. In the Department of Community Development Organisational Review Report of last July, it was stated: 'There is an emphasis on the provision and maintenance of essential services to Aboriginal communities sometimes at the exclusion of broader social concerns'.

The government sees the need to develop a better understanding of what it is that Aboriginal people want for themselves and their communities. It sees the need for a greater depth of socio-economic analysis and for the recasting of values and objectives. There is a clear need for strategies which deal less with the provision of services and more with policies addressing all issues affecting Aboriginal communities and which directly empower the communities to address those issues. The government should now begin to shift its orientation from that of a servicing agent to one of a facilitator or collaborator in community endeavour. By adopting this role and using community profiles being built up, it should be possible to help communities to identify and establish sets of short and intermediate-term goals that are realistic and achievable.

Then, the task will be one of helping to set up action strategies which are relevant to communities and which they are capable of implementing. This approach is not meant to imply that anything a community wants it gets but, by discussion and agreement, goals that have relevance within the government's policy of self-management and within the budget context can be established, with the community accepting various degrees of responsibility for their achievement.

To coordinate and oversee the review of government policies in this area, I am pleased to announce the appointment of a new Director of Aboriginal Development in the Northern Territory. He is Mr Peter Plummer who comes to this post from Batchelor College where he has been a distinguished and innovative principal. Mr Plummer has considerable experience in the area of Aboriginal education and training. A significant advantage of the new arrangements will be to integrate Aboriginal development alongside other areas of the department and this will have a positive impact in the areas of Aboriginal development for which the Northern Territory government has responsibility. These arrangements should achieve a marked enhancement of Aboriginal policies and programs throughout the Territory. Importantly, priority will be given to projects which provide increasing employment opportunities for youth and other unemployed people in communities.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt this speech because I think it is an excellent one. However, I wish to draw your attention to the lack of a quorum in this Assembly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ring the bells.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his kind remark on the substance of my speech.

As I was saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, priority will be given to projects which provide increased employment opportunities for youth. I think this is very important. One has only to visit some of the Aboriginal communities to see what a problem the Northern Territory will have in these areas. Answers must be found to employment problems for young Aboriginals. They must be given worthwhile employment and opportunities to determine their priorities and where they are going. The Department of Aboriginal Development will establish a futures committee to address that very problem. As I said before, the problems of youth are not restricted to Aboriginals. 35% of our population is now under the age of 18 years and we really have to get on top of those problems very soon.

Increased priority will be given by field staff to consultation, education and encouragement of Aboriginal community councils towards their establishment as community government councils under part XX of the Local Government Act. This is a logical step in the progress of community councils towards self-management of their affairs. However, there will be no imposition of the community government scheme on any community. Introduction will be only at the request of the residents of a community and will proceed through proper and adequate consultation.

The government has established the Northern Territory Coordination of Aboriginal Programs Committee, called NTCAP. It comprises departmental heads of Community Development, Treasury, Health, Transport and Works, Education and Lands. Regional committees have been established in both Darwin and Alice Springs. NTCAP has the potential to develop into a major focal point for Aboriginal affairs programs in the Northern Territory. A major task being undertaken by this committee is the development of standardised Aboriginal

community profiles, which will allow more effective monitoring and evaluation of them, and other community information to facilitate the development of appropriate plans and action strategies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will take this opportunity to outline some of the programs and initiatives to be undertaken by other divisions within the department. In the area of welfare, a high standard of support services to individuals and families in crisis, including child protection and the provision of substitute care for children, services to juvenile offenders, and emergency financial assistance, will continue. A departmental welfare presence at Palmerston will also be provided to cater directly for the welfare needs of that rapidly developing community. There will be continuation of funding to voluntary welfare organisations and community groups through the grants-in-aid program. There will be an emphasis on programs aimed at addressing the significant social problems prevalent in many remote Aboriginal communities. A particular focus will be on the establishment of community resource centres and the employment of local Aboriginal people to provide preventative and remedial programs on a community basis. Continuing emphasis will be given to funding local government and voluntary organisations to provide individual and family counselling services.

Last year, the new community welfare and juvenile justice legislation came into effect in the Territory. The legislation has received favourable attention in other states and some are enacting similar legal provisions. The Juvenile Justice Act is about to be reviewed by a committee chaired by the Chief Magistrate. That review is to be completed by August and it will determine the effectiveness of the legislation. Work is still proceeding on the implementation of some parts of the legislation, in particular those relating to the licensing of children's homes, and Aboriginal child welfare. The Task Force on Juvenile Crime has held its initial meeting and will report to the government by the end of May on the incidence of juvenile crime, particularly in the Darwin area. It will suggest approaches to reduce the magnitude of this significant community problem. Population projections and demographic studies suggest that the potential of the problem is increasing all the time. The percentage of our population under the age of 15 is increasing and, in fact, will peak in 1986-87. In my own electorate, the percentage of the population of Palmerston under 15 is currently as high as 30%. I am confident that the task force has the expertise and the common sense to address this problem realistically and I look forward to receiving its recommendations.

Another important initiative is the review of the pensioners' concession scheme. This provides a range of benefits to Territory pensioners and has been in operation for almost 6 years. It has been extended progressively and modified during that period but the time has come for a full review of the scheme to ensure that it remains in tune with current and future needs. It is intended that that review will be completed by the end of August.

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program started in January as a joint Commonwealth state program involving the integration of existing Commonwealth and NT crisis accommodation including sub-programs for youth, women, and homeless people in general. The first meeting of the SAAP Commonwealth Territory Supporting Accommodation Program Coordinating Committee took place on 21 February and that body will be making recommendations to me shortly, and to my federal counterpart, on program guidelines and funding applications for the remainder of 1984-85. The Children's Services Bureau will continue to plan for the provision of child care and related children's services for the Territory's rapidly expanding population. 11 new child-care centres are in the planning or construction stages and they will provide more than 300 additional child-care places by the end of July next year.

In relation to women's affairs, there have been some new administrative arrangements in the Territory. Under the new arrangements announced by the Chief Minister on 21 December last year, the Office of Women's Affairs was transferred from the Department of the Chief Minister to the Department of Community Development. Before I go on to speak about the role and functions of the Division of Women's Affairs, I must clear up some misinformation about this new arrangement. It has been said in the media that the changes mean a downgrading of the government's commitment to women's issues, that women's affairs will become a welfare annexe and that the division will act as a typing pool for the Women's Advisory Council. These criticisms were made without knowledge of the government's action in this area. They are unfair and, in the case of the chief critic, most unworthy. The fact is that the changes will mean a significant upgrading of the government's commitment and, in particular, the new arrangements will ensure that skilled resources will be allocated to programs affecting all women in the Territory. Honourable members will see that the new arrangements will bring together important avenues of information and ideas for the benefit of the government in its shaping of policies for women generally.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Women's Affairs Division will now have a greatly expanded role. Included in it will be a full-time secretariat and research functions for the Women's Advisory Council which will result in the council having access to better and properly researched information and efficient preparation facilities for input to government policies. The Women's Affairs Division will now have a greatly expanded role which will result in the Women's Advisory Council having greater access to the information that it needs most. Secondly, the government will have under 1 umbrella a broad range of functions in which women are vitally interested. In addition to the Women's Advisory Council Secretariat and Research Unit, the Women's Affairs Division will have responsibility for the Women's Information Centres, Children's Services Bureau, temporary accommodation centres for women and the coordination of the Homemaker Program. For the information of honourable members, I will outline the functions of these units.

The Women's Information Centres provide an immediate reference point for women seeking information on any topic of concern to them. They are located in shopfront premises, making them easily accessible. The Children's Services Bureau, which will be functioning within its full charter by July this year, plans the development of child-care services, provides support and in-service training for child-care centres and coordinates government policy on child-care matters. The Homemaker Service is a community-based preventative welfare service which aims to minimise family breakdown and reduce the need for financial assistance, institutional care and substitute care. This service will be devolved on community organisations and local government authorities by the end of June this year. Departmental officers already servicing these functions will be transferred to the Women's Affairs Division and there will be no downgrading of or reduction of positions as a consequence.

These changes reflect the high priority this government continues to place on issues of concern to women. The Women's Advisory Council which, in the past, has laboured under some difficulties through a lack of full-time research support, will now have access, through its Secretariat and Research Unit, to information on matters that are of considerable significance to all women in the Territory. Given this access to information and with the full-time Secretariat and Research Unit now working solely for the council, the council will continue to be able to give to the government recommendations on a range of issues that it considers to be of importance to women in the Territory. The council, together with the secretariat, will be able to work to ensure that the

government is made fully aware of issues affecting Territory women in all walks of life. As the functions within the division are now linked, the government will be able to obtain, through its information network, a more comprehensive picture of issues that affect women. The new and expanded role of the Women's Affairs Division will result in greater administrative cohesion and strength. It will enable advice and coordination of policies and programs of direct relevance to women to be more effective than ever before.

In the area of local government, the emergence of new and developing centres throughout the Territory has made local government a major focal point for my department's activities. Current initiatives in local government include the finalisation of a new local government act which is designed to widen and clarify the powers and functions of existing local government authorities. In the final stages, and indeed throughout the review of the act, considerable consultation has taken place with council members and officials to ensure the widest possible consensus on the provisions of the new legislation. Undertakings have been given for further consultation with these bodies on the development of the supporting regulations. Honourable members will note that the consultation process has been expanded to maximise input from user bodies while maintaining impetus to allow the earliest possible implementation of the new act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the desires of those councils to incorporate changes in their rating structure for 1985-86 will be accommodated. The development of a form of local government known as community government is well under way in proclaimed towns. The scheme for Mataranka is now complete and the statutory procedures for its incorporation are in the final stages. I am pleased to advise that I had a constructive meeting in February with Elliott residents who also wish to act along these lines.

A proposal for a fully-elected local government council in Palmerston is progressing. Resolution of an appropriate and representative form of local government in the outer Darwin area is under consideration and, as I emphasised before, consultation has been the key in the determination of this process. I will be convening a 2-day conference on local government beginning on 25 March at which issues relevant to legislation, the need for boundary changes, new local government and other important matters will be discussed by elected members, officials and interested organisations.

At the next Local Government Ministers' Conference, it is my intention to pursue with my federal and state colleagues the need for special attention to be given to the creation of the necessary infrastructure to increase both physical and social resources essential for new town development. This is increasingly relevant to the Territory with its exceptional growth rate. This expanded focus on local government will lead to greater input by beneficiaries and providers alike to the planning and provision of services.

I have already mentioned the encouragement and support my department is giving to Aboriginal community councils to achieve self-management through the establishment of community government. The government is equally committed to the development of community government in established centres in the Territory and interest in this is being shown in communities such as Pine Creek and Borroloola.

The department will continue to place emphasis on promoting and protecting the interests of consumers through education and resolution of complaints through negotiation. Recently, I appointed a new Consumer Affairs Council comprising a balanced membership from all regions of the Territory. Consumer

affairs initiatives already in place or planned include a review of the Motor Vehicles Act as part of the ongoing review of all consumer protection legislation. The Consumer Affairs Branch now provides secretariat support to the Territory Anti-litter Committee which will endeavour to maintain the admirable results achieved to date in litter awareness and control throughout the Territory. To further assist the efforts of the Territory Anti-litter Committee and Keep Australia Beautiful Council, the department is preparing new litter and pollution control legislation.

For the benefit of honourable members, I will outline legislative proposals currently under consideration or in preparation. It must be emphasised that this is merely an interim list and priorities may alter. There is the Local Government Act which I have spoken about. Amending legislation dealing with caravan parks, hawkers, dogs, tenancy, weights and measures, motor vehicle dealers, litter and waste, credit, the National Trust and cemeteries is under consideration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have provided an outline of some of the aims of the Department of Community Development and some of the initiatives which are planned or have been put in place already. It is my intention that the department will continue to look ahead to determine the needs and desires of a rapidly growing Territory community and to act to meet them, not in a passive or reactive manner but with an informed awareness of those needs before they occur. This year will be one of demand and challenges in this area and I look forward to the role I can play in that process.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, there are several matters I wish to raise today in relation to the address in reply. I would like to begin with a matter that was given some emphasis by the Minister for Community Development. The whole question of women's affairs is a very political issue in terms of the emphasis that has to be given to what has been, for many years, largely a neglected area. It is a fact of life that no matter what sort of face the government wants to put on it, if it moves an area of responsibility from the Department of the Chief Minister to that of the most junior minister in the government, it is a serious downgrading of the political emphasis being given to that particular subject. Mr Deputy Speaker, it does not take a Sherlock Holmes to realise that the government's failure even to mention its plans for removing disadvantages for women or raising the status of women in the address in reply, reveals its true attitude to this important issue. I suggest that the Tuxworth government has not bothered to address this in its first parliamentary statement to the people of the Northern Territory either because it does not care or, as recent press comments indicate, its members cannot agree amongst themselves on what should be done - or both. I refer honourable members' attention to a most curious interview on ABC radio recently. A codicil was attached to the interview on Territory Extra by the Chief Minister. It said that another statement would be made later clarifying what turned out to be some inaccuracies in the Chief Minister's statement on ABC radio.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as honourable members would remember, the opposition was heavily critical for many years of the former Chief Minister for failing for so long to address this issue seriously. That issue was taken up particularly by the former members for Nightcliff, Fannie Bay and Sanderson. To his credit and, I suspect, largely because he was a lot more astute politically than the current Chief Minister, a few months before the last Northern Territory election, he took some very decisive steps. Cynical though some of us were about the timing - and we have heard a lot about timing today - there is little doubt that, once committed, he tried to establish a structure and a system that would benefit both

the government and Territory women. He appointed a Women's Advisor to the Chief Minister. He established the Office of Women's Affairs under the Department of the Chief Minister and he appointed a Women's Advisory Council.

Given a year in which to review its operation, the new Chief Minister was justified in increasing support services to the hard-working members of the voluntary Women's Advisory Council. We have no argument with that. We acknowledge the important work that the council does and the broad section of the community that it represents. But, the new Chief Minister did much more than that. He announced not only that the entire office was there only to serve the council but also took the Office of the Chief Minister's Adviser on Women's Affairs and the Women's Advisory Council and handed them over to the Minister for Community Development. As I said, and it is no personal reflection, he put it under the stewardship of the Territory government's most junior minister. Effectively, he gave the Office of Women's Affairs a 'welfare tag'. Whether the Chief Minister likes it or not, and whether he realises it or not, he has downgraded the status and thus the effect of the entire system significantly. If recent press reports are correct, I am pleased to hear that the honourable Minister for Community Development intends to try to redress the situation to some extent. The fact is that the Chief Minister has placed on the public record a statement that seems to be severely at odds with the statement made in the Assembly today by the Minister for Community Development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that the minister intends to ensure that the Women's Affairs Division will provide both effective servicing to the Women's Advisory Council and the staff resources to allow the division itself to initiate programs and advise on a broad range of issues affecting women. But, no amount of rhetoric or rearrangement, however positive, will undo what the new Chief Minister has done, which is to downgrade and push aside the status and importance of women in the Northern Territory community. If ever there was a Chief Minister who needed to have responsible people who were sensitive to the needs of the electorate directly advising him, it is this Chief Minister. We have seen all too quickly the mess and misunderstanding that has resulted from that Chief Minister's unilateral decision-making, without consultation even with his own responsible ministers. The entire structure set up by the former Chief Minister was designed for women to have direct and quick access - and that was the way it actually worked - to the head of government, not to a junior minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the downgrading of the Office of Women's Affairs is not the only issue affecting Northern Territory women which concerns the opposition in regard to this government's attitude and its record. We are still waiting for the government to introduce sex discrimination legislation to complement the federal act. We are one of the few governments in Australia that have not moved to do this. The new Chief Minister may well discover, to his political peril, that memories in this community are not so short. After all, he is the person remembered first of all for cutting off funding to the Women's Centre and then for closing that centre down. Now he has the added and dubious distinction of being the person responsible for downgrading the Office of Women's Affairs and all the benefits it could provide far more effectively with direct access to the head of government himself.

As honourable members may well know, Northern Territory women, along with those of South Australia, were the first to receive the vote in this country in 1894. Since then, we have seen women take an increasingly active role in the political and social development of the Northern Territory. They include: Lyn Berlowitz, who was the first woman member of the then Legislative Council in the 1960s; Lillian Dean who was the first woman elected to the Darwin City Council; Ella Stack, the first woman to be elected as Mayor of Darwin; and many others.

Another distinguished woman who served the Northern Territory was Pam O'Neil, the former member for Fannie Bay, who became the first woman in Australia to achieve the frontbench rank of Deputy Leader of the Opposition. A great deal of hard work has been put in by the women I have mentioned and others. It was to the great detriment of the Territory, in my view, that the Legislative Assembly lost the contributions of the former members for Fannie Bay, Sanderson and Nightcliff - and by that I mean no reflection on the current holders of those seats. Largely because of the efforts of those women over the years, we seemed to be breaking ground and making some headway when the former Chief Minister began to address seriously the needs of Territory women. The opposition deeply regrets the retrograde steps taken by the government to undo what the former Chief Minister for the Northern Territory set in place. We advise the government that we intend to pursue the matter and we shall monitor its actions in this area very closely and do what we can to redress the damage done by this Chief Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to comment on a number of issues that were mentioned in His Honour's speech. I have just canvassed the one that was not. Mention was made of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority's activities on the Douglas-Daly. I think there is a definite need for continued support by the government for ADMA and that development should continue slowly without the razzamatazz of unreal expectations being built up as we have seen in past years. It should maintain quiet and effective support for the operations of the farmers who are there at the moment without unnecessarily raising the expectations of the Northern Territory community or, indeed, of the farmers themselves. I think it is important at least to maintain the progress that has been made.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the government on the decision that it has taken to create the new Department of Ports and Fisheries. In comparison with the states, we are not exploiting to the fullest extent the potential that exists in the waters off the Northern Territory's coast in respect of fishing activities. We look forward to seeing far greater development of the Territory's fishing potential in future years and there is no question at all that now is the right time to create this separate department. I commend the government on its decision.

Some mention was made of amendments to be made to land rights legislation in the Northern Territory. I will not go into that in detail this afternoon for the simple reason that it has been canvassed at such inordinate length in numerous debates and, without doubt, will be canvassed again at length in this Legislative Assembly. I wish to say simply that the opposition recognises, and has recognised for a considerable time, that amendments are required to that act. We put in a considerable effort in terms of negotiating with all of the relevant groups, including extensive consultations with the mining industry and the cattle industry of the Northern Territory, in respect of amendments which we considered should have been made a number of years ago. It is a matter of extreme personal regret to me that the opportunity to put at least some of those amendments into place was squandered and thrown away by the intransigent attitude of the former Northern Territory government. Had the Northern Territory government been pragmatic enough to acknowledge that everything that was wanted at that time would not be accomplished, about 80% of the proposed amendments would now be part of the act if they had been pursued independently rather than as a package.

It is with a great deal of cynicism that I observe the activities of the senator representing the Northern Territory for the CLP. After 7 years, he has discovered that a land rights act exists. I sat through a number of land claim

hearings in the days when Justice Toohey was the Aboriginal Land Commissioner and witnessed the anomalies in the act. They have been around for an awfully long time and received a great deal of comment from the judge himself and from barristers appearing for various parties. I do not think that it reflects any particular credit on the senator that, during the period when he was a senator in the government which introduced this legislation, he did not make the slightest effort to amend it during that time but is now making moves in that direction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the position I have on land rights legislation is pretty simple in respect of its major point - the whole question of the mining veto. Although the many amendments required to the act - and there are glaring anomalies and problems - have been canvassed in detail, the mining veto can be covered very simply. A veto used by Aboriginal people, not in an attempt to prevent mining from taking place on land, but as - and they have an absolute right so to use it; this is not a criticism of the groups involved - a bargaining counter to extract further money from mining companies, in my view, cannot be sustained or supported. I am sure that some honourable members at least will see that what I am saying is not in any way a criticism of Aboriginal land councils. Like any of us, they use what is available. However, I think the time has now come when that lever should not be provided.

However, there is not the slightest doubt that there are many Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, some of whom I know very well, who could not care less about the CLP, the ALP, the Northern Land Council, the Central Land Council, mining companies or anyone else. As one of them from Gapuwiyak said to me recently, they simply wish to be left alone. They are not interested in mining royalties; they are not interested in money; they are not interested in political parties, politicians or anything else; they just want an opportunity to pursue the lifestyle that they are pursuing at the moment and to be left alone. Those are the people whose interests I want protected and preserved by whatever changes are made to the Land Rights Act.

I have been to meetings ad infinitum and yet I still cannot help being moved by the real issues of human justice involved. This particular gentleman from Gapuwiyak, a man of prominence, promise and distinction, a traditional Aboriginal person in every respect, said recently to myself and a group of people: 'We are living here. We do not want mining. We do not want money. We do not want politicians coming to talk to us. You know what you blokes are going to do to us; we know what you are going to do to us. What you are going to do is come in and muck up our lives. You are going to bring mining and all these other things in' - I had never heard this expressed like that before - 'then you are going to make us sick. We are going to get sick and then you are going to send doctors in to fix us up'. Mr Deputy Speaker, having gone away and had a bit of a think about that, it was pretty hard for me to refute the perception that that particular Aboriginal person had about the reality of what has happened in terms of the impact of government on Aboriginal communities.

I believe the Land Rights Act requires amendment. I do not think that the mining veto as it exists, and in the way it has been used, can be supported any longer. But whatever else happens to the act - and I believe that there will be a broad level of support for this position from the government - those people who are living in a traditional manner are entitled to continue to live in that way if that is what they wish to do. Having said that, I wish to endorse the current government's attitude in this process and the quite dramatic action it has taken in removing those bills from the notice paper and allowing this debate to continue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you were looking for the major points in His Honour's speech which distinguished this government from the last one, you could find them in 2 places. One was the reference to the Land Rights Act and the other the reference to the National Crimes Authority. The National Crimes Authority is a body which was firmly opposed by the former government of the Northern Territory and has now been supported by the current one. I shared the concerns the former Chief Minister had concerning the National Crimes Authority. I am concerned, as he was, that the authority is not used in some manner to intrude or trample upon the rights of individual people. From that point of view, its actions will have to be watched carefully. I think we all have to accept that, in today's world, such a body is required urgently, particularly in respect of drugs.

I was somewhat taken aback, particularly by the drafting of that part of His Honour's speech which dealt with the government's proposals in respect of national parks. With due respect to whoever prepared that particular section of the speech, I must say that perhaps he could have concentrated - not that I am here to give advice to government speech writers - on what the government may be attempting to do. I would suggest that the way in which it was delivered would strike a bit of a shiver into the hearts even of CLP supporters in the Northern Territory. Perhaps I could just quote its opening shot: 'My government has examined the requirements for approval of exploration and mining in national parks'. Mr Deputy Speaker, when you read on, you find that the government is discussing the need to remove duplication in controls over mining between the mining legislation and the necessary national parks legislation. The entire emphasis in the speech - and I fear that it may be the reality - is placed on simply expediting, at the cost of every other consideration, mining in the Territory's national parks. Can I say very firmly that this will be a very shortsighted policy, not simply economically but socially as well, for those of us who intend to stick around the Northern Territory for the rest of our lives. The Territory has 54 national parks under its control - a bare minimum, in my view. Indeed, we do not stand up very well to the national average. A little over 1% of our land mass is devoted to national park use as against the national average of 3%. Those parks have to be preserved at all costs for the future recreation and enjoyment of Territorians. It is difficult to reconcile mining activities with the use and enjoyment of national parks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will give a quick example. Those people who enjoy tramping around Kakadu and sitting in an Australian bush setting with all the solitude and quiet that that provides, apart from the odd crocodile and brown snake, have a considerable distance to travel in Kakadu before they lose completely the sound of the mining operations at Ranger. Because of the size of the park, the current mining operations in Kakadu are not all that intrusive. However, some degree of moderation will need to be observed if mining is to be allowed unfettered in Kakadu National Park and the place ends up looking like a piece of Swiss cheese. It is not simply, as people in government and the miners would have us believe, the physical damage created by the actual hole in the ground that is the problem but the associated activity and, indeed, even noise that goes along with the operation. As a bottom line, I do not think that it can be argued that, at the very least, the one thing that has to be in place, before mining or any other operation is undertaken in our national parks, is a plan of management. That applies to tourist development as much as mining development. There must be a coordinated plan for the future use of the park before any kind of ad hoc development can take place because, what might seem right and reasonable this year could turn out to be a serious mistake in 10 years' time, and everyone will regret having made it. The position the opposition will be taking in respect of this legislation is that, as a minimum

requirement, a plan of management needs to be put into place before a mining operation, or any other operation, including tourist development, proceeds in a national park.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are pleased to see the TAB. We have spoken about its introduction for 2 years. It is always with a great sense of interest that I go back over debates in Hansard. I reread the contributions of the former Treasurer of the Northern Territory, the honourable member for Fannie Bay. He told us at length in the Legislative Assembly how little we knew about the TAB and how totally ridiculous it was to suggest that such a thing could be brought into the Northern Territory. He told us all of the problems associated with lack of broadcasting facilities and everything else and how absolutely asinine it was to suggest it and that, economically, it showed we had no sense whatsoever. Those debates are only about 12 months old and they make very interesting reading today. I am delighted to see the government take this up, as it did the TIO and various other initiatives suggested by this opposition. We support it. We look forward to seeing poker machines freed of the monopoly control of the casino operators and put in sporting clubs in the Northern Territory also.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am running out of time so I will not be able to cover as much ground as I had intended. I simply conclude on 2 things. I think that one of the most exciting developments that is in the offing in the Northern Territory is the gas pipeline and the great potential it has to establish eventually something that is sadly lacking in the Northern Territory: manufacturing industry. I conclude by saying that it is a matter of extreme regret to me to see during this sittings of the Legislative Assembly proof positive that the Northern Territory is in the hands of a distinctly less competent government than it was formerly.

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was pleased to note in the Administrator's speech mention of the government's ongoing commitment to the expansion and development of the Northern Territory's primary industries. Historically, on-farm production has accounted for between 35% and 50% of Australia's export earnings, earnings which enable Australia to service its fast growing foreign debt and inject the capital into the economy which is necessary to support our principles of growth economics. Although the major contributor to the standard of living most Australians enjoy, governments of all ilks have allowed the farm sector to run down to a point where it is no longer a sound economic proposition for farmers to stay on the land and in production. For example, the average level of farm investment in Australia is in the order of \$450 000, yet this year's average farm income will be \$12 000 or less, a return on investment of less than 3%. Even our most strident critics on the other side of the Assembly would have to accept that as an unreasonably low level of return. To further illustrate the point, farm terms of trade, the ratios of prices received to prices paid, are declining at about 2.4% per annum. This is happening when Australia is facing a foreign debt that exceeds 24% of our gross domestic product.

The usual reaction to producers' pleas for assistance is to tell them to become more efficient. It is all very well for governments and suburban critics of the so-called cow cockies to state politely that primary producers must improve their efficiency. In terms of production, Australia already has the most efficient producers in the world. It is time governments recognised where the wealth of the nation is generated and will continue to be generated: on the farms. It is time governments readdressed those policies that have contributed to the run down of the farm sector. It is time also that positive policies and

programs were implemented and directed at returning our primary products to a competitive level on the international market. The problems facing our primary producers will not be overcome unless there is a commitment on the part of governments, and those unions which rely heavily on the primary producer for their livelihood, to face the economic reality that any further erosion of farming income will propel this great nation of ours headlong into the third world.

Let us look at some of the policies that do or will severely disaffect the primary producer. Firstly, there is the indexed excise on fuel. Whilst not disagreeing with the principle of import parity pricing, it is counter-productive for the federal government to apply it to offroad, export-income-generating uses, especially where fuel costs are a major contributing factor to the cost of production. A perfect example of the gross stupidity of the current fuel pricing policy is the recent federal government treatment of the Japanese tuna fishing fleet. The Japanese fishermen fish international waters in the Indian Ocean and have been using Australian ports for reprovisioning and rest and recreation purposes. By changing the definition of 'international voyage' to exclude foreign fishing vessels leaving and returning to Australian ports, whether or not they are fishing Australian waters, the federal government has endangered foreign revenue earnings by somewhere in the order of \$25m per annum.

Mr Deputy Speaker, primary producers are faced also with tariffs on farm machinery. Whilst costing producers many millions of dollars, these tariffs are in place to protect a relatively small number of jobs. The tariff on headers alone costs producers \$15m per annum to protect 260 jobs whereas a \$2m bounty on their production would achieve the same result. Primary producers are now faced with the spectre of a wealth tax, aimed at appeasing the Labor left, with little or no consideration being given to the irreparable damage it will do to the industry and, therefore, to the economy in general. Rising farm costs contribute more than anything else to the malaise facing the industry yet many of these costs could be held easily at the current level and, in most instances, substantially reduced. In the past 4 years, although returns to producers have increased by 19%, inflation and government taxes on farmers have risen by 45% and 70% respectively. If that is not biting the hand that feeds you, then I do not know what is.

Apart from government taxes and charges, increasing industrial lawlessness is further pushing the producers' backs to the wall. The recent New South Wales rail strike cost wheat producers many millions. Union bans on the export of live sheep to the Middle East - a market that can be satisfied no other way - and, closer to home, strikes and industrial disputes in the beef slaughter industry, are classic examples of the unions' failure to recognise that the livelihoods of their members are directly dependent on the strength, competitiveness and viability of our primary producers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the problems that I have outlined are so diverse and complicated that they can only really be confronted on a national level. However, we in the Territory, with our fledgling grain, horticultural and fishing industries, can learn from the mistakes and misdirected policies of other governments and implement policies that will assist the producer to be more competitive in a hostile international marketplace.

Notwithstanding the imposts placed on the industry by governments, the primary producers and their industry bodies and organisations must also share some of the responsibility for the state the industry finds itself in. The industry needs to recognise that, in today's world, products do not sell themselves. Effective and high-powered marketing strategies must be implemented.

I was pleased to note that the Minister for Primary Production foreshadowed a role for ADMA more akin to that of a marketing than a research and development organisation, a move that I loudly applaud. The term 'marketing' addresses many more issues than just advertising the availability of a particular product. The product must hit the market in a form acceptable to the consumer, be consistently of high quality and be packaged or presented in a visually-appealing form. It must be at a price acceptable to the market at which it is directed and, above all, after it is established on the market, continuity of supply must be guaranteed. The term 'marketing' also encompasses the identification of potential markets and the organisation of wholesale and, if necessary, retail outlets. It means the education of a market to new or different varieties of product. In fact, the term 'marketing' applies to almost everything that happens to a product after it is harvested or transported out of the farm gate. Producers cannot, and should not, be expected to assume the role of a marketer. Just as cattle raising, crop growing and fishing are complex and time-consuming occupations in themselves, so is that of the professional marketer. In assuming the role of the marketer, ADMA must work closely with the producers to ensure Territory products meet all market requirements. It must formulate and implement positive market strategies and actively seek new markets for Territory products. Although it is not directly involved in industry research and development, ADMA, as a marketing authority, must have a strong voice in the direction that research and development take.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is essential that the thrust of our research and development is towards products for which markets are available or for which there are good prospects of markets opening up. ADMA must also address itself to the potential of adding value to Territory products within the Northern Territory. I have spoken previously of losses to the Territory economy incurred through the transportation interstate of live cattle for immediate slaughter. In a similar vein, why should we sell our grain when it can be converted into pig meat and then sold? The Territory is well placed to take advantage of the expanding Asian markets and the focus of our marketing must be to the north. To the immediate north and west, we have Brunei which is dependent on imports for about 80% of its food requirements. Singapore imports about 75% of its vegetable and fish requirements and, as a result of pressures placed on its limited land resources, combined with effluent control difficulties, it is moving to close down its pig-growing industry. That is a good example of a market that could open up to Territory producers. In 1982, Singapore imported 76 000 live pigs. That figure can be expected to be in excess of 1.2 million by the end of the decade. A Territory pig-growing industry, geared up to supply 20% of that market, would account for all Territory-produced grains for the foreseeable future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Singapore pig market is but one prospect. Korean oilseed production cannot keep pace with the increased domestic demand brought about by the rapid expansion of its beef cattle herd. In 1982, Hong Kong imported food products to a value of \$US2300m and, in the same year, Brunei imported food and live animals worth \$US80m and animal fats and vegetable oils worth \$US2.2m.

Not only is there enormous potential for our farm products, the fishing industry also presents exciting development prospects. Australia imports 60% of its fish product requirements and, if Australian eating habits follow US trends, as they normally do, we can expect to see fish occupying an increasingly important place in the Australian diet. The government must be prepared to provide the fishing industry with the necessary onshore infrastructure. It must fund continued research into, and monitoring of, the resource and it must

provide training and assistance for young Territorians wishing to get into the industry. A fishing fleet, operating out of Territory ports and of sufficient size to take full advantage of our economic exploitation zone would provide employment opportunities for thousands of young Territorians, and I do mean literally thousands. I spoke previously of the necessity to remove the indexed excise on off-road diesel. For the Australian fishing fleet to become competitive with foreign fleets, the removal of this most stupid of all imposts is essential.

The role of a marketing authority in the fishing industry is crucial to the industry's success. Fish products more than any other require professional handling and packaging. They are highly perishable and subject to inconsistencies of quality. The establishment of a fish marketing authority, whether as an independent body, part of ADMA or a division of the Department of Ports and Fisheries, should be a matter of high priority. I am in no way advocating the establishment of a fish marketing authority along the lines of those in some states where fishermen are required by law to sell their products to the authority. I find that principle abhorrent. What I would like to see established is an organisation designed to provide a wide range of services to the industry without the tight legislative controls in force elsewhere in Australia. A fish marketing authority could provide the industry with centralised handling, packaging and storage facilities. It could monitor the quality of NT products with a view to ensuring that they continue to be held in high regard in the marketplace. Given a degree of entrepreneurial freedom, a fish marketing authority could provide support to the industry by way of minimum price schemes. Such schemes would be of enormous benefit, encourage the development of new fisheries and help to ease the way in raising finance for the construction and outfitting of new vessels entering the fishery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, underpinning a major expansion of the Territory's fishing industry, there must be an ongoing commitment to research into all aspects of the industry and, in time, the government will be forced to look at the acquisition of a research and training vessel. The long-term success of the industry will depend largely on the quality of young Territorians entering it and an early commitment by government to the establishment of suitable training facilities is a necessary adjunct to any proposal for the provision of industrial infrastructure. The exciting prospects presented to the Territory by the fishing industry can best be seen in the catches already being taken in our waters by foreign vessels and the fact that, for every fisherman on the water, up to a further 9 jobs are created on shore.

The enormous value of fishing to the Territory is not limited to the commercial sector. Amateur fishing supports a number of business operations and a well-managed amateur fishery adds immeasurably to the Top End's tourist potential. Commercial and amateur fishermen can, and do, operate in a cooperative spirit and that is no better evidenced than by the recent constructive and fruitful discussions regarding the possible damage done by the taking of barramundi in roe at the opening of the commercial season. I have been asked by members of the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory to express their gratitude to the Minister for Ports and Fisheries for his handling of the affair. A common interest exists between the commercial and the amateur fishermen in the preservation of adequate stock levels and, given the sensible and logical manner in which the barramundi issue was resolved, their willingness to sit down and discuss issues of mutual concern can only augur well for the future of the Northern Territory fishery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in closing, I endorse the comments made by the Administrator in his speech and commend it to honourable members.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise today to speak in the address in reply. Whilst most of my remarks will relate specifically to my portfolio responsibilities, I would like to begin by addressing some comments that have been made by honourable members throughout this debate and also to government initiatives which will have a bearing on my electorate of Port Darwin.

In His Honour's speech, mention was made of the current review of the Local Government Act, a review that is long overdue and one that many members in this Assembly have commented on in the past. The aim of this government has been to support the devolution of powers and there has been no argument about that. The devolution of powers from Canberra to the Northern Territory through the Assembly was hard won by the people of the Territory. The devolution of powers continued from the Territory government down to the various councils and the communities.

My concern, however, is that the local governments should not see the amendments which will enable them to set different rating systems, as a means to force government and business into contributing unreasonably to their coffers. A great deal of discussion has taken place on rating systems. There is no doubt in my mind that the rating system that we have at present is inequitable. Many people have commented to that effect. However, when setting rating systems, you have to be very careful that you do not stifle development. This government has again placed a great deal of emphasis on setting a climate that will generate development. It takes a lot of work to do that.

The suggestion to introduce an improved capital value rating system is seen by me and by many others as a disincentive to development. The more someone spends on a development, the more he has to pay. That type of rating system is one that has to be looked at very carefully indeed. There are many other systems that can be looked at that can support development and dispose of the inequities that exist with the present rating system. I ask all of those aldermen who will be involved to make sure that they take into account the comments that I have just made when they make decisions in relation to rating systems. We need to continue to develop and it is not reasonable to expect people, who are prepared to spend millions of dollars in providing jobs, to be placed in a position where they are driven out because, the higher the cost of their development, the more they have to pay. I believe that aspect has to be looked at very carefully indeed. All I am saying is for them to be careful. Obviously, there will be more said about the various rating systems. I guess it will be an interesting session when the bill comes up for debate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would also like to refer to some remarks made by the member for Koolpinyah on the suggestion that some form of contribution should be made by the people who live in the rural area. I am not going to become involved in the argument of what usage someone makes of a particular road or where people dump their rubbish. I believe that the honourable member realises that, at some stage in the future - and I can assure members that it is only a matter of time - the people in the rural area will have to pay. We all realise that, in most states, areas such as the rural area of Darwin contribute in some way to government taxes, whether it is by rates or whatever.

We are required to make a reasonable revenue-raising effort in the Northern Territory. It is a responsibility we have not shirked. We make an effort in the accepted revenue-raising areas. I believe that we must look to having some form of rate return from that large area just outside Darwin. I have a property there. I am not looking forward to the day when I have to contribute by way of rates, but I acknowledge that eventually it must come. It is far

better that the people who live in the rural area set the terms on which they will pay, argue the issues and look for a satisfactory solution to the problems rather than have a system foisted upon them by people who do not live in the area. Rather than say that they never want to pay, it would be far better for those people to look at the problems and to realise that they must contribute in some way in the future. Then they can bring forward a method by which a form of rate can be implemented that is acceptable to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move to the areas that are covered by my portfolio. The year ahead will be of great importance to education in the Northern Territory. As well as developments following from the major structural changes in the post-school sector, there will be significant variations in Aboriginal education and many important initiatives in other areas. I realise the time limitations but I would have liked to have heard some comment in relation to the initiatives on and development of post-secondary education in the Northern Territory from the opposition spokesman on education. I guess that I will hear his views in due course.

In the post-school sector, the new NT Council of Higher Education will be taking up the challenge of planning the coordinated development of the university and advanced education areas in preparation for expected growth and the development of a university college. The health sciences, nursing, teaching and business studies are 4 particular areas where expansion is expected to occur. In view of the increasing importance to the Territory of teacher training, the Council of Higher Education will be looking into the possibility of establishing a separate school of education at the Darwin Institute of Technology. The institute is already making a significant contribution in educating and training primary school teachers and this year it is introducing a graduate diploma in secondary school teaching which will begin to meet the needs for secondary maths and science teachers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in keeping with the institute's new name, I will also be asking the Council of Higher Education to investigate future needs in the applied sciences, electrical and mechanical engineering areas and other subjects of particular interest to the Northern Territory, such as relevant aspects of marine biology. At Batchelor College, a training program will start this year for Aboriginal adult educators. It will be a 3-year program aimed primarily at training Aboriginal people to become adult educators and thus qualify them to apply for existing adult educator positions in Aboriginal communities. A second aim is for the first and second years of the program to provide Aboriginal adult education assistants with skills to enable them to be more efficient in their work. Action is to be taken to have this program submitted for accreditation as an advanced education program.

The challenge in the technical and further education area will be taken up by the Department of Education and the new TAFE Advisory Council on a Territory-wide level and, at the local level, by the various college councils which are being given increased powers.

Another area which has been touched upon throughout the course of the address-in-reply debate is that of tourism and hospitality. The member for Millner raised this particular issue. I would like to say that this government is very keen to ensure that provision is made for local people to become trained to service that vital industry in the Northern Territory. I might say here that, as the honourable member for Millner would be aware, it was not through want of trying that applications to the Commonwealth government through CTEC were unsuccessful. We put forward a proposal to develop a purpose-built tourism and

hospitality training centre in Darwin at a cost of \$2m. Unfortunately, the TAFE Advisory Council of CTEC did not see its way clear to support that particular proposal. We were looking to provide short-term courses to give local people the opportunity to enter this exciting industry. The industry has indicated that it is looking at short-term courses specifically. I hope that such courses will be available to local people later on this year.

I also make the point that the Northern Territory government has made it very clear that we see Gillen House in Alice Springs as the main training centre for tourism and hospitality in the Northern Territory. We have spent over \$5m there and can understand why the Commonwealth has not been all that supportive of our putting money into a purpose-built facility here in Darwin. However, we acknowledge that there is a need for training, and that we need to involve local people in this vital industry. We are moving in that direction. The construction of stage 2 of Gillen House is well under way. This will comprise a butchery, bakery, food science laboratory and extra teaching facilities. To make it easier for students from other parts of the Territory to take advantage of the training which the school provides, residential accommodation has been opened at the site this year. While this accommodation is available to students of the Community College of Central Australia in general, tourism and hospitality students are being given first preference.

Mr Deputy Speaker, appropriate capital works are continuing to be developed to meet the increasing demands in the TAFE area. Following delays in the early stages, work is now about 50% complete on stage 2 of the Community College of Central Australia, which comprises an administration block, a library, student-staff amenities, lecture rooms and facilities for arts, crafts, hair-dressing, secretarial studies and computer studies.

At Katherine Rural College, where stage 2 has just been completed at a cost of \$1.75m, a third stage costing \$2m will be built this year. It will provide agricultural science laboratories and additional residential accommodation for students. This college is going ahead at a great rate and is destined, I believe, to make a major impact on the Territory's developing rural sector.

In Aboriginal education, an area of great concern to me, a major effort is being made to increase community involvement by expanding the role of FEPPi, the Aboriginal consultative group on education matters. This year, the Commonwealth is providing funds which will enable 3 FEPPi positions to be created, with provision for a full-time chairman, research officer and field liaison officer. FEPPi has also been invited to nominate representatives to chair promotional panels for Aboriginal schools during 1985. New committee members will also be appointed to FEPPi, which will work with the Department of Education this year in developing a program to improve student attendance at Aboriginal community schools. This program is being developed in parallel with the anti-truancy campaign which has just started in urban areas.

Mr Deputy Speaker, many other important initiatives will be undertaken in Territory education this year. Subject to the availability of funds, a satellite education service will be introduced on a staged basis, beginning with a number of communications trials this year for staff training. The initial trials will use the existing telephone system but actual satellite operations are expected by 1986-87. The satellite service may be used for a wide range of activities, including School of the Air programs, in-service activities for teachers and administrators, information exchange, training of Aboriginal teachers, adult education, tutorial sessions for groups of students and presentation of lessons and extension activities for under-served groups of students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are many more areas which could be covered which would indicate to honourable members the tremendous development that is taking place in education in the Northern Territory. Coupled with the continued increase in the Northern Territory's population and the tremendous growth of Territory industries, this all points to a very exciting period ahead in the development of the Northern Territory. His Honour's speech, once again, indicated that this government has tremendous confidence in the directions in which it is heading. I welcome the opportunity of speaking in the address-in-reply debate.

Mr LANHUPUY (Arnhem): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak to the address in reply, I would like to say that, following the recent shadow cabinet rearrangements, I now have responsibility for the areas of health and conservation. Unfortunately, the Administrator's speech to this Assembly the other day did not emphasise these areas which, I believe, are most important to the Northern Territory. The absolutely vital portfolio of health, which has been badly managed by this government for so many years, did not even rate a mention. This is an area which affects every Territorian. I find it disturbing indeed that the government has not seen fit to address any of the issues which concern so many Territorians. It would seem that, once again, the government is putting health in the too-hard basket. There are so many unanswered questions that must be addressed by this government.

For instance, as the Minister for Health must be aware, the Alice Springs Hospital is at present facing a serious crisis. The hospital has had to cut down its services and close down wards, at least in part, because of a shortage of nurses. This is due partly to difficulties in recruiting nurses to remain in the Alice Springs area. As the honourable member for Stuart, and former shadow minister for health, has suggested, a nurses education scheme planned for Alice Springs could help to alleviate the problem. The Department of Health has relied on a surplus of nurses from other states for too long and has neglected to plan for an independent approach to staffing. In this regard, the Labor Party welcomes the move to transfer basic nursing training to the Darwin Institute of Technology from the Royal Darwin Hospital. It is our hope that the government will move quickly to ensure that Alice Springs nurses will be trained in a similar fashion. It is widely accepted that a high percentage of nurses who train in their local area are more inclined to remain in the area because they maintain family links and so on. Apart from the shortage of staff, I am aware that there is a lack of essential equipment at the Alice Springs Hospital, and that also is a matter for concern.

Mr Speaker, the current problems in Alice Springs are only some of the issues which the parliamentary Labor Party wants the government to address. As I said, there are many unanswered questions. What is happening in relation to the government's proposed children's hospital? What progress has been made there? Is the Darwin Hospital Patient Care Committee able to deal effectively with the complaints it receives, and what other avenues has the government made available to members of the public with concerns and complaints about hospital services? What has the Department of Health done to streamline administrative procedures in hospitals throughout the Northern Territory? What does the government intend to do to improve facilities for the delivery of adequate psychiatric services in the Territory?

Mr Speaker, I intend to deal with those issues later in the sittings but I want to raise one more health-related matter which is of particular concern to me and my constituents: the serious problem of petrol sniffing in many of the remote communities. I would very much like to see the government assist with

funding of community-based programs to combat this problem. For instance, I would like the government to consider the funding of videos specifically to raise awareness of this issue in the communities to help them to tackle this problem. There is no doubt that the programs which have been most successful have been those initiated and managed by the communities themselves.

Mr Speaker, I will now move on to some other matters but, once again, I would express this opposition's disappointment and concern that the government has not seen fit even to mention the area of health in the announcement of the Tuxworth government's plans for the Northern Territory. I hope that the government's performance will improve dramatically in this regard.

Mr Speaker, I want to turn now to my shadow portfolio of conservation and again express my concern at the government's attitude and approach. I regard the government's proposals to change the laws governing mining in Northern Territory parks and reserves as a recipe for the destruction of those areas. I believe it poses a serious threat to the Territory's tourist industry. The proposed changes will mean that the Minister for Mines and Energy will have control over all mining activity in our parks. Not only does this create a complete conflict of interest for the minister, but the proposals are completely contrary to both national and world approaches to park management. The government's own statement that the purpose of the proposals is to accommodate and attract mining to parks is a complete reversal of the normal procedures in park management.

Potentially, the most serious change is the removal of the requirement for a plan of management to be in place for parks and reserve areas. The tourist industry has a unique capacity to generate local employment and provide extensive spin-offs for our local businesses. The legislative changes would allow the Northern Territory Minister for Mines and Energy to make a decision without a plan of management. This could destroy a park's potential as a major tourist attraction. The government says that tourism is our greatest potential industry, but moves like this hardly support such statements. One of the reasons the government gives for these changes is the length of time it takes to prepare plans of management. Surely that problem could be alleviated if more funds and resources were provided to the Conservation Commission to do the job quickly. Mr Speaker, this would be a far more acceptable arrangement, particularly for the long-term protection of our heritage and tourist industry. There are other conservation issues which the opposition will be looking at closely and monitoring the performance of the government on, but I will deal with those later on.

Mr Speaker, on a more positive note, I was pleased to see the government's initiatives on the development of tourism. In particular, I was pleased to find the government is making Aboriginal participation an integral part of that development. As many public surveys have shown, the Aboriginality of the Territory's heritage is one of the greatest tourist attractions and Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry is essential to ensure that this heritage is properly protected and effectively promoted.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the most controversial issue that has concerned this Assembly and people living in the Northern Territory generally: land rights. There is no doubt that many members of the Assembly, myself included, will be discussing this matter during the life of this Assembly and over the years to come. For some time, it has been interesting to note the performance of some of our members in this Assembly who are very much aware of the fact that the Territory's population, 30% in fact, is Aboriginal. This government has a

responsibility to protect some areas of land on which Aborigines may want to live and areas of land which they may not want to have mined. As the Leader of the Opposition said earlier, there are people living in my constituency who do not give a hoot about mining. They are happy living out there and this issue has been a thorn in the side of the Northern Territory government. I was pleased to hear the announcement by His Honour the Administrator the other day that, in line with the policy of the federal government, the government has decided to drop the 9 bills in relation to land which were introduced into the Assembly last year. That certainly has my support and I would advise the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that consultation occurs on the proposed national Aboriginal land rights title which he is trying to impose. I am against it personally because of my personal commitments to some of the people whom I represent in this Assembly. I shall certainly ensure that those views are heard by the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and by this government when it proposes amendments in line with those of the federal government.

Mr Speaker, once again, I look forward to working with members of the Assembly during this year and I hope we can achieve something that will be worth while for both black and white.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator's speech in the Assembly. I would like to commence with some remarks on developments in my electorate.

The electorate of Ludmilla has seen considerable changes in the last 12 months to the betterment of a large proportion of residents. The staged closure and removal of the 2½ mile depot and associated workshops to allow for residential development has moved ahead considerably since last year and the Floreat Plumbing development of 74 two and three-bedroom units at the northern end of the area has nearly been completed. The second stage, the development of the south-west corner of that site, will probably occur within the next 12 months. The Tropicana units, sited on the corner of Hudson Fysh and Ross Smith Avenues, a very high-quality home-unit development of some 70 units, has been completed and the owners are to be commended on the beautiful landscaping surrounding the site and also on the landscaping that is being undertaken on the road opposite and at the road closure points.

The industrial area at Coconut Grove saw some further work with the completion of a small industrial subdivision on lot 8723, Dick Ward Drive, just before Christmas. This industrial subdivision, consisting of 16 lots, will provide suitably-serviced and reasonably-priced land for the development of small warehouses, attracting a large range of small business and industrial users. I understand also that a \$0.5m development of glass-fronted showrooms on the front 2 blocks is currently under design for retail and wholesale outlets. This will assist in lifting the profile of this industrial area to a much higher level.

Other new developments in the electorate include a medical centre on the corner of Dick Ward and Progress Drives. This is under construction. Those members who drive down Bagot Road may have noticed, on the corner of old McMillans Road and Bagot Road, an area of cleared land which is being developed for tennis courts and associated clubrooms. This development will include 6 courts, a kiosk, a storage area and parking areas, and will be open to the public for hire by private individuals and club members.

During the last year, the electorate of Ludmilla worked very hard, in conjunction with the Keep Australia Beautiful Committee and our Territory Tidy

Towns Committee, to attempt to re-beautify the electorate. Considerable activity has taken place, including tree planting. One of the more notable projects has been undertaken at Bagot Reserve over the year. During the current wet season, more than 200 trees have been planted. An association called 'Friends of Bagot' is working hard with the community leaders on this project and further planting will take place during the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are working together also to attempt to beautify the area which is visible to all traffic on both Dick Ward Drive and Bagot Road entering and leaving the northern suburbs. I refer to the Kulaluk area. Considerable work was done by community members in the electorate and culminated in the Ludmilla area winning a special award in the Territory Tidy Towns 1984 competition. I congratulate all the people who worked on that committee, and the people of the electorate on the response they gave.

Unfortunately, during the dry season, a large open area on the Kulaluk reserve suffered the usual, uncontrolled, grass fire burn off which created a very undesirable and unattractive blackened area for the latter part of the season. This particular problem is being addressed by myself and the electorate generally in conjunction with the Conservation Commission. The Kulaluk residents and council are attempting to ensure that this illicit lighting of fires within that large area does not occur during the coming dry season.

The Coconut Grove area has seen a considerable increase in housing numbers over the last 12 months, particularly through the activities of the Housing Commission in and around the Hazel Court and Reynolds Court area. This development is very attractive. Unfortunately, there are considerable problems in this area which are being addressed by myself and departmental authorities at the moment. These problems derive from activities at a hotel nearby and include noise and harassment caused by clients of that hotel. There has been illegal drinking and fights have occurred, including a very serious knife fight less than 3 weeks ago. Hazel Court is predominantly occupied by pensioners and they feel particularly threatened by the activities that are occurring around them. Another problem that concerns them greatly is that, whilst we have seen the completion of very attractive bicycle paths and footpaths through the electorate, particularly so from the McMillans Road junction to the Ross Smith Avenue area, the footpath area from McMillans Road through to Trower Road is in a deplorable state. These matters are being given high priority by myself.

During the year, the Fannie Bay racecourse committee and the Northern Territory Touch Football Association committee have reached agreement on the development of the Fannie Bay racecourse inner boundary area for the provision of touch football ovals. A joint submission to the Northern Territory government for funds to allow this course of action was successful. A grant was made for the development of the ovals, lighting and ancillary facilities. The Northern Territory Touch Football Association is one of the fastest growing sports associations in the Northern Territory. The activities of the group will reach a high point when the national finals are held in Darwin later in the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning away from electorate matters, it has been my pleasure this year to travel extensively throughout the Northern Territory and other parts of Australia on matters of government interest and importance. During this period, I have learnt a considerable amount about the needs and aspirations of Territorians. I am impressed greatly by the provision of services for the tourist industry and, in particular, the considerable number of accommodation units being provided at this time. I would like to commend the

Northern Territory Tourist Commission on the activities that it has undertaken to fill the new developments and its promotions, both in Australia and overseas, of our tourist facilities and attractions.

While we have had considerable success in the Australian domestic market, nonetheless we need to extend ourselves overseas to attract a better proportion of overseas visitors to the Territory. I believe that the Northern Territory has a unique potential as a destination for overseas visitors which is curtailed at the moment only by inadequate air services. We need to push very hard for additional services by overseas airlines and create a climate whereby charter operators will find it economically viable to bring in a larger number of overseas visitors. To that end, I was able to assist in bringing to Darwin a group of sales promotion consultants from interstate and overseas for discussions with the Tourist Commission. I trust they have success.

Mr Deputy Speaker, despite comments made in some quarters suggesting Australia's future in agriculture is diminishing, I believe it will continue to prosper. At the recent Arid Zone Research Institute field day in Alice Springs, which I attended, several Territory and some interstate companies demonstrated equipment associated with solar and wind-power generation, conventional and wind-operated pumps, water purification plants, a range of computer satellite communications equipment and an extensive display of new farming equipment. The Central Australian Institute of Technology and some private companies demonstrated the use of computers in farm management and provided practical hands-on tuition for the producers. Australian farmers are among the world leaders in their acceptance and application of new technologies and it is only by fully exploiting these advances that we will be able to compete effectively on world markets in the future. While primary industry in the Northern Territory is confined mainly to large-scale cattle production on native pastures, there is a rapid and considerable expansion of arable farming programs into areas other than cattle. Two of the new programs being looked at are the expansion of the table grape industry in the Ti Tree area and date farming south of Alice Springs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, already the 'Territory-Made' symbol is well known in southern markets. For some products, such as tropical fruit and vegetables, it is even sought out specifically as the symbol of a reliably good product. With only 2 seasons, both of which are generally more predictable than the southern 4 seasons, the Territory is in the enviable situation of being able to create and hold its position on markets both in southern states and overseas in neighbouring Indonesia and Malaysia. Many small horticulturalists have invested in the well-known tropical fruits such as mango, banana and pineapple, but new varieties are under trial also and new markets must be developed for them if they prove successful.

There is no doubt in my mind that at least parts of the Territory will be devoted to intense farming operations. We are capable of producing a very wide variety of crops and we have the advantage of being much closer geographically to overseas markets than the rest of the nation. With predictable seasons, proven crops and available markets, a major problem still exists which should be addressed with urgency: the high cost of freight, in particular that portion concerned with handling. Through travelling widely this year and talking to residents of remote areas of the Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, it has become obvious to me that these people suffer greatly from a lack of services in many areas. Isolation from major centres not only causes additional strain on their transport mediums but also considerable strain on, and sometimes disruption to, family lifestyles.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a suitable, modern and operational private telephone service is probably the most desperately needed facility for some 200 000 remote area residents today. The disruption, dislocation and despair in households and communities caused by the inability of these people to contact immediate family, relatives and friends in other parts of the country when illness strikes or when comfort and support is needed has to be seen at first hand to be fully appreciated. On one visit to an outback community, I was told by a young woman, whose mother had died in New South Wales, of the total despair she suffered and from which she has not yet recovered, on realising that the first message she received of her mother's illness was 3 days old and that, by the time she had arranged a message out of the area to obtain air transport, joined the commuter network and arrived home, she was not even in time to attend the funeral which took place 9 days from the day that the first message was sent.

The provision of 1920s' technology in remote areas is deplorable in the 1980s. I was pleased when Telecom announced its digital radio service and its digital concentrator radio service to provide 1000 voice links within the Northern Territory by the year 1990. I applaud the announcement. However, I believe that demand from the remote areas may outstrip Telecom's ability to supply and or complete the service within its time frame. As a government, we will be doing all we can to ensure that all remote areas receive an adequate service as soon as possible.

Late 1985 will see a marked change to outback lifestyles with the launch of Aussat's domestic satellite communication system and the launching of the first 2 satellites. Almost 40 000 of the Territory's population will be able to receive, for the first time, an ABC television program and an ABC radio broadcast, provided they have installed a receiving dish. The possible provision of a commercial television service is being debated through the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal hearings. In discussions with the Department of Communications, the Territory government is working hard to ensure that a truly commercial, professional and appropriate service will be delivered to the approximately 60 000 Territorians who have not yet had this facility which has been available to most other Australians for nearly 20 years. Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr MANZIE (Transport and Works): Mr Deputy Speaker, in rising to make some comments in the address in reply, I was very pleased to note that the Administrator pointed out the government's commitment to continued development in the Northern Territory because development will ensure employment, both now and in the future, for our children. It is important for us all to be aware of the number of young people still attending school in the Northern Territory. It actually amounts to about 30% of the population. It is very relevant that this government has created a situation where people are now making the Territory their home. People are staying; they are not coming here for 2 to 3 years and then heading off down south again. As a result, their children are staying here and those children will expect jobs when they finish their schooling. Unfortunately, those jobs will not grow on trees although sometimes, from the comments that opposition members make in relation to certain things, I wonder whether possibly they might expect that to happen. Those jobs will occur only if the government creates a climate which will accelerate development and create them. If that means that, as a government, we have to make some unorthodox decisions or some politically difficult decisions, we will not hesitate to make them, because we are looking ahead to the year 2000 and beyond. We are looking to the future for our children and their children too.

I have often seen raised eyebrows or heard comments from the other side of the Assembly in relation to development in the Territory and the initiatives of

this government. Rather than go through the list of government projects and initiatives that the opposition has rubbished, I will simply comment that even the concept of self-government was considered by the opposition to be something that was not relevant in the Territory. It is a good thing that the opposition was not in power in 1978 otherwise it would be 1978 still and we would be going backwards at a rapid rate.

It might be appropriate to make some comment in relation to one of the projects that is on the go in Darwin at the moment, and that is the performing arts centre. The member for Millner commented yesterday on what he saw as a Singapore-based architect who had made some mistakes as a result of which, he insinuated, the ceilings were so low in the Japanese restaurant that we would all have difficulty walking in there without touching our heads. He said also that there had been a special team of concrete gougers engaged to work day and night to make room for services such as air-conditioning and electrical fittings. As usual, his comments contained only a little bit of fact. They were about as accurate as they normally are: entirely inaccurate or untrue. Even though the honourable member is not present in the Assembly, I presume that he will read Hansard. The truth is that a mistake was made though not by a Singapore-based architect. It was made by a contractor. The actual concrete ceiling will end up 60 cm lower than it was supposed to be. However, there is a gap above the concrete floor, between the theatre seating area and the concrete ceiling, that varies from 1 m to 30 cm. The services will go in this gap. In fact, the ceiling height will remain at exactly the level that the architect designed. The Japanese restaurant is on the opposite side of the building to that ...

Mr B. Collins: The gap is above the concrete floor?

Mr MANZIE: The Leader of the Opposition is obviously having some problems there, so I will just go through that. The floor of the theatre is designed in such a way that people are seated higher at the rear of the theatre than people at the front. To achieve that effect, it is required to have a slope to the floor. For obvious reasons, the floor is not made of solid cement; it is hollow. The theatre floor is over 1 m higher at the rear than it is at the front. Therefore, there is a gap between that and the floor proper. That is where the services will go. As I said, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was wrong as usual. The Japanese restaurant is on the opposite side of the building. Actually, I had an opportunity to go through the performing arts centre and it will definitely be quite a significant building for the Darwin community and for all Territorians.

As pointed out in the Administrator's speech, tourism is the major thrust of the government program. A great deal of work is being carried out by the Department of Transport and Works which will dovetail with the tourism initiatives that are being taken. No departmental project which will benefit tourism will disadvantage any Territory residents. Indeed, all residents will benefit from those initiatives. I will name a few. In relation to roads, the Kakadu road will be fully sealed between Pine Creek and Jabiru. Obviously, this will play a very important part in tourist infrastructure in the Kakadu area. We have spoken in this Assembly about the planned road from the Yulara area to Kings Canyon. The development at Kings Canyon will be an extremely successful one. The concept of a ring route for tourists from Alice Springs through Yulara back through Kings Canyon to Alice Springs again is certain to be significant in relation to the bituminising of the South Road from Adelaide which will see a great increase in tourist traffic from the southern areas of Australia. There is a continuation of road improvements throughout the Territory. There is an

ongoing program in the rural area. Obviously, the member for Koolpinyah would like to see it speeded up but these programs must be taken in relation to the overall development of the Territory and spending that will benefit all people throughout the Territory.

There are other areas that probably deserve some mention. Mr Deputy Speaker, you raised some problems in relation to the salt content of the water in the Alice Springs area. Obviously, that is developing into quite a problem and one that the government must address in order to prevent a disaster of the magnitude that is becoming apparent near the Murray River in the southern areas of Australia.

In relation to sewage disposal in the Alice Springs area, I think it might be worth while mentioning that I have asked the Department of Transport and Works to prepare a detailed submission in relation to the removal of the effluent treatment and disposal system, which is presently situated near the Ilpapa Swamp, to the Brewer Plain area. I believe it will cost around \$6m. It will certainly create a sweeter-smelling environment than exists presently. I have been told also that it may help to alleviate some of the problems caused by mosquitoes which breed in that swamp area. I have been informed that the water levels in that area will definitely be a lot lower than they are now.

In relation to aviation, Mr Deputy Speaker, obviously the government will continue discussions with Canberra on the rebuilding of the Darwin Airport at the present rate and also concerning the development of the Alice Springs Airport and our proposal for a tripartite scheme of management there. At this stage, I must express some concern about a recently released report, resulting from the Independent Inquiry into Aviation Costs, which is commonly known as the Bosch report. This inquiry was set up to look at the costs of all aviation facilities. Some of its recommendations cause me some concern. The inquiry recommended that the federal government adopt a policy of full recovery of attributable costs to be progressively implemented from 1985-86 and achieved by 1994-95. Thereafter, full cost recovery should continue. This means that the whole range of aviation industry charges, which includes airport and airways charges, aviation fuel taxes, airport rents etc, will progressively increase in real terms and these sources of revenue will possibly include passenger service charges. It means that the cost of the industry will be expected to be completely recovered where those facilities are situated. Implications in relation to Darwin could be quite frightening with the capital cost of the redevelopment of Darwin Airport at \$95m. There is a possibility that there will be suggestions that that be recovered from Darwin Airport users. One can imagine the absolute impossibility of that occurring and the airport remaining open to the public. It also creates problems in relation to the development of Alice Springs Airport.

This is only a recommendation to the federal government. Obviously, there will be a tremendous amount of debate in relation to the inquiry. I am sure Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine will not be the only areas of Australia to be affected. However, I think it is worth while indicating in this Assembly what is being recommended to the federal government. I can assure all members that we have already commenced a dialogue with the federal government in relation to the development of airports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning to the Housing Commission and its role in the Northern Territory, I indicate that I am very pleased to have been made Minister for Housing. I consider the Northern Territory Housing Commission to be by far the most effective housing authority in Australia. We are quite proud of the

houses that are built by the commission. Also, it is common knowledge that, on a per capita basis, the commission provides far more accommodation than any other housing authority in Australia. January saw the signing of the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement in relation to all states, the territories and the Commonwealth. There are some problems that I see in that agreement but there will be continued negotiation for the life of that agreement in relation to those problems and I am sure that they can be solved. One concern is the move towards a per capita funding basis under the agreement which, obviously, will cause great problems in the Territory with our small population and the much greater building costs which result from isolation and a number of other factors.

I have directed the Housing Commission to examine the development of a singles housing policy. There is a requirement under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement that signatories to the agreement supply accommodation to people regardless of their marital status, sex or whatever. This also points to single person housing which has to be provided on a needs basis. There are a number of problems in relation to developing a singles housing policy that will be effective in the Territory. On one side of the coin, the extreme would be to open up a list and have every person over the age of 16 place his or her name on that list regardless of what accommodation they have now, whether they live at home or whatever, and end up with a list of 10 000 or 15 000 people looking to get themselves a flat each. We also have to look at the other end of the spectrum. There are a number of people in our community who are single and who, due to various circumstances, are unable to house themselves. Obviously, we must make provision for those sorts of people. That particular policy is being examined. I have asked the commission to take all aspects of the situation into consideration while this policy is being developed and, hopefully at the next Assembly sittings, I will be in a position to place that policy in front of all members.

It must be borne in mind that, under the provisions of the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme, which has been in operation since Christmas, quite an excellent loan situation is available with a repayment schedule involving a maximum of 20% of salary. It is obviously a scheme that puts reasonable finance well within the grasp of a number of single people in our community. Certainly, it provides a good opportunity for people to become established in a house early in their lives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the situation with housing in the Darwin area has reached a stage now where the commission has only some 38 blocks of land left to build on. After those blocks have been built on, all future commission development will occur in the Palmerston area. That shows how rapidly our community is developing. I must say again that it is the policies of this government that have brought about this rapid development. We have to proceed with these policies in order to provide opportunities for our children.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, in his address to this Assembly, His Honour the Administrator outlined a legislative program to which the government is fully committed. The achievement of the objectives of further growth and development in the Territory which His Honour indicated and the completion of the legislative program requires us to establish proper priorities and to conduct our business in an orderly and responsible way. The changes in the administrative arrangements which have been announced represent the first step in the creation of some new departments and the reorganisation of others. They are essential to the efficient implementation of our legislative program and the realisation of our objectives.

Mr Speaker, the administrative arrangements and the grouping of ministerial portfolios reflect the government's views on efficient public administration in the circumstances which now face the Territory. A major review was in order because circumstances had changed over the years since self-government. New issues have emerged, new problems need to be resolved and new approaches are called for in some areas. I do not suggest for one minute that the current arrangements should remain in place for all time. There is no doubt that it will be appropriate to introduce further changes in the years ahead, and there is nothing dramatic or extraordinary about that. I would expect that, over time, circumstances will again change. The issues to be faced will likewise change and the most appropriate structure of public administration will need to change accordingly.

In his speech, His Honour indicated some of the areas where changes have occurred and the reasons for these changes. It is appropriate for me to expand on those matters. There has been some public comment about changes to the education portfolio. In all the furore which some people have tried to create, there has been very little criticism of the direction of the changes which have been announced. This is because the changes take us forward as we address the main issues in education at this time. The government has provided an administrative structure which will provide for better coordination of post-school education, remove inefficient and costly duplication and achieve a more effective delivery of services with clear lines of responsibility and control. The changes in the post-school area were necessary to develop cost-effective government structures which were efficient. I am pleased to say that, in the first budget review, the anticipated annual savings of \$0.8m - or \$400 000 in the first half-year of 1985 - have been achieved. Changes in the post-school sector include the abolition of the Vocational Training Commission, the Post-school Advisory Council and the Administration Unit of the University Planning Authority. At the same time, Darwin Community College has been redesignated as the Darwin Institute of Technology with the former college council becoming the new Northern Territory Council of Higher Education. Its task is to chart future directions in higher education in areas such as medicine, education, nursing, tourism and the trades. These are areas that are vital to the Territory's expanding industries.

Mr Speaker, the Territory is making progress towards the establishment of university opportunities in the Territory for Territorians. The University Planning Advisory Committee will continue to press strongly for the early establishment of a university college. As a practical first step, drawing together the University Planning Authority's activities and linking them with the advanced education activities of the Darwin Institute of Technology will provide a basis for a rational and coordinated approach to the university objective. There is no doubt that this integrated approach to higher education will create significant academic benefits for Territory students and, in my view, that is the issue which counts.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform honourable members that, in order to formalise these changes, the Minister for Education will be proceeding with the legislation to amend the Education Act that was announced earlier in this sittings. Unfortunately, these very positive and sensible moves have been obscured by people who have sought to generate unnecessary controversy and have done so with very little regard for the interests of the students. The appointment of a new principal for the Darwin Institute of Technology followed perfectly normal procedures. I note that the procedures followed in this instance were very similar to those recently adopted in Queensland, which has moved to draw together its technical and further education arrangements.

The public debate which has proceeded over the Darwin Institute of Technology has provided us with some quite extraordinary insights into the former Darwin Community College. I am extremely concerned that the evidence which has emerged suggests that improprieties may have occurred in the manner of assessing students and determining academic results. The Darwin Institute of Technology has been operating for some 12 years and I have come to the view that it is time that the government reviewed very carefully the performance of the institute and its achievements. Against the background of considerable resources which have been made available, the Minister for Education will be making further announcements during this sittings on the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Mr Speaker, other important changes in the structure of government departments and authorities result similarly from the government's view of our current circumstances and priorities. Small businesses constitute the backbone of the private sector in the Territory and will continue to do so for a very long time to come. The creation of the Department of Industry and Small Business is a recognition of this fact. The department has not been established to regulate small businesses. Quite to the contrary, it has been set up to ensure a sympathetic ear is available, to advise small businesses on financial, marketing and other matters and to offer appropriate assistance. Its charter is to promote, encourage and assist, not to regulate and control.

Mr Speaker, His Honour noted the establishment of a Department of Ports and Fisheries as a reflection of the government's view that the fishing industry has the potential to become a major Territory industry. I confirm that view and I underline the government's commitment to seek new ways to promote the Territory's fishing industry. A major study into the potential for developing the fishing industry has been under way for some time and, so far, indications are encouraging. The Minister for Ports and Fisheries will be outlining the priorities in this area during this sittings of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, I repeat that the new administrative arrangements set the pattern for the development of objectives and programs and, where necessary, the bringing forward of legislation to achieve our goals. I would now like to highlight some of the issues which the government believes need to be addressed with some urgency and to which I personally attach considerable priority. His Honour the Administrator referred to the establishment of a Department of Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs. I wish to underscore His Honour's comments. All governments in Australia must face up to the difficulties which will be experienced in the years ahead as young people move through the education system and into the work force. The Territory is no exception. Youth unemployment continues at unacceptable levels. Imagination and vision will be needed to ensure that future generations of young people will have suitable opportunities for productive and meaningful employment. The Territory cannot solve these issues on its own, but will work with the Commonwealth and the states in the development of suitable policies and programs.

Mr Speaker, I would like also to highlight the expanded role of the Department of Community Development because it also indicates the way in which the government is seeking to focus on community issues. In addition to its former responsibilities, this department now has responsibility for Aboriginal matters and the Minister for Community Development also receives advice directly from the very effective and successful Women's Advisory Council. It is appropriate for issues of particular concern and interest in these areas to be dealt with in the community development portfolio. The relocation of the former Office of Aboriginal Liaison and the Office of Women's Affairs has been represented by some as a downgrading of the government's commitment in these

areas. Mr Speaker, I reject that. The truth is that quite the opposite effect has been achieved. These officers have work to do which relates to the bringing forward of community issues and the officers have now been provided with a better opportunity to do just that.

I believe that some benefits are already apparent from these changes. Territory ministers, myself included, have had discussions with the Commonwealth and with Aboriginal organisations on a range of issues of concern to Aboriginals. We are making progress in some areas. His Honour indicated that the government will not be proceeding with certain bills relating to land which have been the subject of considerable discussion and debate, not all of which has been informed. I do not wish to minimise the importance of Aboriginal land concerns, nor do I wish to understate the significance of some problems which remain. However, it is my unshakeable view that progress can be made through consultation and the government is committed to that course.

Mr Speaker, His Honour the Administrator referred to a number of developments in relation to tourism. Honourable members will be aware of the increased emphasis which has been given to tourism over recent years. More importantly, the entire Territory community is now beginning to see the benefits of this strategy. Major hotel and other facilities are now in place and tourist numbers are increasing as the capacity to handle visitors is expanding. This means more money spent in the Territory and, of course, more jobs. The government is convinced that its strategies are correct and priority will continue to be given to the expansion of tourism. His Honour referred to the government's overall objectives in tourism and the Deputy Chief Minister will be expanding on this aspect in the days ahead. I believe we need to have realistic goals. One realistic goal for the Territory would be for 1 million tourists to visit the Northern Territory every year after 1990. The benefits of that would be enormous.

Mr Speaker, Territory progress is evident in more than just tourism. The Territory and Commonwealth governments and a consortium of major private sector organisations have now reached agreement for the development of the gas-fired power-station for Darwin, with gas to be provided by a pipeline from the centre of Australia. This is a major national project with very significant benefits for the Territory and for Australia generally. The Minister for Mines and Energy will report to the Assembly on the progress of this project.

Another major project which has been the subject of considerable discussion in this Assembly is the Alice Springs to Darwin railway. I believe that all honourable members would share my view that this project should proceed as quickly as possible. The government is continuing to explore every avenue to bring the project to fruition and I am encouraged by recent comments which have been made to me. I believe considerable interest is being shown in the project by the private sector and there is significant support in the federal parliament for the proposition. It would not be helpful for me to go into details at this stage, but I assure the Assembly that we are working constructively and cooperatively with private sector organisations and with other governments to secure an early start to this project. I will keep the Assembly fully informed as matters progress.

His Honour also referred to developments in primary production and, particularly, the close links between the Department of Primary Production and ADMA. Agricultural development has never been easy in the Northern Territory. There have been failures in the past but, more recently, we have been encouraged by some successes. Admittedly, these are small but, nonetheless, they are significant. The development of smaller-scale agriculture through ADMA has

shown the potential for crop development in the Territory provided that there is careful management and selection of crops. Certainly it is clear that there is very good potential for horticulture. Again, I believe we need to set goals. Our aim should be self-sufficiency in the production of those crops and horticultural products which can be grown in the Territory. The ability of Territory farmers to market Territory produce out of season in southern and overseas markets will further enhance the viability of agriculture in the Territory. Closer cooperation between the Department of Primary Production and the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority will help make this work.

Mr Speaker, the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign has been in effect in the Territory for some time and much progress has been achieved. The government recognises that the program presents some difficulties for pastoralists. We are sympathetic but I must emphasise the absolute necessity for the campaign. We are faced with a very real prospect of losing our major export markets for beef if we do not pursue the program vigorously. While some argue that the campaign is destroying the Northern Territory's pastoral industry through its impact on the viability of some properties, the more important point is that, without a successful eradication campaign, the future of the entire industry is at risk. We are prepared to work with the Commonwealth and the pastoralists to overcome the problems and to assist wherever possible in restocking to promote the viability of the industry for the long term. The bull purchase incentive scheme which we have introduced is an example of the government's support in this area.

Mr Speaker, over the next few years, we in the Northern Territory will benefit from a number of very important developments in the area of communications. This Assembly established a Select Committee on Communications Technology which will issue its report shortly and I am sure that we are all eagerly awaiting its findings. I have no doubt that new opportunities for Territorians, which will result from the launching of the domestic satellite and through improved telecommunication facilities, will significantly improve the quality of life in all parts of the Territory, particularly in the more remote areas. Honourable members will recall that an Office of Technology and Communications has been established within the Department of the Chief Minister to coordinate the interests of the government and the Territory and to promote our participation in those new communications opportunities.

Later this year, people in the remote areas will be able to receive ABC television and radio through the Homestead and Community Broadcasting Satellite Service. The Territory government is working also to encourage transmission of commercial television and radio services to remote areas and we hope this will come to pass very quickly. Telecom has commenced a program to extend its Digital Radio Concentrator System throughout the Territory by 1990. The Territory government is now exploring ways to improve telecommunications facilities, particularly in the remote areas, as cheaply as possible using the capabilities of the satellite. In the second half of this year, a new ABC short-wave radio service will be in place and this will enable improved communication links in areas which could not be serviced formerly - for example, enabling fishing vessels off the Territory coast to keep in touch. Over and above the entertainment and normal communications issues, the Territory government is actively examining how we can best use the new communications opportunities for the delivery of government services in more effective ways. I believe that the satellite, in particular, will revolutionise the way we provide services in such areas as education and health and will also have important benefits for agencies such as the police.

His Honour the Administrator outlined the legislative program which the government will pursue in the coming session. The responsible ministers will be

giving further details of this at the appropriate time. One matter which requires comment is the introduction of TAB in the Territory. Honourable members are aware that the government has decided to introduce TAB and arrangements are well in hand for this. We have entered into an arrangement with the Australian Capital Territory TAB to provide a service incorporating the amalgamation of totalisator polls. A manager for TAB in the Territory has now been appointed and the various other administrative matters are progressing towards the commencement date of 1 July 1985. I believe this initiative will have the support of the Assembly.

Mr Speaker, His Honour referred to the need to secure appropriate financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the Territory. In this regard, I believe the next 6 months will be important in shaping future financial relationships and relations with the Commonwealth and with local governments. Honourable members will be aware that the new revenue-sharing arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states are to be put in place from the commencement of the next financial year. The Commonwealth Grants Commission is completing its inquiry into appropriate tax-sharing relativities between the states. While the Territory continues to hold the view that it is not appropriate for it to be included in any review of tax-sharing arrangements with the states, we have nonetheless participated constructively in the exercise. The Territory has argued that its present stage of economic, social and political development make it inappropriate for it to be included in any ongoing arrangements which may be determined between the Commonwealth and the states for the distribution of taxation revenue. The simple fact is that the Territory's needs are still being identified. It has become somewhat commonplace to say so, but the Territory is still different in many ways. The cost of services in almost all areas of government is unavoidably higher than in the standard states of New South Wales and Victoria. The Northern Territory has an area 70% larger than New South Wales but with only one-fiftieth of the population.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission has accepted that the Territory suffers disadvantages relative to the states because of demographic factors which give rise to the need for extra services in departments such as police and correctional services. The proportion of Aboriginals in the Northern Territory population is 57 times as great as the average in New South Wales and Victoria, and this has serious implications for funding needs. The Territory has to maintain 23 times the per capita road length that the New South Wales and Victoria governments have to maintain.

Mr Speaker, I could go on at much greater length by citing other examples. However, the point is very simple. The Territory's financial arrangements with the Commonwealth are essential to our continued progress and arrangements must be agreed to which do not jeopardise that progress. The Territory government believes that the financial arrangements agreed on in the Memorandum of Understanding should be maintained and we will be working with the Commonwealth to that end. However, if the Commonwealth determines that the arrangements are to change in a manner which will be detrimental to the Territory, then we will have no option but to give early consideration to the development of further constitutional change.

Mr Speaker, His Honour referred to the record of growth and achievement in the Territory in the years since self-government. This needs no elaboration by me. The record is quite clear. The government accepts the charge from His Honour to continue to pursue the goals of growth and development for the wellbeing of the people of the Territory. The various matters which I have touched on today, and which will be brought forward by the relevant ministers at the appropriate time, will ensure that we move forward in a positive and worthwhile direction.

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I intend to present the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator at Government House at 11.30 am tomorrow. I invite all honourable members to accompany me at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr DONDAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Speaker, I seek to provide some additional information to the honourable Leader of the Opposition about trust investments and loan payments for the casino. The Leader of the Opposition referred to line 55 of schedule 3 of the operators agreement which related to trust outgoings by way of loans at an estimated 14%. These loans have been obtained by the trust from the Australia Bank at cost. There is no correlation between those expenses and the returns to equity holders in the trust. Equity holders in the trust accrue a return of 10% on their investment plus CPI after 2 years. They also participate in the distribution of surpluses determined as an override on casino corporation taxes, being 50% of that amount for the first 5 years and one-third thereafter.

A particular arrangement has been set in place with the Australia Bank to warehouse \$5m worth of shares which consists of an operator's option of investors. A provision exists for the shortfall between the cost of those borrowings and the return on those trust units to be met by the NTDC. As a general observation, as has already been mentioned in the statement by the Chief Minister, provision exists for the government to waive the base casino tax and for the NTDC to make repayable loans to ensure that the operators have sufficient income to meet their obligations by way of rental to the trust which enables the trust in turn to meet its obligations to the shareholders.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to touch on 2 matters this afternoon. I will be brief. Firstly, I wish to speak now because of the presence of the Attorney-General in the Assembly at the moment. I take this opportunity to raise the extremely serious issue, which has been the subject of publicity for some weeks now, of the crisis occurring in the Northern Territory's lower courts.

Mr Speaker, the lower courts of the Northern Territory, as I guess they do elsewhere in Australia, must handle by far the lion's share of the workload of the entire judicial system. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the lower courts are in a condition of some crisis. At the moment, 2 of the Northern Territory's magistrates are reputed to be taking sick leave as a direct result of the stress occasioned by the workload which the magistrates are currently being forced to handle. Indeed, I could do no better than to quote the headlines in today's Northern Territory News which used the word 'chaos' in respect of the current situation of the Territory's lower courts. This word 'chaos' in the headline was occasioned by the fact that over 40 cases were adjourned today because of the problems resulting from magistrates being absent due to ill-health, and the small number of magistrates available in the Northern Territory. I ask the honourable Attorney-General to place on the record of this Assembly some indication of what attention the government is giving to this matter and what remedies it intends to institute in order to alleviate the problem.

Mr Speaker, the second matter I wish to raise is far less serious in its immediate terms but it is of some annoyance to me. Last night, along with many

other interested people, I watched the premiere episode of the ABC National news service. I had some misgivings initially when I heard the format that was proposed for the National in that, allegedly, the Territory was to be given a 10-minute window for news at the end. I think that somebody had better get the cleaners in as far as that window is concerned or open it a little more widely than it is at present. Whilst I do not think that the kind of editorial-type news presented on the National will be everybody's cup of tea, I certainly welcome it. As a politician I find the editorial-discussion approach very welcome. Whilst I had no particular argument with the national content of the program, I thought that the treatment the Territory received last night was abysmal. Indeed, if it was a portent of things to come, I think that considerable protest ought to be made, at least initially, by honourable members of this Assembly, in respect of the treatment we received.

Mr Speaker, we were shown 2 or 3 minutes of news through that window. I was a bit curious about the sporting content. We had 2 minutes of sport in the news which consisted of hearing the results of last weekend's football matches. I hardly saw the relevance of that because, if you followed football, the news you were getting was 48 hours old. If you did not follow football, you did not care anyway. I could not quite see the relevance of that 2 minutes being used in that way. Of course, the national part of the program intruded at the end of it anyway. The upshot was that the Northern Territory window contained exactly 2 stories. There were 2 news items in the entire broadcast.

The previous service that was offered by the ABC in Darwin contained an excellent mixture of international and local news in the same program. People were able to maintain their interest. I thought it was a good service. If you have a look at the current service being offered by the commercial television channel, it is even more obvious that the new, much-vaunted news service of the ABC does not stand up very well by comparison at all. If the service that ABC National provides for the Northern Territory continues to be as poor as it was last night, then it is quite obvious that potential viewers of it in the Northern Territory will either watch Channel 8 instead, and get their entire news from Channel 8, or they will watch the national part of ABC National and, at the end of that national news, go and make a cup of coffee.

We seem to be always in this position in respect of the Australian Broadcasting Commission and I think it is extremely disappointing that, once again, we are getting the rough end of the deal, while people in the southern parts of Australia seem to be copping it sweet, as they always do. I am a great supporter of Auntie. I am a regular listener to ABC radio, particularly in the early hours of the morning when a very high standard of public affairs broadcasting is maintained. I thought that one of the prime purposes of the ABC was to make up as a national broadcaster for the deficiencies that obviously exist in commercial broadcasting where there is a lack of market. There seems to be a progressive downgrading of the services that are provided by the ABC in respect of the Northern Territory.

I would like to go on the public record as making some kind of protest about the appallingly poor quality of the Territory's news segment in the inaugural program of ABC National last night. I hope that other members of this Assembly will indicate their feelings on the matter. Perhaps some people here were satisfied with it. I intend to take up the matter with the management of the ABC, as I have done on past occasions, and try to obtain some improvement on what was a very poor effort last night in terms of Territory news.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Speaker, tonight I would like to touch briefly on the recent commemoration of the bombing of Darwin. For some time now, it has

concerned me that attendance at the commemoration service in Darwin has been confined mainly to what appear to be government officials, service chiefs, public servants and a very small contingent of returned servicemen and servicewomen. It seems to me that the day is losing much of its traditional importance. Recently, I found that one of my constituents, together with another person, had started to research the history of the bombing of Darwin. I would like to pay tribute to their activities. They are Sister Ellen Kettle MBE and Mr Sid Hawks. In fact, I would like to read a letter that has come into my possession. It was sent to them recently by a survivor of the bombing of the Neptuna. It is not without its humour in a time of great crisis. I am hoping that, in due course, Sister Kettle and possibly Sid Hawks will contribute some of the material they are receiving to be included in a book that, hopefully, we can place in the hands of our schoolchildren so that the history of this particularly important event is not lost. With your indulgence, I would like to read this letter:

Dear Miss Kettle,

Your letter came as something of a shock to me as I was convinced that the Neptuna had been forgotten by all but those who sailed in her. I fear I can supply little that would be of consequence to the history of the health service of the Northern Territory; my contribution would be more in the nature of a personality sketch of John Hyde.

John Hyde was a New Zealander, an FRCS London, who in earlier times, specialised in a certain bowel operation. His thoroughness bordered on the extreme as was demonstrated when he joined a dancing academy as a beginner and finished up by winning a ballroom championship while partnering his teacher. He spoke rather quickly, which is unusual in a man who spoke softly, and he had the knack of being completely at ease in vice-regal company or in any other in which he found himself. He had a wonderful sense of humour and took an impish delight in knocking over hardened drinkers with his cocktails. He was an accepted authority on wines, but just why he chose the mantle of a somewhat poorly paid ship's doctor, no one knows.

When the raid started, he prepared the dispensary as best he could before joining a number of us who were sheltering in the saloon vestibule. The first warning had come in the form of a near miss, which caused some underwater damage in the engine room. After 15 minutes or so, I developed an acute attack of claustrophobia and went out on deck while the doctor and a few of the others moved down the stairs to D deck. A minute later the vestibule took a direct hit. I make no attempt to describe the utter destruction except to say that some incendiary material had been used and the whole pile of rubble was alight. A minute later she received another in almost the same spot, followed by a third some seconds later. Hearing no more dive bombers I ceased trying to claw my way into a 4 inch teak deck and set about doing something.

When the first bomb dropped cadet Knight and the doctor each became pinned down by the legs and were unable to move and, whilst in this desperate situation, the doctor was wondering if death by burning was as horrifyingly painful as his medical training had led him to believe. The second bomb shook the whole burning mass up so much that they were able to free themselves and hobble to relative safety. On the other side of the deck my first discovery was the captain lying in the scuppers.

Cadet Kent showed up so I sent him off to get the doctor and immediately afterwards I dispatched cadet Rothery to the engine rooms to get the engineers to start the pumps in an endeavour to put out the fire. He came back with the news that the pumps could not be operated so now it was a race against time. A burst oil main under the wharf was spewing crude oil by the tonne. Something had set it alight and the early ebb tide was taking it slowly along to our point of escape. The 'doc', visibly distressed, attended the captain but it was too late - he died a few moments later.

By this time, the list was such that it would have been impossible to launch the starboard boats, even if I could have spared the hands to do it. Everyone in sight was needed to help the wounded. The doctor attended many victims, one of whom we managed to dig out from the saloon rubble with a thumb and index finger of one hand hanging uselessly on the end of a thread of skin. The doctor snipped them off, threw them over the side, and told the wharfie to get going. The last time I saw him he was swimming in fine style.

On reaching the end of the saloon deck, I came upon an unrecognisable figure covered in blood from head to toe. It was cadet Knight and, when he realised that he was not alone and that help was at hand, he started to 'give' at the knees. I half seriously told him that he could not collapse just now because so many needed attention and he would become a bloody nuisance. I still marvel at his response. You could actually see the resolve moving through him as he straightened up and, under his own steam, made for the improvised gangway. At this point we heard a cry of 'water, water' coming from the other side of the ship. In spite of his wound, the 'doc' was right on my heels and it was to discover cadet Stobo (we carried 4 of them) sitting on the deck with his hands supporting the weight of his torso, one leg below the knee smashed to pulp and half his intestines in his lap. In this condition he had dragged himself about 100 feet from where he had suffered his injuries. The doctor now gave his undivided attention to the boy. A plank was used to support the leg and sheets from a cabin were used to secure the rest of him and make the unfortunate lad as comfortable as was possible at the time. After we got the boy ashore, I had to leave them to attend to other things so we lost contact for a while.

By this time the burning oil had passed the gangway and so we were actually moving about over the flames. After satisfying myself that there were no living beings left on board, I went to the end of the wharf, kicked off my white shoes, threw my cap into the water and, like Lot's wife, felt compelled to turn and view the awful spectacle. The fire was getting uncomfortably close to the end of the wharf so diving into a sea of crude oil was not a difficult choice. After swimming for a few minutes I spotted a Qantas launch not far off and a spirited dash of a minute or so enabled me to intercept and grab her stern. The cox decided that he could make better time by stopping and taking me on board than leaving me where I was. After climbing in, I was delighted to see that cadet Knight was already there, together with a couple of our Chinese crew.

When standing in the launch I was able to see the doctor and his charge about 100 yards or so out into the harbour and had no difficulty in getting the cox to alter course to pick them up. When he saw the boy's condition, he decided to take us to

HMAS Platypus and then come back again. I helped Knight up the gangway with a fireman's lift while many willing Navy hands took Stobo to the sick bay. A petty officer directed myself and Knight to a companionway that led down to the wardroom which had been converted to a temporary sick bay. On laying the boy down, I said to him: 'OK Knight, you can now do what you like'. He literally went out like a light.

The navy medicos were wonderful. I am sure our doctor appreciated their efforts for he was now showing signs of collapse. After all, he was not a youngster, having been a major in the first war. Unfortunately, Stobo was beyond their help and he died an hour or so after boarding. The tragic side to this story was the fact that his own father had been lost at sea a few months earlier and the boy was symbolically taking on his father's role. It was his first trip to sea. One can only imagine how his mother felt.

Knight and the doctor were transferred to the hospital ship Manunda that evening. Later on, I had the pleasure of sailing with John Hyde for more than 3 years and, during this period, he told me about his time on that ship. To say that the treatment they received was perfunctory would be praise indeed. They were down in the bowels of the ship somewhere until one day a senior surgeon, whilst on his rounds, stopped and said: 'Don't I know you from somewhere?' Hyde replied: 'Yes, in Yvonne's cafe in Vienna in 1912 when you were so drunk we had to leave you under the table. Mitzi said she'd look after you'. A deck cabin was immediately laid on with royal treatment but Hyde would not move an inch until similar treatment had been afforded to Knight.

After that the trip was quite pleasant. I got ashore from the Platypus about 4 in the afternoon and found my way to the Burns Philp office where quite a number of crew had gathered. The manager had few ideas and little information but we did glean the fact that a new hospital had been opened a short time before and that the old one was vacant. 'But', he warned us, 'no one is allowed in there'. We found it easily enough and promptly staked our claim to part of it. All it contained were beds and mattresses and a few mosquito nets. I returned to the office with the idea of getting some food for the crew but the manager would not even accept my signature as senior surviving officer of the ship. I can't imagine who broke into his bulk store later that night. Whoever it was didn't leave his name.

Some of the crew had minor injuries but they did not go near any hospital that day as we were all well aware that they would be far too busy getting the injured to the Manunda and treating other more serious cases. The following day, they all received prompt and friendly treatment and came away feeling that, in spite of all the havoc, some people actually cared about those who had only minor wounds. I would claim that as a large plus for the NT nursing service.

I spent the next day thumbing lifts to Bagot and Berrimah and other places trying to locate our surviving Chinese, and the final tally showed that we had lost 11 Europeans out of 22, and 25 Chinese out of 104. It was more than 2 days before we got regular food. No one wanted to take us over. The Navy had no spare food (it was all

in the Neptuna) and the civilian administration had broken down completely. We each received one piece of bread (if you were within 30 of the head of the queue you could also get a little bit of butter) and a ladle of baked beans. You got the same issue for dinner - there was no lunch. In the early hours one morning, we had discharged a ship of lorries and other military equipment and returned her to her anchorage and were coming back when we pulled alongside a small vessel to pick up some badly burned victims (I think they came from the Don Isidoro on Melville Island).

Seeing them was shock enough but it was as nothing compared with the abuse we received from the medical officer in charge. I've forgotten just what he said, but the substance of it was that we were a mob of loafers with no sense of responsibility. We were taking up space that he wanted for fighting men and if we did not get out he would throw us into the water. I think he might even have called into question the sleeping habits of our parents, but I am not sure. Strangely enough, not one of us uttered a word! I think it was because the outburst was so irrational that we sensed he was under great stress. As it turned out, he had been working for 3 days almost non stop and with no sleep at all. I met him a few days later - he was charming - and I said not a word. He was truly a dedicated doctor.

Ballots had been drawn for seats on the first train out of Darwin and cadet Kent had secured one but he relinquished it to join me in helping to man the Tulagi - cadet Rothery came too. We left with a very mixed crew about midnight on 28 February, I think. She carried her own master while the mate from the sunken 'British Motorist' signed on as mate. I filled the second mate's spot and the third officer from the BM came as the third mate. The Tulagi's purser took on the job of chief cook and her second radio operator filled in as second cook and baker - and I can vouch for the bread he made with Enos. The Tulagi's own engineers were all there and 3 from the Neptuna acted as supernumeraries as there were no greasies or other engine room crew. The other 2 radio men did all the radio watches. The 2 cadets from the Neptuna acted as wheel hands while the Navy loaned us 2 more. One of them could steer but we had to teach the other. The Navy also gave us 3 lookout men. One was a bomb-happy E.R.A., the second was a W.O. with a chronic appendix and the ulcerated legs of the third had to be seen to be believed. The Navy also provided a spare man who had never been afloat before, and with this merry mix we reached Sydney.

There have been many articles and books published by journalists and others and much of it is sheer rubbish. In 'Darwin 1942' Timothy Hall states that the Neptuna was 'loaded down to the gunwhales with explosives'. Had this been so, Darwin would have been another Halifax of the first war or a Bombay of the last one. No, so far as I can calculate, she carried no more than 80 tons of explosives. As for the wharfies who 'felt rumblings under their feet' just before she blew up, I am quite safe in saying that the nearest wharfie at the time was the one who was minus a finger and thumb and, when I last saw him, he was swimming to such purpose that I was convinced that not only did he intend to get away from the Neptuna but from the Port of Darwin too.

I think I have covered your 5 questions but, as I said earlier, I can contribute little to the history of medical services in the NT. I can only repeat that whenever or wherever we sought medical aid, it was forthcoming in the friendliest way and left each one feeling that someone cared. I must thank you for writing because it made me put a few of my thoughts on paper (a thing I should have done years ago). I have many more, of course, but they involve serious criticisms of many people so perhaps it is as well to let sleeping culprits lie and, in any case, most of them would be dead by now or, at best, very old men.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the time that you have given me to read that.

Mr VALE (Braitling): I would like to raise a few points very briefly tonight but, before I start on them, I will join with the Leader of the Opposition in his criticism of the much-vaunted news service of the ABC that went to air last night. Whilst I do not think any blame can be apportioned to ABC personnel in the Northern Territory, I think that, after all the hullabaloo in recent months of what we were to get, last night's service was very disappointing. In fact, in recent months, I believe the ABC has abdicated its national responsibility for providing regional news services throughout the Northern Territory because, several weeks ago, the ABC Alice Springs local news, which we used to receive at 6.25 pm, was thrown overboard. Where the ABC has the men and equipment and the ability to provide such a service, I believe it is duty bound to provide that service in those more remote areas. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can only say that I hope that the national service that we saw last night improves in the coming weeks. I believe that, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, possibly more pressure will need to be applied to the ABC if it is to lift its game, particularly in this part of Australia.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 3 brief points that I want to raise tonight. All of them relate to federal responsibilities. I believe I have a responsibility to bring these 3 issues to the public's attention tonight. One relates to Telecom's provision of telephones in central Australia. For many years in central Australia, telephone connections were performed almost within a matter of days or hours of an application being made. It is quite obvious that, in recent times, Telecom has not been able to keep abreast of the tremendous rate of development in central Australia. The delay for the provision of telephone services in and around Alice Springs has gone from several weeks to several months. I think that Telecom should smarten up its operation.

Another concern is much more serious. It involves safety at the Alice Springs airport. In recent days, there have been 2 near misses due to people wandering on to the unsecured tarmac area where the planes taxi. Large commercial aircraft have been required to brake or stop their movements on to the taxiway there. In past days, the gates on to the airport taxiway were looked after by security people employed by the Department of Aviation. For some reason, in recent weeks, that service has been abolished and it has been up to the airline companies to keep an eye on the people coming and going through the gates. At least during the loading of aeroplanes there, the airline company concerned had hostesses or stewardesses out at the gate to watch who went out. The 2 near misses that I spoke about occurred prior to loading of aircraft. No airline company personnel were there. I think that urgent action is required before someone really comes to grief.

The third point relates to customs clearance in the Top End. Some friends of mine came back from overseas several weeks ago with 2 young children. They arrived in Darwin at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and were several hours

getting through customs. The time it takes to pass through customs has been the subject of much criticism in this Assembly in recent years. I wonder why the airlines and customs officials bring passengers in through the bottom deck where there is no air-conditioning. I make the suggestion that it might be possible for passengers to be brought back in through the upstairs lounge where they can sit in some comfort in the air-conditioned rooms. The kiosk could be opened. In addition, perhaps customs could engage casual labour to assist with the clearance of passengers through that terminal instead of having people wait 3 of 4 hours in the early hours of the morning. It is difficult enough for adults who are tired at the end of a trip but it is more frustrating if they have young children in tow and are kept for that length of time at the end of a long trip.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to welcome the newly-appointed General Manager of the TAB, Mr Des Healey. Whilst I am not necessarily a supporter of the TAB, I am a fairly one-eyed supporter of Australian rules football. In particular, the Melbourne Football Club is one that I have followed for many years. I just wish that Mr Des Healey could bring his sons with him because he has 2 lads who play for the Melbourne Football Club - Greg and Gerard Healey. One of them played for the interstate side last year. If he could be convinced to bring them to the Northern Territory and leave them at Alice Springs on the way through, then I am certain we could put them to a lot of good use.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in today's adjournment to make some remarks concerning tertiary and further education or TAFE, as it is generally known. The allocation of funds to TAFE for utilisation by adult educators is a matter of particular concern to me. It is important because, more often than not, the projects have been of a developmental nature either in terms of an individual's personal development or in terms of community development. Community development theory recognises that community development is a process which builds on individual collective achievements. It is a learning process. Where a developmental process is involved, it is critical that continuity of input be maintained. In simple terms, for the benefit of honourable members opposite, it is important that something, once started, is finished, that a commitment made is, in fact, fulfilled. In community development terms, it is disastrous to build up individual and community expectations, through starting a process or making a promise of commitment, and then not fulfilling it.

That is precisely what has happened in relation to adult education, as I now point out to the Chief Minister. I make 2 points, Mr Deputy Speaker. Firstly, once community or individual expectations have been raised and then dashed, it is immensely difficult - if not impossible - to start again. Secondly, I draw attention to this government's lack of commitment to provide the marginal increase in funding which would mean the difference between success and failure. I submit that the social cost of involving people in half-hearted or token efforts is far in excess of the present dollar cost of facilitating a viable community development process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will now draw on several examples from particular localities. In one locality, there has been a major loss of resources since 1984. The vehicle which was available to the adult educator in 1984 is no longer exclusively available to him. Supposedly, it has to be shared with 2 other communities which are literally many hundreds of kilometres apart. In practice, it is an impossible situation. The loss of the vehicle has several implications. Firstly, it means that 2 smaller communities, which were serviced in 1984, will not be serviced in 1985 unless the adult educator's private vehicle is used. When confronted with the adult educator's dilemma, the response of a senior bureaucrat was along the lines that he did not have to go if he didn't want to. At one of the communities, about 20 students were

involved in classes which had cultural significance and commercial potential. Several part-time instructors were employed. In the other locality, about 25 students and several part-time instructors were involved. Similar numbers of students and instructors had been lined up for 1985. Expectations have been built up in good faith and have been dashed. The response is both pathetic and indicative of the government's commitment.

Secondly, loss of the vehicle meant that artifact classes, which involved 5 PTIs in 1984, will not be held in 1985. For the information of honourable members, PTIs are part-time instructors. Thirdly, loss of the vehicle meant that driver education classes will not be held in 1985. As honourable members would be aware, most employment opportunities in Aboriginal communities involve having a driving licence. Concurrent with the loss of the vehicle, funds for employment of PTIs have been slashed to the extent that they virtually do not exist. I believe that the amount allocated for the whole southern region for the next 6 months was initially about \$465. I found this out only about 2 days ago, but I understand that belatedly there has been a further allocation. However, that allocation coming in March has meant that the PTIs have already ceased to work, the program has stopped and the whole thing has to be set going again. So much for commitment, Mr Deputy Speaker, and so much for understanding the nature of the community development process which the Chief Minister felt he knew something about.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will also refer by way of example to the adult education program at Yuendumu, which is a very successful program. In 1984, 5 Walpiri teachers were used in the various classes. There were a total of over 7000 pupil attendances that year. In the second semester, the average weekly attendance was 148. In the third semester, it rose to 168 and, by the fourth semester, it had risen to 194 student attendances per week. I find those figures to be most impressive. In 1985, those programs are severely threatened because of lack of funds which, in my view, equates with lack of commitment. In 1984, part-time instructors were able to be paid \$18 an hour for 20 hours per fortnight. In 1985, the rate is just over \$9 per hour for whatever hours are now available given this cut in funding. Mr Deputy Speaker, dare I say that, to argue about pay rates for part-time educators is probably academic at this stage given that the funding is not available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a couple of remarks about the bureaucracy involved in this particular program. Service delivery is continually frustrated by a number of arrangements that are required to get a new program going. I will just go through them. There are 8 steps. The PTI has to fill in a registration form which goes to the regional senior education officer, TAFE. Secondly, the submission by the adult educator goes to the senior education officer, TAFE, to employ. Thirdly, the course is approved by the senior education officer and the commitment is raised. Those stages take 4 to 5 weeks. Fourthly, the PTI then has to maintain statistical details of the first session for each of the students. Fifthly, the PTI makes a salary claim and has it verified by the adult educator. It then goes to the salaries section with duplicates to the regional manager. They still have to do their fortnightly reports which were about all that were required before. Every 6 weeks of the program, there is a massive review. Forms have to be filled in in relation to each of the programs. Eventually, at the end of the term or at the program's completion, they have to work through the following items: attendance statements, estimated versus actual attendances, aims and objectives, recommended changes to curricula, tangible results and cost. Eighthly, there are evaluation reports to be sent to the central office each quarter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it may seem quite apt to have that system in a town situation with people who have teaching degrees, diplomas or apprenticeships etc

but, when applied in the bush, it takes away the ability of Aboriginal PTIs who often are very well versed in the particular things they want to teach, but may not have the necessary skills in the English language. They are being cut out through this process and have been downgraded from the previous \$18 per hour down to \$9 because they are unable to fill in all these forms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also note the aim of the adult educator at Yuendumu was to make himself redundant over a 3 to 4-year period. It was his aim, and he was on target, to hand over the educator's role completely to Aboriginal people. A very important principle is at the essence of community development theory and I doubt if the principle is really understood by members opposite; it is certainly not reflected in their policies. The cuts in the amounts of money that were available for that program have meant that those programs have had to stop. The adult educator now has to apply to find out if this money is available and if it is enough to get the whole thing going again. However, effectively, it means that the program has been put back at least 6 months to a year - if it can be geared up again. It is just not good enough, Mr Deputy Speaker. Planning has to go into these programs so they can continue through the number of years required so that we can actually train Aboriginal part-time instructors in the bush and get them to take over delivery of those services to their own people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I make 2 references to a NARU study into Aboriginal adult education in the Northern Territory by Loveday and Young. I have been waiting and hoping that this would be tabled in this Assembly because it is a very interesting book. When an adult educator asked the senior staff from head office for advice, he was led to conclude that his superior had neither theory nor advice on how to handle the job. That is a sad state of affairs. Secondly, the senior education officer was reported as saying that Aboriginal adult educators were largely a forgotten group and the fact that they have particular and pertinent skills and important roles to play in their community's development is beyond question. The report, the community and the adult educators have recognised the importance of adult education, but it seems to have fallen on deaf ears with this government.

I put forward these arguments, not as a destructive exercise to irritate the minister and the government but as a matter of importance for all to reassess just what level of success we want to achieve in regard to adult education as it applies to Aboriginal people in this community. As I have highlighted, the present system is just not coming up with the goods.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Deputy Speaker, this is an unexpected pleasure. Firstly, I would like to touch on a matter that the Leader of the Opposition raised this afternoon, a matter which indeed I and the government are taking very seriously, and that is the situation in relation to magistrates in Darwin at present. As honourable members would be aware, the government decided a short time ago to increase the number of magistrates in the Northern Territory. We have been advertising for persons who wish to become magistrates. Unfortunately, the response has not been as satisfactory as I would have liked. One of the magistrates in Darwin is on sick leave and may be off work for a couple of months. To aggravate that situation, the Chief Magistrate, as recently as yesterday, also found himself off work on medical grounds. Thus, the ranks are severely diminished somewhat unexpectedly. I do not wish to pre-empt His Honour the Administrator but I guess it is appropriate for me to inform the Assembly that I will be making recommendations to the Administrator, hopefully tomorrow, to appoint an acting magistrate for a period of time to help overcome the existing problems. The government is examining further options of additional acting magistrates to be appointed at the earliest possible time. I

will keep that matter under daily review. I hope honourable members appreciate that we are concerned. However, it is not simply a matter of waving a wand. The selection of people as magistrates and judges is very important. The administration of justice is a most serious matter and will not be taken lightly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the main reason I rise in the adjournment today is to say a few words about one of the Territory's true characters, one of the people who helped make the Territory uniquely famous or infamous, both interstate and overseas. That person is Carl Atkinson who passed away recently. Carl was surrounded by mystique and rumour even when he was with us in Darwin over the past many years. It seems no one really knew where Carl was born although Germany and Canada appear to be the favourite rumours. I think Carl may have fostered a little bit of the mystique about his background and some of his exploits. Just the same, they were part of what made him such a character. Whilst we do not know very much for certain, we do know that he was an engineer, an adventurer and a salvage diver.

There have always been so many amazing stories about Carl that you do not know whether to believe any of them or all of them. It was claimed he was the first person to water ski in Australia.

Mr Dondas: That is true - 1948.

Mr PERRON: That was in Sydney. My colleague says that it was in 1948 but I think I could get half a dozen people to quote other dates. Certainly, it was in the 1940s. Somehow, during his stay in Darwin, he obtained title to all of the shipping wrecks that were sunk in Darwin harbour during the war. Ironically, the salvage rights to these were sold to the Japanese. In the mid-1950s, they spent a period here cutting those wrecks up and taking them away for scrap steel. That was after Carl had spent a considerable period in bringing ashore tonnes and tonnes of relics and valuables from the wrecks himself. As owner, he was certainly entitled to those.

It is either a brave or a foolish diver who dives alone. Carl Atkinson probably did most of his wreck diving alone. When I was a boy, I remember witnessing a boat anchored not very far from where we were fishing in Darwin Harbour. It was near the spot where lay what was left of the United States destroyer, the Peary. The boat was unmanned with just a compressor on board running and a hose over the side. While we were there that day, Carl made several trips to and from the wreck alone with bits and pieces. He was working in 100 feet of murky water amid the dangers of diving on a shipwreck with all that that entails - wires, loose material and so on. Certainly, it was a very risky pastime for anyone, let alone doing it alone in a place like Darwin harbour with its currents and poor visibility. For many years, Carl was the only person who knew where the Peary was because it had drifted down current from the place where it had disappeared beneath the surface during the war. Rumour had it that the Peary had gold bullion on board and that rumour persists until this day. Everyone thought that the gold ended up in Carl's hands. I wonder if any of us will ever know.

The giant groper, which frequents wrecks, is several times bigger than man. It used to be considered responsible for the deaths of many hard-helmet and pearl divers in the past. Carl told me that he never considered them a danger but rather magnificent, curious creatures. They used to follow him around a wreck and have their sides scratched. As we know today, the giant groper is indeed a very curious animal and likes to have its sides scratched. It is quite common knowledge. When Carl was diving alone on these wrecks 35 years ago, one was considered almost insane to hold a view that these giant gropers were really

quite harmless to man and that one should take some interest in them rather than kill them which we always seem to do. He was a brave man in that regard.

One common story had Carl bringing 2 jeeps ashore. After a period of use in Darwin, he was told that he would have to pay customs duty on those jeeps. Rather than pay, Carl drove them back into the sea and left them there. It was only 2 years ago that Carl told me that the 2 jeeps in question were in shallow water below the low-tide mark off Doctor's Gully. One of these days I might get curious enough to see if I can find them. I am not sure whether the story has any truth in it at all. It was one that Carl told many people and which people associate with Carl instantly.

Another newsworthy story had Carl donning his diving gear and walking across the floor of Darwin Harbour towing his boat over his shoulder on the anchor rope after the motor had failed. He claimed that he had been stung by box jellyfish so often that he was immune to the danger and he would pick them up in his hands to demonstrate to people. Mind you, he was very careful how he picked them up. Just the same, it was one of those stories that really made the legend of Carl Atkinson. Probably the only decompression chamber for 2000 miles was a primitive machine made by Carl himself. I believe it is now in the hands of the museum in Darwin. It was said that many men owe their lives to a stay inside that decompression chamber under Carl's instructions.

I am sure that a fascinating book could be written on the saga of Carl Atkinson and a luxury yacht called the Sea Fox if anyone ever has the time to research the events. The millionaire's yacht, supposedly built for Errol Flynn, went aground north of Darwin. After Carl had retrieved it and brought it to Darwin, a bitter row flared over ownership with Carl guarding the vessel, at that time beached at Doctor's Gully, with a rifle. The saga raged on for so long that the vessel deteriorated to the point where it was eventually burned to recover salvageable items, including several tonnes of lead that had been used as ballast. One of the 100-foot tapered steel masts that came off the Sea Fox is now in the hands of the Navy at the patrol boat base in Darwin. I hope they find the resources to erect it as a monument to the Sea Fox saga.

Carl was one of the foundation members of the Northern Territory Water Ski Club at Vestey's Beach. I am told it was 25 years ago this year that a small band of Darwinites, who were keen on water skiing, formed that club which has survived over the years. About 10 years ago, Carl suffered a stroke which left him partially paralysed. He refused to lie down, however, and continued to enjoy his great love of the sea by driving his speedboat and towing anyone who wanted to water ski. Six days a week he would get out of bed at about 5 am and drive to 2 bakeries to collect stale bread to feed the fish of Doctor's Gully, a pastime which has made the place very well known.

Just over 5 years ago, Carl decided to move south and, after a spat on the Gold Coast, he settled at Tumbulgum in northern NSW where he died on Sunday 17 February. I understand that the Oral History Unit has interviewed Carl, as did 1 or 2 local journalists a couple of years ago, to take note of some of his exploits. I hope that someone takes the trouble to write about a big man who lived a full life and left his mark on the Territory as one of those irrepressible characters who did everything his way.

Mr COULTER (Berrimah): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak in tonight's adjournment, I would like to speak about a portion of my electorate which has undergone unbelievable growth in the last 2 years. We have heard tonight in the address in reply from the Minister for Transport and Works that there are only 38 building blocks left in Darwin available to the Housing Commission. After they are expended, all development will take place at Palmerston.

Mr Perron: And a good place too.

Mr COULTER: A top little place to be. I would like to draw this Assembly's attention not only to some of the developments at Palmerston but also to how progressive this government is in setting aside land in the Noonamah area for the new town to be named New Town.

Mr Perron: We can get a better name than that. That is unimaginative.

Mr COULTER: A new town is to be built out there. Perhaps a better name than New Town may be suggested in time. There are many new towns around Australia.

The growth within the Palmerston area really is unbelievable. In 1976, the only construction that one could see in the area was a motorcycle track which was operated by the Top End Junior Motorcycle Club. Today it houses some 3000 people. As I indicated in the address-in-reply debate, 30% of the population out there is under 15 years of age. Also, I understand the number of children in the 0-5 age group is more than twice the Northern Territory average. As examples of the growth rate that has occurred out there, the Gray School, which was opened some 13 months ago, is now full to capacity and we await with interest the development and the opening of the new Driver Primary School to relieve the overloading which is occurring within the Gray School. Already we are talking about emergency accommodation within the school to accommodate the number of students who are enrolled there.

The high school has not yet been opened. It is under construction and it is hoped to be opened in January 1986. We believe some 300 students travel from the Palmerston area into the Darwin area as well as to Taminmin High School in the Humpty Doo area. It is believed that we will have to accommodate Years 8, 9 and 10 when the high school first opens. There is talk already of a second high school for the Palmerston area.

The 9-hole golf links has recently been completed there. We are awaiting the opening of that particular facility. Of course, Marlow's Lagoon, which is a recreational lake of some 3 ha, is to be opened soon with 2 small islands, jogging tracks and footbridges over the water. It is a very picturesque development for any town. We also believe that the amount of water that is available from the Marlow's Lagoon area is unbelievable. Some of the test bores have released water in the vicinity of 40 000 gallons an hour. This type of saving may be available for the sporting and recreational reserves in the Palmerston area which could bring about a big cost reduction in the development of those areas within Palmerston boundaries itself. The rural subdivisions are going ahead around the Marlow's Lagoon area. They are up to 3 ha in size which will bring a magnificent contribution to the variation in lifestyle which can be enjoyed within the Palmerston area. The first release of those should occur within a few short months.

660 houses have been built in Palmerston in the last 2 years. People currently enter the Palmerston area at the rate of about 6 families a week. I think that these figures are not well known to honourable members who should be made aware of the type of development which is occurring there. I understand that some 250 blocks are available for private development within the Darwin area before all private development will be restricted to the Palmerston area. That includes places like Brinkin, Northlakes and Woodleigh Gardens. It is only a matter of time before all that type of private housing development is situated at Palmerston itself.

The development of recreational facilities, in particular the youth recreational facilities, at Palmerston are well in hand. We hope to be making some announcements soon on the types of facilities that will be available for our young people. Sporting bodies are starting to come out to the Palmerston area. We believe that all the infrastructure that goes with the development of a community is not that far down the line. Local government is also well advanced. Elections are to be held in May this year for its own form of local government, which augurs well for grass roots democracy in a town that 2 years ago did not exist. To give you an example of the development, there will be 12 km of bicycle tracks by mid-1985.

For the last 2 years, the development of Palmerston has been in the hands of the Palmerston Development Authority which has been largely involved in the infrastructure and the engineering works at Palmerston. We believe that we are now entering a stage where we have to address some of the people issues within the Palmerston area. I look forward to some of those developments with interest because the people make up neighbourhoods, not buildings. Post offices, cinema and employment generators, such as small industries, are also proceeding well. We believe it will only be a short time before it becomes self-sufficient with those employment generators becoming well entrenched. Already we had the opening of the supermarket. That type of facility did not exist 12 months ago. These are all welcomed by the people in the area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is also interesting to note that some of the federal agencies are now also interested in the area. Organisations such as the Commonwealth Employment Service, the Department of Social Security, the post office and a host of other Commonwealth departments are now interested in coming to the Palmerston area. I know that it is a little way down the track and some members do not go that far south on their holidays, but I suggest that, if honourable members do get the opportunity, they have a look at the types of facilities that the Northern Territory government has put in place at Palmerston. I believe that it demonstrates how committed the Northern Territory is to development of communities such as Palmerston.

I would also like to mention the construction of the bridge across the Elizabeth River. It is nearing completion and people will soon be able to drive through Palmerston, across the Elizabeth River to Channel Island. That is the site of the other fantastic development which is being constructed by the Northern Territory government - the gas turbine electricity generating plant.

On their way out there, if honourable members take the time to traverse that part of the country, they will witness another interesting development which has taken place and which can clearly be seen from the air - the aquaculture project conducted by General Prawn Pty Ltd which is the Taiwanese-Australian joint venture. Already hatcheries are established and 4 ha of prawn ponds are operational and simply waiting for the gravid females, which are the pregnant females, to be harvested from the sea so that that project can reach fruition. It represents an investment of almost \$1.5m. If it is successful, and I have spoken about it in this Assembly from time to time, we could be looking at something like 3.5 t of prawns per hectare every 90 days. What that means for the Territory is a large export market of prawns plus the use of our own primary production in terms of soya bean and corn fishmeal. For 1 kg of prawn, you need 2 kg of feed. You do not have to be an economist to work out just how beneficial that will be to the Northern Territory.

I would also like to mention the other industries planned in the area adjacent to the Palmerston development. I look down the line not very far to the establishment of a university. I am pleased to hear that the Minister for

Education has entered into negotiations with Queensland University to develop a university college. I am sure it will only be a short time before such an establishment reaches fruition. I was interested to note that the Minister for Small Business and Industry spoke about the development of the trade zone within the electorate at Berrimah. I believe that demonstrates the confidence that people have in the area and the development which can take place there. BHP has already spent \$1m within the electorate of Berrimah for the development of its facilities.

I look forward to listening to the contribution to an adjournment debate by the member for New Town, whoever he may be, in a few short years, when he is in this Assembly speaking of development similar to that I have spoken of tonight. I believe that, with that type of visionary approach to things, all bodes well for development in the Northern Territory as it echoes the principles of this government on development. That is what it is all about.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to do 2 things tonight. First of all I wish to talk about a parochial electorate issue and then something a bit wider. My parochial electorate issue is the Territory Tidy Towns Competition as it affects my electorate. I do not think the suburb has had a very high rank in the beautification stakes over the last few years but it was a true honour to the people in the Millner Territory Tidy Towns Committee that Millner took second place in its section and, in fact, took second place to the overall winner, Jabiru. I think that deserves some comment tonight. Considerable beautification work has been done in the Millner electorate over the past few years, both by residents and also by organisations such as the Darwin City Council and the Conservation Commission.

I guess the biggest achievement has been the saving of the old Bagot speedway site from a promised supermarket that the council wished to inflict on us at one stage. Instead it has been turned into a very nice park which is being developed at present. The good thing was that, throughout the entire process, the council consulted very actively with residents. Residents have been involved on tree planting days and it is now a feature of which we can all be proud. Last year in the Territory Tidy Towns Competition, the committee organised tree planting among several nature strips in the electorate. A group of people surrounding a small park in the electorate organised themselves into a watering roster which kept the park green and lush right through the Dry. All in all, the Territory Tidy Towns Competition last year was a very worthwhile activity and has significantly improved the appearance of the area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, turning to my wider issue, I want to talk about what I consider to be the most startling effect of the new administrative arrangements and that is the virtual emasculation of the Public Service Commissioner's Office. I must admit that I find what the government has done to the Public Service Commissioner's Office very strange indeed. Under the Public Service Act, the Public Service Commissioner is in fact the linchpin of the public service. His responsibilities include employment, promotion, discipline and conditions of service. As well, the Public Service Commissioner issues determinations and is the respondent on behalf of the government for a large number of awards. Under the new arrangements, we find that he has largely been shorn of his powers.

Industrial relations has gone to the Department of Industry and Small Business, despite the fact that, in my view, it is in contravention of the legislation and has caused considerable confusion. The sort of confusion that I am talking about is well demonstrated in a press release issued by the Northern Territory Trades and Labour Council. I want to read into the record a few paragraphs:

A 3-page document has emerged that is guaranteed to confuse, confound and collapse the existing industrial framework which, although not perfect, at least provided a reasonably coherent avenue of communication. What we now have is a situation where personnel matters go to one autonomous area and industrial matters to another, and that areas of conflict will be settled by consultation. The fact is, of course, that many industrial disputes arise out of personnel decisions. It is imperative that unions know where to address their problems and to divorce such matters is impractical and absurd. This is not just a case of hiving off an unrelated function to a more appropriate area. It is an action that will inevitably lead to a division of the most disruptive proportions.

The purpose of industrial relations is to facilitate the resolution of employer employee problems. The legislation clearly indicates that the Public Service Commissioner is the employer. Why then should the unions have to go elsewhere for decisions and, furthermore, why should the unions have to make a decision on content to determine where they have to refer and then probably find it requires joint consideration by 2 government areas, neither of whom can make a binding decision?

As stated earlier, the rearrangement is unworkable and a piece of administrative lunacy. It is an arrangement which has been introduced with no regard to legislation and also with little care and thought. Rather than binding parties together, it will lead to even greater rifts between the government, the public service and the public service unions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I said, that refers to a document jointly issued by the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business and the Public Service Commissioner headed: 'New Administrative Arrangements Industrial Relations Activities'. The sorts of problems that this artificial split has caused are amply demonstrated by the fact that the circular has to provide a definition of 'industrial relations'. It goes on from there to say that, basically, industrial relations matters will be dealt with by the Department of Industry and Small Business and personnel matters will be dealt with by the Public Service Commissioner's Office. But then, we have this terrific part on page 3: 'On occasion it will be necessary for the commissioner to refer a matter to the new unit' - that is the new industrial relations unit in the Department of Industry and Small Business - 'even though it addresses an issue outside the definition provided. Such occasions will arise if the issue is one which has industrial relations and or policy implications'. Earlier in this document, it says very clearly that personnel-type matters are clearly in the bailiwick of the Public Service Commissioner. Obviously, in dealing with personnel-type matters, policy matters need to be dealt with also. Yet here it is said that, if there are policy matters to be discussed in the personnel area and there is a possible conflict, the Public Service Commissioner does not have the power to do what he thinks appropriate. It goes on to say: 'In these cases, the matter will be referred immediately to the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business and all parties notified accordingly'. Once a matter has been so referred, all further discussions will be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small Business who will advise the Public Service Commissioner.

That is a very clear pecking order indeed. What one can read into that is that, in 99 cases out of 100, the Public Service Commissioner will have to refer personnel matters to the Secretary of the Department of Industry and Small

Business and then the secretary has carriage of the matter. Mr Deputy Speaker, it does not make any sense. There is no administrative sense in my view in putting together the industrial relations functions of private industry and the public sector. They are completely different aspects of the industrial relations exercise. They have worked quite satisfactorily in the past with different spheres of responsibility and there does not seem to be any rational reason why it has been done.

The only conclusion one can come to is that it has been done, not for purposes of rationalisation but because the government, for whatever reason, has been most dissatisfied with the performance of the Public Service Commissioner. It is common knowledge that the government offered to buy the Public Service Commissioner out of his contract but that the Public Service Commissioner, for his own reasons, refused to go. We have a situation where, because the government is unhappy with the Public Service Commissioner and his operations, it has been prepared to wreck a perfectly acceptable set up, one that has worked well, simply to take away these responsibilities from that person. It is quite clear that the illogicality of the present arrangement is such that, once the present Public Service Commissioner goes, the present arrangement will be reverted to. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you want any evidence of that, you have only to acknowledge the lack of legislation that has been presented to the Assembly this week by the government to amend the Public Service Act, to put its administrative changes into proper legal effect. I think that reveals quite clearly what its true attitude is on this particular matter. I conclude by saying that it is a high price to pay in terms of the efficiency of the public service, it is a high price to pay in terms of increasing the possibility of serious disruption and disputation with the union movement for the government to take the attitude that it has on this particular matter.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, this morning, I asked 2 questions of the Minister for Education. The first one related to just how easy or how difficult it is for parents to obtain details of the syllabi in schools. The second question related to what checks the minister has to know that the syllabi are actually taught in full and that they are treated in a fair manner, particularly in regard to time allotment. I will come back to those points shortly.

With respect, the minister did not answer the first question. That was because he spoke about curriculum. A curriculum is a much bigger document than a syllabus. It contains the rhyme and reason of a course, the rationale, teaching hints and a whole host of things. In fact, often the curriculum of a particular course would come in a booklet form and, indeed, when a student has many subjects to take, to provide the curriculum of all of those courses would be an extremely costly exercise. It was good to know that these 'curriculae' are available in libraries.

Mr Bell: Curricula!

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Belt up!

I am sure that will be useful information. Certainly, I did not know that one could get them there. I hope they are available in all the libraries throughout the Territory. On the other hand, a syllabus is a brief document of about 1 page. It is a list of topics and sub-topics. It has a time frame and an indication of the depth of study. Basically, what I am thinking of there would be called by most teachers the timetable for teaching a particular subject.

The second question asked what the guarantees the minister has that a syllabus is taught and taught fairly. The answer that I was given was that,

firstly, the principal has the key role within a school to see that that happens. Of course, he delegates the oversight of that particular area to his senior staff, assistant principals and senior subject teachers. The minister also mentioned the Education Officer from the Regional Office. However, it is a pretty big job to get around all the secondary and primary schools and so forth and keep an eye on what is being taught.

The minister suggested that school councils play a role. This was echoed by the Leader of the Opposition: 'Go and join a council'. My experience of councils in my electorate, and there are quite a few of them, is that they are doing a great job. But let us look very carefully at what the powers of the councils are. As we know, any school council can take on a number of areas which it feels capable of handling: finance, canteens, uniforms etc. But, the fundamental questions parents ask are: what is my child being taught and how well? The Leader of the Opposition boasted this morning that he had a great deal to do with drafting the Education Bill. I can see his hand in it because I know from my brief spat with the Teachers Federation that he was very much in cahoots with it. The federation's greatest fear is that parents might know what is going on or question what is being taught. That is the area which is most important to parents and it is one in which councils have only peripheral input.

The minister said that, apart from actually sitting in a classroom, he could not guarantee just what went on, how well things were being taught and whether they were being taught according to a syllabus. That of course is exactly right. I have a confession, Mr Deputy Speaker. As senior physics teacher at the Alice Springs High School some years ago, I had a junior colleague who was teaching pre-matriculation physics. I accepted him as a professional colleague. Occasionally, he knew what his course was. It was sent out in the syllabus provided by the Adelaide University which set out the matriculation and pre-matriculation courses. I would chat with him on occasion as to progress. I received assurances from him; I trusted his word. However, I wore the result because, towards the end of the year, I discovered that he had left several sections of the syllabus out, which of course meant that those kids going into matriculation were behind the 8-ball. I had them in matriculation the next year. We had to pressurise the whole course to finish off what was left out of Year 11 before we could get on with the matriculation work. That was grossly unfair and unprofessional on his part. I was close to it so I can fully understand the minister's dilemma.

Another thing happened in my time as a teacher. There was much hoo-ha about approved courses. Particularly for internal Year 12, schools had to set up approved courses which had to be accredited. I remember one internal Year 12 science course which, when you read its syllabus, was fantastic. It was a very demanding course. In fact, I would dare to suggest that it seemed on a par with some of the matriculation work. For internal Year 12, that is a fairly high level. I was not in charge of the area as a whole; another senior was in charge of that. Towards the end of the year, I came to learn 2 things about that course: firstly, by no means was it taught in full and, secondly, the standard had been watered down. In fact, much of the work was done using Year 10 science books. It was a gross deception of the department, the parents and, worst of all, the students. I call it criminal.

I mentioned time allotment. For 2 years in a row, I was told by students about time management in a matriculation course. That was after I came to the Assembly. That particular course had 6 parts to it, each of which was expected to be allocated almost the same amount of time. One of the topics was a favourite of a particular teacher and it was taught for 50% of the time. I was told that by various individuals; I did not know about it. I mentioned it to

some other young people and they said that the same thing happened the next year: 50% of the time was devoted to one unit, another 25% was devoted to another unit and the remaining 4 topics had to share the rest of the time. That is criminal; the students were not getting a fair deal. I know this teacher personally and I had a great deal of respect for him. I certainly do not have a great deal of respect for him now. I could say more on this subject; it would make interesting reading. If I ever need to, I will certainly raise it.

The minister also mentioned Greg Sheridan's article in the Weekend Australian: 'The Lies They Teach Our Children'. That was followed throughout that week by a whole host of replies supporting or denigrating Sheridan. The following Weekend Australian had 2 articles from federation people, from both private schools and public schools, and many more articles as well. It was a great debate in many ways although there was much vitriol and personal attack on Sheridan. I found it very interesting that many of those who attacked him personally had very little substance in their opposition to what he had actually said. There were also many supporters. I believe it was very healthy for education; it is a very important topic.

I tried to put myself in the position of a parent who has children at school. After reading all this material, who does one believe? Children are either getting the most marvellous education possible or are getting the worst possible education there is. I am prepared to suggest a possible solution. It is one of those things that comes to you when you are doing boring jobs among the grapevines at Ti Tree. If parents were provided with the syllabi for their children's courses - perhaps on one sheet of paper for each course - indicating what topics would be taught, the approximate timetable, the depth of study and which textbooks would be used, parents would then know what is planned. They could even buy the textbooks. Providing parents with the syllabi would not cost the school very much. I always provided my physics and maths students with the particular syllabus so that they could help plan their study and work ahead. It would be quite easy for schools to provide syllabi to parents. The parents would know what it is planned to teach the children because the syllabus really is the teaching plan. They would be able to follow the progress by picking up their children's books. There would need to be avenues open to the parents to ask teachers about progress. Some constraints would be needed because some parents would not take to the spirit of the thing and become obnoxious. However, the majority would do the right thing. They would welcome the chance to know what their children were actually being taught and would take a much greater interest.

I believe also that most teachers would welcome the attention of the parents. The truly professional teachers, those competent, hard-working teachers who take a responsible attitude to their teaching, are becoming sick of the blanket criticism which the public often heaps upon teachers. I believe that most of them would welcome the chance to prove their unquestionable worth. I would support the minister in that.

It would generate keen parental interest. School councils and the teachers cry out for this interest. The parents would show a far greater interest in the school. The only people who would fear this would be the incompetent, lazy teachers or those who wanted to teach their own particular curriculum. You can read into that exactly what you wish. I recommend to the minister this course of action. It would be a very worthwhile exercise to prove that our education is indeed as good as what he says it is.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, last Thursday evening, I spoke on the issue of juvenile crime and identified problem areas which I believe should

be addressed by the Task Force on Juvenile Crime. Regrettably, on that evening, my time ran out before I was able to finish. However, I would like briefly this evening to continue the comments that I wished to make.

My suggestions at that time were based on comments made to me by numerous members of the community, people who have been the victims of break and enters, others who work with young people through schools and various community welfare groups. All these people agreed that we have a major problem to address and believe the government, after the task force report, must take whatever action is necessary to solve the problem. The role of the task force will be difficult indeed as it has not only to identify the causes of our young people turning to crime but to come up with the answers on how to solve the problems as well. The problem areas identified and the solutions offered were meant to be constructive and of assistance to the task force. I do not suggest that these are the only problem areas or the only solution. Doubtless, many other individuals and organisations will make submissions and I am sure that they will all be considered on their merits. In these genuine and constructive submissions, I am confident that the range of answers that the minister has requested will be found.

I was amazed and disappointed by the comments that same evening by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who chose to criticise my remarks. I found his comments negative in the extreme. For one who is a member of the task force, and from his frequent media releases concerning juvenile crime, I believed he would accept my comments in the manner I intended them. This was not the case however. In his negative manner, he scorned my suggestions. He proceeded to waffle on, quoting examples of juvenile problems in his electorate. I suspect that, by the time he had finished, he was as confused as I was. I would suggest that the honourable member spend his time in this Assembly putting forward his own views on how to attack the problems rather than wasting our time as he did on that occasion.

Last Thursday evening, I identified a number of problem areas and put forward some suggestions as to how these could be remedied. At the time, I was referring to the need to develop further our system of institutions suitable for accommodating juveniles. Whilst most will agree, and I am certainly one of those, that committing young people to detention institutions is undesirable, at times it is unavoidable. Currently, the only such facility in the Northern Territory is Giles House in Alice Springs which has a capacity of only 24 inmates. I am pleased to report that I have visited Giles House and must compliment Matron Daff on her conduct of that institution under, I might add, difficult circumstances.

I would recommend that consideration be given to constructing a detention centre in the Top End to relieve the pressure on Giles House and to provide for the behaviour modification of those who are now being continually recycled through our courts. We require a facility with sufficient land available for farming and the construction of trade training schools. This would provide a much greater scope for young offenders to be trained in some skills in a healthy, outdoor atmosphere. I consider this project should be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Mr Deputy Speaker, to sum up, we must address the following matters: parental responsibility in relation to child neglect and restitution; the employment of additional social workers; the removal of the root cause of the need for juveniles to obtain large amounts of cash - for example, pinball machines; the provision for young people of meeting places and supervised entertainment facilities throughout the suburbs; the revision of penalties in

the Juvenile Justice Act; and the construction of a juvenile rehabilitation centre in the Top End. Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend these recommendations to you.

While I am on my feet, Sir, I would like quickly to draw to your attention something that has been of concern to me while I have sat in this Assembly for the last few days. I refer to the paintwork on the walls. Regrettably, the paintwork in some areas is in quite disgraceful condition. Perhaps we are waiting until we build a new Assembly. However, perhaps I could be forgiven for mistaking some of the paintwork in the area as a fresco or a collage or perhaps just a plain mutation. Nevertheless, I do draw your attention to this matter in the hope that it may be attended to in the near future.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to raise 3 matters in this evening's adjournment debate. Firstly, I want to add a little to what I had to say last week in relation to the 16-mile stock reserve and the proposal that it be used for the storage of dangerous goods even though a claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act has been made over the area. I referred to that matter last Thursday afternoon. I do not want to recapitulate except to put once more on record the 2 questions I wanted answered by the Minister for Lands. He is not here but I hope that, by placing them on record, somebody will draw them to his attention. Why has his department decided not to provide a special purpose lease over Northern Territory portion 1948 for the storage and disposal of these dangerous goods and decided instead to provide it over Northern Territory portion 2410? Secondly, was the minister aware that there was a claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act over Northern Territory portion 2410 before he issued his notice of determination under the special purpose leases act on 20 February this year?

I wish to add a third question which relates to the fact that these dangerous goods that are proposed to be stored there are not just any dangerous goods. My understanding is that the dangerous goods involved are mutagenic poisons, specifically 24D. That, of course, would be familiar to you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a particularly noxious form of chemical. It can be used as a herbicide. I understand that it either is or is related to Agent Orange which would be well known to us. If these particular chemicals are to be stored, I would like to know exactly what sort of assessment has been carried out of the environmental impact that the storage of these goods might have.

Incidentally I am particularly disappointed that there are only 6 sitting days and I do not think I have been able to ask a question in the 4 days we have had so far. We have only had one question time and that was this morning. The only chance for a humble backbencher like me to obtain answers to questions is by raising them in a grievance debate of this sort.

Mr Perron: You could write him a letter.

Mr BELL: The honourable member for Fannie Bay chooses to waste my time and your time, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the time of other honourable members, not to mention the staff of this establishment, by interjecting with absurdities like that. Of course I could write him a letter but I think it is indicative of the sort of contempt that a character like the honourable member for Fannie Bay has for the deliberations of this Assembly that he decides to interject in this fashion. This place is for debate and the elucidation of issues of importance not only to our electorates but to the Territory as a whole and I trust the honourable member will treat it as such in future and respond to reasonable requests in a suitable fashion.

The second matter I wish to address in fact concerns the member for Fannie Bay in his capacity as Minister for Mines and Energy. I hope he does not fall asleep because I will not be writing a letter to him. I hope he will be able to respond during this sittings. He may have visited Palm Valley, one of the prize places in the Northern Territory, which attracts many visitors. Last Thursday in the adjournment, I mentioned the fact that Palm Valley can be mined or explored at ministerial discretion. I believe that therein lies a problem. I believe that there should be some stronger statutory requirement. Mr Deputy Speaker, as somebody with an interest in the mining industry yourself, I doubt that you would disagree with me in this regard. I am sure that you would feel that such a premier attraction in the Northern Territory should be protected in some slightly stronger way.

You also recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I referred to drilling in Ellery Creek. I do not propose to repeat that again but I would like answers. Evidently, these questions were not drawn to the attention of the Minister for Conservation. Specifically, I am curious to find out when he was advised, as minister responsible for national parks in the Territory, when this drilling was about to take place. Secondly, as a matter of policy, I would like to know whether the Northern Territory government feels that mining at Palm Valley should be subject only to ministerial discretion. There is a key policy question involved here and I believe that we are entitled to a straight answer on that question. I am disappointed that either the minister has not taken up these questions that I raised or deputed somebody else to answer them for him. Given the relative paucity of sitting days available to members to prosecute these answers, I think it is a shame that they have not been answered hitherto. If anomalies exist in the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act in the way that I have described, what action does the Northern Territory government, and specifically the minister, plan to remove these very anomalies so that delightful places like Palm Valley can be adequately protected?

The third and final matter I wish to address this evening is the matter of the government leasing private property in Alice Springs. I am indeed pleased that the Minister for Transport and Works has returned to the Chamber because I intend placing a question on notice in this regard. The minister will recall that there was a news item indicating that this would happen. I believe it is important for me to place on record that I do not say this for any malign purpose whatsoever. I fear that the Minister for Transport and Works rather took the wrong side of my interest in bringing this matter to the attention of Territorians. Members may be aware that there are privately-owned buildings rented or leased by the government. I have no complaint about that. Let me get that quite clear because I have been misrepresented in this regard. I have no complaints about the government leasing properties owned by rank and file members of the governing party. My only concern is that those rents be charged at the right price. Members would appreciate the possibilities that such an arrangement would have for abuse of public funds. I will not go into other examples of such abuse that have occurred in the life of the previous Assembly. I do hope that those transgressions are not part of the Tuxworth style.

I have one further matter in exactly that context that I wish to address, Mr Deputy Speaker. It refers to a column in the NT News that was published subsequent to my raising this issue. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be as aware and no doubt as concerned as I am about the Berrimah-line thinking that characterises this particular journal. When I raised this particular matter, I was derided by Mr Peter Wilson as being impetuous because I had somehow disturbed some sort of deal that was being worked out between what Mr Wilson referred to as 'a Darwin ALP businessman' and the government. This article said that a Darwin ALP businessman was involved in negotiations with the government

to let office space in a new building he is putting up in Alice Springs with partners. The article said that the net toll of the Bell outburst was that the Darwin businessman and his partners lost the government lease in Alice Springs. I find that extraordinary, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am sure you will find that as extraordinary as I did. I would be interested if the Minister for Transport and Works is able to elucidate in this regard. Incidentally, to this day, I have neither heard nor seen hide nor hair of the Darwin ALP businessman but obviously the honourable Minister for Transport and Works has heard of him.

I would briefly like to place on record that I wrote to the editor of the Northern Territory News saying: 'Look, this is quite a story. If the government is going to chop off negotiations on a rental deal because a humble backbencher, such as I, places a question on notice, I am sure that you would consider that newsworthy in the extreme'. However, the Northern Territory News did not choose to chase up the subject, nor did I receive a reply from the editor. I look forward then to hearing from the Minister for Transport and Works on that subject. I do not have his press release with me but my recollection is that it was something less than a gem of wisdom. Of course, it made the same sort of suggestion that I was somehow disagreeing with the idea of the NT government leasing office space in Alice Springs. Of course, that is patently absurd. However, I will look forward to hearing the explanation that the honourable minister is able to provide.

Mr MANZIE (Transport and Works): Mr Deputy Speaker, I have tried very hard to follow the member for MacDonnell's drift and I believe his suggestion is that the government is paying some sort of extra rental to alleged members of the CLP. I find that allegation to be pretty serious and I believe that, if the member for MacDonnell is making it, I certainly hope that he has some factual basis for it.

There has been a very conscious effort by the government to involve Alice Springs far more in its own destiny, if I may use that phrase, rather than perpetuate the myth that the place is a poor relation to Darwin. Obviously, this sort of action by the government leads to a demand for more office space which, as we hear from the member for MacDonnell time and time again, is a commodity that is in short supply in Alice Springs. As I mentioned in response to criticisms of favoured treatment for property owners who have CLP affiliations, all I can say is the Department of Transport and Works has responsibility for housing government departments. Presently it has plans to occupy space in 2 new developments in Alice Springs. One, which has yet to be built, is the Australian Fixed Trust Building in Gregory Terrace and the other is the extension to the TIO facility. Mr Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that neither of those facilities has any associations with the CLP. It might be worth mentioning that the sort of people who are erecting office buildings in Alice Springs are people with vision, people who have faith in the Territory's future. If, by chance, it happens that the only sort of people in Alice Springs with those sorts of visions are either members of or affiliated with the CLP, it probably indicates why there are only 6 members on the other side of the Assembly. Obviously, people in the ALP should be getting out into the business world, spending a bit of money and showing a bit of faith in the Territory and they would construct some buildings which the government could take over.

In regard to the rental of buildings, the member for MacDonnell has made a very serious allegation. The rentals of buildings that the government leases are set by the Valuer-General. The government has no input into how the Valuer-General establishes office space rentals in Alice Springs. The allegation does not wash. It is a malicious one. I feel rather sad that the member for MacDonnell has stooped as low as to make it.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I must also start with the honourable member for MacDonnell. The honourable member implied that he was not able to ask a question because the government had not allowed question time. I might draw the honourable member for MacDonnell's attention to the fact that the Assembly opened last Tuesday and, on the following 2 days, we had censure motions. When we have a censure motion, we do not have question time. To imply that it is the result of an action of the government is a nonsense.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening we have had an interesting adjournment debate. Two issues of specific concern to me have been raised. One was raised by the member for Sadadeen in relation to questions that he asked this morning. I do not want to take up a lot of time but I can say at this stage that I will read his remarks carefully with a view to taking some action in that regard. That is all I can offer to the member for Sadadeen. I would like to reiterate what I said this morning: the government is very proud of its record in education. A lot of work has gone into that particular field. The curriculum is available and I emphasise again to members of the Assembly that, if they want copies, I can make them available but, at this stage, costs prohibit making them available to everyone in the community. The material is available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Stuart raised issues concerning adult education and TAFE. I will be addressing the issues that he raised in more detail at a later stage. When the honourable member talks about promises and projects not being finished, all I can say is that it cuts both ways. There has to be a commitment by the communities concerned and by the government. To make an allegation that this government lacks commitment to Aboriginal communities is incredible. This government and the Commonwealth government have spent a fortune in Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory. Quite frankly, I am disappointed that the honourable member feels that this government lacks commitment. Clearly, we have a commitment to Aboriginal education. Clearly, we have a commitment in the TAFE area in Aboriginal education and we will continue to honour those commitments.

I might also say that one of the problems we have is lack of funds, and people seem to forget this. Aboriginal education is a very expensive exercise and I can assure the Assembly that it is an effort. The other night the member for Millner said that he would support trying to obtain extra funds for these disadvantaged schools. It happens right across the board. Aboriginal education is a very expensive exercise and the Commonwealth governments together with the Northern Territory government, must play a role and make a commitment. Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a huge area. I can only say to the members for Stuart and MacDonnell that we must address the problem of funding in Aboriginal communities. The implications are horrendous.

The reason I rose to speak in the adjournment was to join the Minister for Mines and Energy in making a few remarks in relation to Carl Atkinson's death. I start by offering my condolences to Wendy Atkinson on the death of Carl Atkinson. He was a dear friend to many people, in Darwin in particular, and he was one of the Territory's 'colourful characters', as I call them. No matter where he was, he was noticed by everyone. When the minister mentioned the jeeps, I recalled Carl driving down Smith Street with his jeep and his German shepherd and I think that many Darwin people would recall that as a familiar sight.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my first recollection of Carl Atkinson goes back to my boyhood. I am not exactly sure when Carl Atkinson arrived in Darwin. When I was 9 or 10 years old, about 1949-50, Carl Atkinson was down at Doctor's Gully. We used to play down there regularly. In fact, Doctor's Gully was a second home

to me. That was borne out by the fact that, if ever I was missing from my house, my mother would go down to Doctor's Gully to look for me. There are few people in the Territory who had as long an association with Carl Atkinson as I had. In fact, I could be one of the few who could boast that, when I was a boy, I was chased away from Doctor's Gully for fishing and, some 30 years later, my son was also chased away from Doctor's Gully for the same reason and by the same man.

Carl was a big man and he used to get angry on occasions. I guess he had every reason to become angry. A number of the activities that we used to become involved in were very dangerous indeed. On reflection, it is a wonder that I am here today to be able to reminisce. We used to swim all year round. We would take off from Doctor's Gully and use the currents and go past Lameroo. It did not matter if it was the dry season or the wet season. We would use the currents and come back into Doctor's Gully. We would obtain the ammunition that was dumped at Doctor's Gully after the war and proceed to remove the cordite from the shells. The way we used to do this was to bang the head of the bullet to loosen it and then remove the cordite. Carl used to chase us away from the area. I can see him now. We would run up that hill towards where the YWCA is now. At the time, all of that area was bush and there was a little creek that went down into Doctor's Gully. It is a place that holds many memories for me.

He was a strong man and he enjoyed life. I do not believe that he had a day of sickness until he had that first stroke some 10 years ago. That set him back somewhat but he was able to fight and recover to be an active man again. One of the last memories I have of Carl, and I guess it bears out just how much drive he had, was seeing him at Doctor's Gully in a diving cage. I went to see him on that occasion. He was downstairs and he said: 'Tom, you go upstairs and I will be up in a minute'. I went upstairs and I was sitting down with Wendy Atkinson when the next minute the whole floor started to shudder. There was a roar and a terrible grinding noise and, blow me down, Carl appeared in this diving cage. It was his method of getting from the downstairs section to the upstairs section. He had made a lift. That was one of the last memories that I have of Carl. I also saw him on the Gold Coast a couple of years ago. He was still looking well at that time. I will always have a place in my memory for my boyhood days in Darwin and my association with Carl Atkinson. I believe that Carl Atkinson will be remembered in the Territory's history as one of those colourful Territorians who are fast disappearing from our ranks.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATOR

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

I, Eric Eugene Johnston, the Administrator of the Northern Territory of Australia, in pursuance of section 11 of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 of the Commonwealth, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a bill for an act to provide for the establishment of a Northern Territory Totalisator Administration Board, to make provision for betting by means of a totalisator system, and for related purposes.

Dated this 5th day of March 1985.

E.E. JOHNSTON
Administrator.

URGENCY

Crown Lands Amendment Bill

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a letter from the Chief Minister requesting, pursuant to standing order 153, that I declare the Crown Lands Amendment Bill to be an urgent bill. The letter reads:

Passage of the bill will correct problems currently being experienced by the Registrar-General when dealing with the exchange of land between adjoining pastoral leases. An anomaly which requires all mortgages to be manually discharged and reapplied when land is being added to or excised from a pastoral lease has only recently been discovered. Manual discharge of a mortgage is a time-consuming and expensive procedure which can be corrected by this bill. It is expected that the relevant provisions such as sections 59A and 10B of the Crown Lands Act will be utilised in the immediate future. Therefore, any delay in the passage of the bill will cause hardship to lessees required to undertake time-consuming and therefore expensive discharge procedures.

I have considered the request of the Chief Minister and, pursuant to standing order 153, declare the Crown Lands Amendment Bill to be an urgent bill.

PETITION

Sealing of Roads in Katherine Area

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 269 residents of Katherine on behalf of yourself relating to sealing of the Florina and Cossack Roads. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of certain residents of Katherine and environs respectfully sheweth that there is an urgent need for the Florina and Cossack Roads to be sealed to provide year round all weather access to this area of major developmental importance. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the government give urgent priority to sealing the Florina and Cossack Roads and provide sufficient funds to maintain these roads to a high standard, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Classification of Certain Video Material

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, I present a petition from 224 citizens of the Northern Territory relating to pornographic material. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the Northern Territory respectfully shows our belief that, because it causes serious harm to the community, the Legislative Assembly should make illegal and should not legalise, regardless of how the material is classified, the possession, sale, hire or supply of any publication or video tape, video disc, slide or any other recording which consists of or contains a pornographic visual image or from which a pornographic visual image can be produced being an image which displays: (a) degradation of any man, woman, child or animal; (b) scenes of explicit sexual relations or showing genitalia detail or unduly emphasising, prolonging, repeating or dwelling upon real or simulated sexual activity; (c) sodomy, bestiality, sadism, masochism, mutilation or any other form of sexual perversion; (d) the use and effect of illicit drug taking; (e) blasphemy, indecency or insanity; (f) unnecessary, excessive or unduly prolonged or repeated violence, horror, crime, crudeness or coarseness; or (g) matters that are likely to cause offence, distress or harm to any reasonable, mature person. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Shopping Facilities in Katherine East

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of yourself from 20 residents of Katherine East relating to shopping facilities. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. Mr Speaker, I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of certain residents of the Katherine East residential area are severely disadvantaged and greatly inconvenienced by the complete lack of shopping facilities in the subdivision. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Minister for Lands and the government take urgent action to provide land for establishment of at least one corner store in the Katherine East subdivision, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITION

Creche Facilities in Katherine

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of 79 residents of Katherine relating to creche facilities. The petition bears the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the requirements of standing orders. I move that the petition be read.

Motion agreed to; petition read:

To the honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the humble petition of certain residents of Katherine respectfully sheweth that crisis exists in Katherine in the area of creche facilities. At the present time, there are facilities for only 45 children in the face of an urgent need to cater for over 100 children, and this number will increase with the expected developments in the town in the foreseeable future. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Minister for Community Development and the government take immediate action to provide emergency creche accommodation as the first step to providing adequate creche facilities as it is important in developing the town, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Status of Gas Negotiations

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I rise to advise honourable members of the current status of negotiations involving the construction of a gas pipeline from the Amadeus Basin in central Australia to Darwin, the purchase of gas at the wellhead and the construction of the new Channel Island Power-station in Darwin. It is the government's intention to have these matters finalised by the end of March and, at this stage, we are confident of achieving that target.

In respect of purchase of gas by NTEC at the wellhead, a letter of intent was finalised with the gas producers in September last year and negotiations have been moving steadily towards signing of the final contract. Talks are currently proceeding satisfactorily in Sydney and finalisation of a contract could well take place by the middle of this month.

In respect of the construction and operation of the pipeline itself, all major factors have been negotiated with the consortium headed by Westpac and again we are now in the process of finalising details. Legal advisers are currently drawing up the necessary contractual documents and it may be possible to finalise these documents by 18 March.

In respect of construction of the Channel Island Power-station, NTEC has given detailed consideration to generation strategy options and its

recommendations are expected to be considered by Cabinet within the next several days. These recommendations have been finalised by NTEC in consultation with the Department of Mines and Energy and the Northern Territory Treasury, as well as with various consultants who are assisting the government in this matter. Stage 1 of the Channel Island Power-station is scheduled for commissioning in late 1986 and will meet Darwin's requirements through to about 1992, with capacity for expansion thereafter.

The options under consideration include: open-cycle plant which uses gas turbines to drive generators which produce electrical energy; and a combination of both open-cycle and combined-cycle gas turbines. An open-cycle plant loses heat when in operation and a combined-cycle plant recaptures this heat and converts it to steam to provide additional energy.

Site preparation on Channel Island itself, the provision of needed infrastructure such as access roads, the Channel Island bridge, construction of 23 km of 220 mm water main and construction of a 22 kV powerline over the route to provide temporary power during construction have all been completed. The Elizabeth River bridge is nearing completion. Channel Island is ready to receive a modern, efficient gas-fired power-station to meet Darwin's electricity needs well into the future. More than \$30m has been spent on work associated with the Channel Island development. Revised tenders for site services on Channel Island were received late last month and it is hoped that a contract will be awarded later this month with construction on the site starting as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, in respect of negotiations which have been conducted interstate on construction and operation of the pipeline and purchase of gas at the wellhead, these negotiations have been conducted by a working party involving NTEC, the Department of Mines and Energy and the Northern Territory Treasury. The Royal Bank of Canada, which participated in discussions on the Western Australian gas pipeline, has been acting as financial adviser to the Northern Territory government. I am sure it will keep us in a better situation than the Western Australian government is at the moment as far as its gas purchases are concerned.

All information sought by the Commonwealth in respect to gas reserves in the Amadeus Basin have been provided and our informal advice is that both the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources and the University of New South Wales investigating team, which is providing detailed calculations for the Commonwealth, have accepted the estimate of 200 petajoules of proven reserves in the Palm Valley gas field.

There is one matter outstanding over which the Northern Territory negotiating team has little control and that relates to the Commonwealth capital grant for the construction of Channel Island Power-station. The Commonwealth originally approved a capital grant for a coal-fired power-station on Channel Island. This grant was for \$150m in 1984 dollar prices and negotiations are being held between the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth government in respect of maintaining this grant for construction of the new gas-fired power-station on Channel Island. The Commonwealth government's decision in this regard will have a significant impact on electricity tariffs in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I would reiterate that the decision to proceed with gas as a fuel for electricity generation presents the Northern Territory with an opportunity to: use an indigenous fuel with known future price increases; move in the long term towards containing electricity production costs without reliance on a Commonwealth subsidy; use a fuel which will not be affected by

industrial disruptions to power supply resulting from interruptions to fuel supplies, delays to shipping etc; provide greater flexibility in power generation planning; provide increased flexibility in responding to daily demand fluctuations; provide lower capital and operating costs for power-generating facilities of similar capacities in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek; and reduce the environmental problems associated with coal-power generation.

Mr Speaker, I undertake to keep honourable members informed of developments as they take place. I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I rise to indicate the opposition's support of the entire development of this gas pipeline. I am somewhat taken aback that, in the quite protracted discussions that were held this morning with the honourable Leader of Government Business about the curtailed question times and the reasons therefor, there was not the slightest mention made by the Leader of Government Business that this major statement would be delivered in the Assembly this morning.

Nevertheless, in the address-in-reply debate which we will shortly be presenting to His Honour the Administrator, I described the gas pipeline as the most exciting potential development that I have seen in the time that I have been in the Northern Territory. Despite the fact that no prior notice was given by the government of this matter and despite the indications that I have given to the honourable Chief Minister again and again that I would do anything in my power - and I am quite happy to place that on public record now - to expedite the development of that pipeline, it would be somewhat remiss of me not to indicate our support for it after that major statement has just been delivered in the Assembly. I am delighted to hear that the negotiations are proceeding at that pace. I am interested to hear the new completion time for the Channel Island Power-station. I imagine that would be a very tight construction schedule indeed. I trust that 1986 can be met.

One of the major problems of the Northern Territory, if not the major problem in terms of its future development, is the cost of our power. That is the reason why we have no manufacturing base to speak of in the Northern Territory. When entrepreneurs, who are interested in the Northern Territory, consider the cost of infrastructure and the cost of supplying power, they realise it is prohibitive.

Mr Robertson interjecting.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, in response to that interjection, could I just say that the cost of electricity supply in the Northern Territory and the extent to which government members personally benefit from the use of public money are 2 completely separate issues. We have already had evidence in this Assembly as to the very tidy windfall profit the honourable member for Sadadeen copped from a motel sale in Alice Springs ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr B. COLLINS: ...6 months after an NTDC loan had been given to that honourable gentleman ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr B. COLLINS: ... at concessional rates of interest.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Will the honourable Leader of the Opposition confine himself to noting the statement.

Mr B. COLLINS: Certainly, Mr Speaker, but I advise those members opposite that they will get as good as they give in this debate. I would have hoped that the backbenchers opposite would have been prepared to keep their mouths shut.

Mr Speaker, the gas pipeline for the Northern Territory is one of the landmarks that is likely to be left behind by this government. We are indeed fortunate to have had the gas reserves proved up to the extent that they have been. Let us get that straight. We are lucky to be in the position of actually having the gas, and it is a pretty exciting possibility. Not only do we know now that we have sufficient gas to give us a stable and reliable source of indigenous energy for the next 40 to 50 years, at a stable price, but the possibility exists to realise the dream of people like Rex Connor. I know that the Chief Minister agrees with me in my opinion of the patriotic vision that that man had for this country. Once the pipeline is completed and gas is pumped up the pipeline, if the offshore supplies of gas prove up, we are going to be in the potential position of pumping gas down the pipeline.

Mr Speaker, it has enormous possibilities. There will be considerable discussions and negotiations on this but the possibility also exists to run this pipeline to Nhulunbuy. The operations at Gove use considerably more power than we do here in Darwin. In rough figures - these figures are a bit dated but the percentages would be the same - of the \$100m it costs to run the entire operation at Nhulunbuy - that is, running the town, paying the wages and doing everything else - \$60m of that \$100m is to buy the fuel oil for the power-station. It is an exciting possibility indeed that the future operations of that most important industry in the Northern Territory are going to be stabilised in the manner that is available to us now.

There is a further benefit. If the pipeline can be extended to Nhulunbuy, it will dramatically reduce the cost of the gas. The honourable Chief Minister would be in a position to provide the precise figures. From my recollections of the briefings I have had, if it does not cut it in half, it comes very close. I think the figures were that it would bring it down from \$3.50 to \$1.50 per kilojoule of gas that is supplied. We are now faced with the exciting possibility of having every major community in the Northern Territory linked to an indigenous power fuel supply for the foreseeable future. That is a most exciting real possibility. It has passed the stage of being a dream. It is about to become a reality.

The major potential result will be to get over the major stumbling block that has been in front of the Northern Territory for certainly as long as I have been here: our total lack of any manufacturing industry. I believe that nothing will do more to assist the job of selling the Territory to potential development than this gas pipeline when it is finished. I am perfectly happy to place on the public record the complete support of the Northern Territory opposition in any of the endeavours the government might make in order to have this realised.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, it was not my intention to comment today on this statement by my colleague but the Leader of the Opposition has risen to speak in support of it. There are a few things that he touched on that are very dear to my heart: the need for gas vis-a-vis coal, Rex Connor's vision and the Gove connection.

To address the issue of whether we should have gas and why we decided on it so late in the piece, I would like to say that, at all times, the government was very concerned that coal, although it was our most economic option when we considered it back in 1982, was not our best future development option. The use of coal would have enabled us to put a lid on the existing cost of generating power. Over a period of 30 or 40 years of the life of a coal-fired station, we would have been able to arrest the cost but it would never have been comparable with other places in the Commonwealth where industrial development benefits from the cost of electricity. Neither would we have been able to make a certain projection about the cost because there is a very important component in the cost of coal over which we would have had no control. We would have been able to control the buying price at the pit with a long-term contract, and we knew about royalties and unloading, but we would never have been in control of the freight cost between the mine and the Northern Territory. In fact, we could have been hijacked by anybody and everybody so far as that freight component was concerned. Computer model projections showed that, given a certain set of circumstances, in the year 2000 the cost of the freight could have been 3 times the cost of buying the coal. There is no doubt that, if we wished to develop the Territory in the longer term, coal was a very good option. It could have contained costs but it would never have brought them down.

What transpired came out of the blue as a result of the government's proposal to pipe gas down the Esplanade from the gas tanks at the bottom of the hill to give new and existing motels the benefits of gas. They use a fair amount. At the time, AGL said that it had a scheme whereby it could provide gas from central Australia. We had determined the cost of a pipeline at about \$500m and that was out of reach. The previous reserves of gas were insufficient for us to have confidence to go ahead. Subsequently, during the latter part of 1982, a couple of mining operations in central Australia found gas while they were looking for oil. Because of the North-west Shelf to Perth line and the Jackson to Brisbane line, pipelining technology and costs had improved.

Within about 30 days, the proposals came forward and they looked too good to set aside as fanciful. At that stage, it also became obvious that the project was so big - in fact, it will be the biggest and longest pipeline in Australia - that there would be no way that we could undertake it with one company. That was when the consortium came together. The consortium represented end users, producers, transportation people, engineers, finance people - all Australian blue chip companies and people who knew what they were doing so far as the development of reserves and the transportation of resources were concerned.

Mr Speaker, the proposals have shifted greatly from where we started. The original proposal, which was regarded as hare-brained at the time, was that we liquify the gas in Alice Springs, buy 50 trucks and run them around the clock carting it to Darwin. That is what they do in America every day. Given the problems we already have on the roads, it seemed to me to be a bit of a wild card to put 50 trucks of gas on the Stuart Highway and run them 24 hours a day. It did not seem a very attractive proposition but it certainly led to the investigation by the pipeline consortium.

Mr Speaker, not everybody thinks like us. From the day I mentioned it to the Leader of the Opposition, he has been really keen. We have all been keen and we needed that confidence to go ahead. This country is full of members of the flat earth society. We have found them everywhere. We found them in

companies, in banks, in government, overseas and everywhere. We found guys who had 10 000 reasons why we should not burn gas in a power-station. The fact that South Australia generates 85% of its own electricity from the Cooper Basin escaped their notice. It was an outrage to consider providing power here for 20 years for 100 000 people. Some of the bankers said: 'It is a bit risky. It is really difficult. We have this reserve and we have a government customer at the end of a 1300 km pipeline. What if the gas runs out? What if Darwin is blown away by a cyclone? What if the pipe breaks? Who is going to pay?' I could not believe that there were so many people in this country who were determined not to do anything; not to look at the merit of the project and let us give it a go.

I must say that, while the project was regarded in its infancy by the ministers in the government with some scepticism, at all times they said: 'We do not think it will work but we are prepared to be convinced'. That was a tremendous cornerstone on which to take the development of the project forward. We have been able to convince people that gas is the best option for the Territory.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition raised the point about the cost of power. Every time we talk to an investor, whether we talk to him about a motel room, a canning line or a brick factory, the first thing he says is: 'What about the cost of energy? Tell us how we are going to pay for this? Can you give us any comfort against the run of energy in 1994? What if the Arab states get carried away again and give it a fly? Where does that leave us? Can you give us a guarantee that the government will not put electricity up to real costs and drive us out of business?' With the coal option, we would never have been able to give comfort to any investor for any project to develop the Territory in that relationship. The gas will give us the capacity to do that because we know when we sign our contract at the wellhead that the cost of gas is x cents a unit. We know the cost of transporting it from A to B. We know that that will not inflate because the cost of the pipe is written in today's dollars. We know that we may need more pumps and maintenance but we can get a very reasonable idea of how that is likely to be inflated over the years. It is not a great proportion of the total cost.

With today's gas generation technology, and using the closed-cycle option which is the energy-conserving option, there is no difficulty in saying to an investor, a government or a community: 'We can tell you that, in a certain year, the cost of power will be within a certain range. You can be pretty sure of that unless a government takes a deliberate decision to make money on power'. Governments in this country have not been famous for that over the years. On the contrary, they have been rather inclined to subsidise the cost of power from other revenues. That is another matter.

Mr Speaker, some of the other benefits that the Leader of the Opposition mentioned are the most important ones. The Gove capacity is tremendous, not only for the pipeline but for the country. Gove spends 3 times more money on oil than we do. We are going to save that in foreign reserves. We are going to have energy conservation. The Territory will receive a small royalty on the amount of gas Gove uses. We would not get that royalty while Gove used oil. We looked at Gove's use of oil in terms of tonnes per annum. We prepared a couple of models and were able to say to Nabalco that, if it came on to gas in the year 2001, the cost of using gas as a feedstock vis-a-vis oil would result in a saving of \$100m per annum. The savings to the community would be enormous. I am the first to admit that that is a

ball-park figure which relates to the cost of running the pipe to Gove, whether we have troubles, whether we must go under water, how much it uses, our reserves etc. In any event, the potential is there for us to do great things. It gives us the potential to put gas into Groote Eylandt, 20 miles across the water. We reduce transmission cost each time we put more gas through the pipe. We save ourselves money on transmission because the pipe costs will not increase and it does not cost any more to pump the gas up the pipe.

Mr Speaker, I conclude my remarks with a comment on the Rex Connor dream. When he was in government, I had a real problem with the Rex Connor dream. He was 15 years too soon. It seems to me to be a great scheme and it must happen. The problem in Western Australia is the volume of gas out of the North-West Shelf and the size of the pipe to Perth. The project is a little early. In 1995, people will look back at the debate on the cost to the Western Australian government and the size of the pipe and they will wonder what it was all about. Whilst it is embarrassed today, the government did the right thing 5 years ago when it went for the big pipe. In the long term, it will win.

The national gas grid is within the grasp of Australians. All we need is the vision and the guts to reach out and do it. The Alice to Darwin pipeline will be the first step in the grid. I foreshadow that, before 1990, we will be planning to connect, or in the process of connecting, the central Australian field to Cooper Basin. A connection from central Australia to Eromanga will take gas into New South Wales. We will be moving to bring Western Australian gas across to the connection at Alice Springs to take it into the eastern states. That will be the cornerstone for the next 50 years of development in Australia. The confidence that investors will have in the supply and the price of gas will see an injection of capital investment in this country the like of which we never dreamed of. What is frightening investors most these days is the cost of energy. They ask what their projects will look like if the cost of energy escalates out of all proportion.

Even with coal-fired powerhouses built next to the pit, we have endless problems in containing the cost of generation. That used to be regarded as the best circumstance for generating electricity. It still is but certainly it has many problems. The concept of the national gas grid is only a few years away. The only reason we do not have it is that we have not yet convinced ourselves that we ought to do it. The government that makes a national gas grid one of its projects for the bicentenary celebrations will stay in for years. It will be like the hydro-electricity scheme in the Snowy Mountains. It is that sort of vision and it will have that sort of return for the country.

The Territory will benefit from it too. When grid connections come from the north to the south, by whatever means, the Tern and Petrel fields offshore, which will have a developmental cost in the order of \$1000m to \$2000m, will then have a consumer market available to them that will justify the platforms. Once you have the platform in, you regulate the flow, but the cost of the platform does not change. If we have to spend \$1000m for a platform to supply Darwin, it is not a deal. If we had \$1000m to supply Darwin and send 10 times more gas to Adelaide or Melbourne, and they knew it was a guaranteed supply, we would then be a part of the national gas grid. We could then foreshadow to places like Gove that we would have the capacity to generate electricity and to provide energy for additional production and processing of Australia's alumina resources. It could feel sure that the Tern and Petrel fields had the volume of gas needed to provide gas to it.

All the gas that we have in this country today has been found by accident. We found it because we were looking for oil. Companies tell me it is a bloody nuisance because they cannot get anything for it and the hole for the gas costs them the same as the hole for the oil. That is a mentality that we have to turn around. We must now say that gas is one of our most important resources. As well as coal, it will be the future feedstock for industry in this country. We will want to get right out of oil and, the sooner we do it, the better. I am grateful for the support and the encouragement that the Leader of the Opposition has given me over the past 12 months when I have been involved in this. Regrettably, I have very little to do with the gas pipeline now because of other things but I am very committed to the project. I think it is the next chapter in a book that is about to be written about the development of this country.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, the enthusiasm of the Chief Minister is so infectious that I thought I should rise to express once more the opposition's complete and utter support for the project. Recently, the Leader of the Opposition and I had the opportunity to talk to a group of small secondary business people in the Darwin area. Their main concern at that stage was electricity prices. Admittedly, that meeting took place just after the 16% increase in electricity prices. Even taking that into account, it is obvious that one of the main concerns that secondary industry people have in the Northern Territory is the cost of power. In their view, the cost of power is a major factor that prevents expansion of existing secondary industry and makes it difficult for new people to take the plunge.

It is quite clear, as outlined by the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Chief Minister, that, over the next 10 to 15 years, we will be able to control the cost of power production and ultimately the cost to the consumer in a way that we cannot do at present using coal-fired power-stations or oil-fired power-stations. That can only benefit the Northern Territory. As well as the current disadvantage that our secondary industry people in particular suffer in terms of electricity costs, there are other disadvantages that they labour under such as the size of the market, the distance from bigger markets and the cost of freighting raw materials from other places into the Northern Territory. Some of those factors are disadvantages that secondary industry in the Northern Territory will have for a long time. If we can make an impact on the cost disadvantage in power generation, we will improve significantly the selling position of secondary industry in the Northern Territory.

At the federal level, there is a determined move to reduce or remove completely state tariffs and state preferential agreements. As I understand it - and perhaps the relevant minister could tell us later in this sittings - we are very close to reaching agreement at a federal level to remove state preferential arrangements for their own industries. If we can reach that situation and if we can make our own industries more competitive through a much greater control over power costs, we will be able to offer to secondary industries, particularly in Darwin, the very real prospect of penetrating the Western Australian market in the north-west of Western Australia and perhaps even some of the Queensland market. Undoubtedly, we do have the capacity and the entrepreneurs in the Territory at present to be able to penetrate those markets. With the assistance of greater control over future electricity prices and the removal of the tariff barriers, particularly in Western Australia, the opportunities will be greatly increased for secondary industry in the Northern Territory. It will be a very exciting time for secondary industry and the Territory in general in the next 10 to 15 years if those things happen.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from 5 March 1985.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, as I advised yesterday, I will present the address in reply to His Honour the Administrator at Government House at 11.30 am today. I invite all honourable members to accompany me.

MOTION

Status of Gas Negotiations

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the statement of the Minister for Mines and Energy. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, I have had some association with the field owners who propose to deliver that natural gas, hopefully at an early date, to Darwin, Tennant Creek, Katherine and other towns in between. It should be noted that this will be the largest single private enterprise project ever undertaken in the Northern Territory. During its construction, and more particularly so afterwards, it will give a tremendous boost to the Northern Territory workforce, particularly because it will allow the establishment of permanent industries from one end of the Territory to the other en route with the pipeline.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate an engineer with the Australian National Railways, Mr Des Smith. I believe that the work that he did with both the Northern and Central Land Councils in establishing a rail line, which is still not being used, will allow a much quicker construction of the pipeline from Alice Springs to Darwin.

Quite apart from the cost savings that the Northern Territory will make by supplying fuel to all of our major power-stations, the amount of money that will be generated in royalties alone will run into millions of dollars during the next 30 to 40 years. I have always argued against the import parity system whereby local crude oil is priced according to the price of oil imported from the Middle East. I do not believe that is a relevant argument. However, we are tied into a national decision. By converting to natural gas at an early date, we will stabilise our energy costs right across the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister made mention of the fact that natural gas was virtually the booby prize in the exploration industry. It should be noted that, for many years in the Middle East, when oil explorers discovered natural gas in their search for oil, they would put a match to it and burn it off instead of plugging and abandoning the wells. Over many years in the Middle East, millions and millions of dollars worth of a natural energy resource went up in smoke.

On a dollar-for-dollar basis, and in terms of gross heating value, natural gas is the best fuel available. If you take into account the argument about Middle East oil prices, there is no question about that. Whilst we talk about the immense reserves that are available from Palm Valley for Northern Territory consumption, we tend at times to forget that, at Mereenie, a few miles west of the Palm Valley field, we have a combination of oil and natural gas. Of course, where that occurs, engineering practice dictates that the oil must be produced first. Then the gas is separated off at the wellhead and reinjected into the field to keep the oil pressure up. But in 30 or 40 years time, we will be able to start producing that gas in large reserves. Hence, in addition to the Palm Valley field, we have another large field of

equal size in gas reserves further west in central Australia. Of course, there are other minor gas shows in central Australia. I believe they will ultimately be proved up to have significant reserves of natural gas either for the Territory or for consumption elsewhere in Australia.

I might add that, back in the 1970s, there was a proposal to export natural gas as LNG via the Borroloola area; that is, freezing it, purifying it and shipping it overseas. I still believe that that will occur again via Northern Territory gas fields if the Middle East prices go through the sky and the world energy picture again becomes as grim as it was in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mr Speaker, I had only proposed to speak very briefly on this statement because the minister, the Chief Minister and indeed the Leader of the Opposition spoke at length and covered all the main points. Let me say that it does not matter what type of development we have. We can build our Yularas, our Kings Canyon, our roads, our rails, our hotels, our motels and any industry in the Northern Territory. But all of those fall short unless we can obtain and maintain a reliable and stable supply of energy at a fair and reasonable price. Energy is the bottom line for any Northern Territory development. For too long we have been relying on interstate and overseas energy supplies. I suppose I could sum up by saying that this decade sees natural gas becoming the caviar of the energy world.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I will be brief. It seems that, by making a statement in the Assembly this morning, I caused a small storm in a tea cup. I think that is what it was. The Leader of the Opposition made some points about the statement I made being a major statement. I do not accept that at all. The pipeline project has been spoken of in this Assembly on a number of occasions by the former Minister for Mines and Energy. There has been quite a lot about it in the press as well. It is not as if there has been any surprise to honourable members in the basic concept of what was proposed. What I advised in the statement today was merely the present status of the negotiations which I thought honourable members would like to know about. Indeed, it seemed that they did appreciate knowing about it. I did not see the statement as being a major document but merely one of basic information to the Assembly.

The Leader of the Opposition said that we were very lucky to have this project at all because we were lucky that enough gas was found in central Australia recently. I think that luck played only a small part. We are lucky in the same sense that we are lucky to have uranium in the ground, we are lucky to have manganese and we are lucky we have gold in the Northern Territory. I guess you could describe it as luck. I think that those who go out and find it describe it more as hard work. We are lucky we have water under Alice Springs otherwise we would have to fold up the town and move it somewhere else. In that sense, you could say we are lucky that there is gas in central Australia. The proposal to bring gas to Darwin certainly has ensured that centralian explorers are now far more interested in finding gas in central Australia. Many millions of dollars have been spent recently in proving up the reserves that were known in central Australia in recoverable quantities so that the pipeline and the powerhouse to be built in Darwin could in fact proceed.

One of the most important tasks which I am addressing at present is the system to be established in an attempt to clear the pipeline corridor of sites of significance and sites sacred according to Aboriginal lore. We will be

putting together a small team of people to negotiate with the various interested parties in the hope that we can obtain a fairly quick clearance of the necessary corridor. I am advised that the optimum route is likely to follow some of the railway corridor which has been identified and cleared of areas of significance to Aborigines. In some cases, it will follow that route, in others the Stuart Highway and, in other places, it will probably be a corridor unique to the pipeline itself. Hopefully, over the next couple of weeks, more of those matters can be clarified.

There is one aspect we should all bear in mind in considering gas as a long-term indigenous supply of energy which at least has predictable costs as far as its extraction is concerned. We need to bear in mind that we are subject to the vagaries of federal politicians, in particular, as far as levies, taxes and so on are concerned in regard to major commodities such as gas and oil. Quite obviously, there is a possibility that the federal government will impose levies on gas at some time and that could change the economics of it completely.

As honourable members will know, the last federal budget imposed an excise on heavy fuel. It was totally unexpected and was not picked up in the federal government's subsidy to us to help generate electricity. It was an additional impost which we did not have before and will be borne by Territory electricity consumers in the future. Let us hope that the federal government stays away from gas for as long as is humanly possible. As it becomes a bigger industry in years to come, because of the quantities involved, it will be more attractive for federal Treasurers to slip in a couple of cents here and there per kilojoule and raise very substantial sums. Obviously, the people who will pay in the long run are the consumers.

Mr Speaker, I will undertake to keep honourable members informed as progress is made on all of these matters.

Motion agreed to.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Continued from page 297.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to inform the Assembly that, accompanied by honourable members, I have this day waited on His Honour the Administrator and presented to him the address in reply to the speech by His Honour on the occasion of the opening of the session which was agreed to on 5 March 1985. His Honour was pleased to make the following reply:

Mr Speaker, thank you for your address in reply which you have presented to me. It will afford me pleasure to convey to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, the message of loyalty of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia to which the address gives expression.

DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE Aboriginal Education

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received the following letter from the honourable member for Stuart:

Dear Mr Speaker, I wish to propose under standing order 81 that the Assembly discuss this morning as a definite matter of public importance the following: the failure of the Northern Territory government to honour its commitment to Aboriginal education as demonstrated by the inadequate number of Aboriginal teachers and assistant teachers in the Northern Territory schools, administrative decisions and the provision of physical resources.

Is the honourable member supported? The honourable member is supported.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, the proposition the opposition will be maintaining in this discussion is that the Northern Territory government is not serious in its approach to Aboriginal education. The Northern Territory government's approach to Aboriginal education can only be described as tokenism. It is our contention that, if the government were serious, a different approach would be evident, an approach in which the commitment would be matched with appropriate policies and adequate staffing levels. Mr Speaker, to demonstrate the basic proposition outlined above, I will concentrate on the number of positions available for Aboriginal teachers and teaching assistants, and the Remote Area Teacher Education Program. My colleagues will cover other areas.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, let me remind the minister of his government's supposed commitment to education for Aborigines. This commitment was expressed in the Northern Territory Department of Education Information Statement No 6: 'Education for Aborigines - Strategies for Improving the Academic Performance of Aboriginal Students in Primary and Secondary Education'. The minister, in speaking to the statement, noted on 7 May 1984 that a significant proportion of Aboriginal children proceed through their schooling to Year 10 without achieving functional literacy and numeracy. They are, therefore, able to take only minimal advantage of the benefits which schooling can provide. He saw the information statement as a blueprint for rectifying the situation. Fine words but who was he trying to fool? The government's commitment began as follows:

The Northern Territory government is committed to enhancing the educational opportunities and raising the level of academic achievement of Aboriginal students at all levels of education - primary, secondary, and tertiary. Particular efforts will be made to ensure that appropriate and relevant life and work skill programs are provided for all Aboriginal students of secondary school age. These programs should take into account the requirements of individual communities.

Mr Speaker, that is the commitment the government made. The government stated its aims for Aboriginal education in the form of 7 points which I will not repeat here. Suffice it to say that these aims are unachievable without certain basic conditions being met.

As I shall now demonstrate, there are enormous holes in the government's performance in its supposed attempt to achieve those aims and meet its commitment. One of the essential requirements for the improvement of education for Aborigines is the employment of Aboriginal teachers and assistants within schools. Indeed, there are many who will say that Aboriginal staffing is the essential requirement. They say that, until we reach the stage where Aboriginal teachers are the normal experience of Aboriginal children during their primary school years, we will have little hope of achieving any significant improvement in the educational standard.

Mr Speaker, I am not going to establish the prima facie case for this statement by going into cultural tradition. I merely ask honourable members, through you, Mr Speaker, to cast their own minds back to their early childhood - they may wish to look at their own children - and think of the enormous influence that a teacher has over young children. The school is the first major contact a child has, unprotected by parents, with a reality outside the home. New ideas and concepts flow and new problems with social relationships have to be overcome. Is it any wonder that teachers become surrogate parents and that, as time goes by, they become one of the child's major role models? They provide a standard of excellence. They enforce standards. They say: 'These are the standards of the adult world. This is how you will be expected to spell, to read and to enumerate'. Because for most of us it was obviously true, with varying degrees of success, we went about learning the three Rs. We acquired standards of achievement and a vision of where we were heading in life.

Mr Speaker, roughly speaking, that is kardiya or whitefeller experience. What would have happened if, from the very first day at school, it had become obvious that none of those things applied? What if you went to school and found that the teacher could not understand a word you were saying and you were having real problems following the teacher? What if the lifestyle, values, standards, if you like, of the teacher were so hopelessly at odds with those you lived with daily that you could not link the teacher into your own day-to-day reality? How could that teacher provide a model for you to grow with? Why would you feel any need to accept that person's standards of achievement and vision of where you should be going? That is precisely where some 30% of the young schoolchildren of the Northern Territory find themselves today and I am sorry to say that they will drift through their primary school years gaining a certain facility in the 3 Rs, but never being educated and never really believing that they can achieve at the teacher's level. Without a teacher-based standard to guide them, the lowest common denominator takes over and peer group pressure ensures that all comply with it.

Mr Speaker, it is clearly obvious that, if the government were serious about its commitment to Aboriginal education, there would be an Aboriginal assistant teacher working alongside every white teacher. Additionally, there is an urgent need for a crash course for Aboriginal teachers. It is my contention that there should be enough teachers being trained right now to fill all the Band 1 positions in Aboriginal schools. Is the government honouring its commitment and following its noble aim? Let us look first at assistant teachers. Teachers take longer to train and there is a lot of curriculum development work to be done etc. But we would expect that the government by now would be well down the road to the stopgap position, the interim position, of one assistant teacher to every classroom.

The figures I am about to give were compiled by senior staff in a survey conducted last year. They show that, in the southern region in 1975, there were 34 assistant teachers spread across 12 schools, an average of only about 2.8 per school. Those figures applied in the days of Commonwealth responsibility and we would have expected to have seen a fairly significant improvement since then. However, let us have a look at the figures for 1980 and see if we were near to achieving our goal or even if we were halfway there. We had not even held the ground.

In 1980, there were only 24 assistants in 13 schools. That is 10 fewer than 5 years before. In 1984, there were 25 assistant teachers employed, only 2 more than in 1980 but they had to cover 3 more schools. In 1975,

disregarding the schools which had no assistant teachers, there was an average of about 2.8 per school. By 1984, this had fallen to 1.6. That is disgusting. However, we always cop it in the neck in the Centre so we dug until we found overall Territory figures. In 1979, as near as we were able to establish, there were 344 full-time Aboriginal assistant teachers employed. In 1982, we found a drastic reduction of over 100 assistant teachers to 226. By 1984, the numbers had plummeted again to around 110. That is a pathetic effort; a damning indictment. It is a ridiculously small number of Aboriginal people involved in the education of their people. It represents something less than 5% input of Aboriginal teachers and assistants when 30% of children attending primary schools are Aboriginal and there are hundreds of others on outstations waiting for schools.

Mr Harris: Where are those figures from again, Brian?

Mr EDE: I'll get to that if I have time.

This is the reality of education for Aboriginals as opposed to the pious statements of the government in its policy document on education for Aboriginals.

Another survey showed that, in the community surveyed, the Department of Education had by far and away the lowest proportion of Aboriginal staff employed. I would have hoped and expected that it would have led the way. It is impossible to run a bilingual program successfully without having a teacher who speaks the Aboriginal language and who grew up in the culture. As reported by senior staff in the Alice Springs region, I quote from the document which the minister had last year on the current status of teaching assistants in the central region:

The lack of Aboriginal personnel to teach in bilingual programs has led either to the reduction of bilingual programs or to the independent recruitment by local schools of Aboriginal teaching personnel. However, this practice is not confined to bilingual schools. In one of the non-bilingual schools, the principal informed us that, 'frequently, it is the policy of this school to remove the janitor or cleaner out of their normal roles to function as a teacher assistant'. This survey by these staff found 9 people, not employed as such by the Department of Education, working as teaching assistants or literacy workers in 8 schools.

Mr Speaker, it is appalling the way this government has systematically stripped the schools of their teacher assistant positions. We fear the lack of commitment. We did not expect to find that, over a period of 5 years, the government had wiped out two-thirds of its teacher assistant positions - 200 positions gone. The area where we could have expanded rapidly was gutted by the government. I challenge the minister to give any halfway credible explanation of how those figures demonstrate his government's commitment. It is a hollow sham.

Mr Harris: Give us the figures.

Mr EDE: I will supply them to the minister as soon as I have finished. I have them in the file here with me.

Mr Harris: But who do the figures come from in the first place?

Mr EDE: The first 2 lots of figures are from a government publication:

344 in 1979 and 226 in 1982. The third lot of 110 I believe was supplied by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. They are not members of the federation. The numbers it recorded were of people working for the Department of Education.

I will move on to the Remote Area Teacher Education Program, generally referred to as the RATE program. It is widely believed in rural areas, a belief backed by an objective view of the situation, that the government's commitment to RATE is half-hearted to say the least. An experienced practitioner at one of the schools sees RATE in the following terms: 'The RATE program is a great idea which suffers from insufficient and inadequate organisation, structure, guidance, personnel and funding'. If this is the case, and most educators I have spoken to in community schools believe it is, then it demonstrates the half-hearted approach by which the government attempts to provide a workable system for getting Aboriginal people with experience and knowledge into the classrooms where they can teach children more effectively.

There is nothing wrong with the RATE idea. It just does not go far enough. The minister's education for Aborigines statement says: 'Appropriate teacher training can only be provided through Batchelor College and Darwin Community College'. What a load of rubbish! The government builds flash institutions and then blames people who do not use them. Communities do not want their young people 1000 miles away. Husbands will not let wives go, nor wives husbands. The government says you have to go to a college. Why? It is typical government thinking. It just does not work in an Aboriginal context. It is so unnecessary. An alternative would be simply to expand the Remote Area Teacher Education Program to support trainee teachers doing external studies on the job. Has nobody heard of external studies? Batchelor could be used for short in-service courses, course design, teaching materials, lecture notes and upgrading to 4-year trained status. Anyone who has worked for any period in Aboriginal training will tell you that, on-the-job training, interspersed with short courses, is the way to go. The short courses should be provided out of the residential colleges of Kormilda and Yirara, right through to 3-year trained status.

Mr Speaker, the blame for low numbers of Aboriginal teachers and assistant teachers cannot be laid at the door of the Aboriginal people. It is the system that has failed Aborigines. I know what the minister is going to say about sending them to Batchelor or the Darwin Community College. He will say: 'Well, if they want to be teachers, they are going to have to put up with it'. He might say: 'It is good for their souls to get them out of their society and into ours'. This chuck-them-in-the-deep-end-and-we-will-see-who-swims mentality is as out of date as it has been consistently proven wrong.

Three-year-trained staff are restricted to teaching in Aboriginal communities. They will be teaching within an Aboriginal cultural context. Accordingly, I ask why the government is trying so hard to get them out of that cultural context during the training phase. I will put it in another way. Here we have people who will be required. They want to teach in their own community. Probably they have already become a bit cut off through going to Yirara or Kormilda, and the government says: 'If you want to teach in your own culture, you will have to cut yourself off from it even further'. Isn't that stupid? Isn't that the height of egocentricity? Isn't it possible, indeed probable, that the people who successfully get through the present system will be so culturally isolated that they will have problems re-establishing themselves as teachers in their home communities?

Mr Speaker, I want the Minister for Education to lift his game. This is all basic stuff. I am certain that his department has been giving him similar advice but I do not know why he cannot understand it and why he cannot implement it. I will give one more example of just how the government appears to be committed towards destroying its own program. Suppose a teacher assistant decides to do a course to upgrade to teacher. Does the person go on an unattached list and the school hire a temporary replacement? No way. The school has to go without a teacher assistant unless and until the old teacher assistant, the now trainee teacher, resigns from the teacher assistant position and takes the lower pay and study grant. Of course, if the school does not put pressure on the trainee teacher to resign, and there is a vacancy, it is interpreted as a sign that it probably never needed the position and it will probably end up losing it anyway. If the trainee teacher resigns his old position and then does not make the grade at Batchelor, or just cannot stand the isolation, can he go back to his old job? Of course not. There is another teacher assistant in the job. He is not nearly as well trained or experienced as the one who went to Batchelor but, for the trainee, sink or swim are the options. There is no going back. Is it any wonder that many prefer to hang on to what they have, a teacher assistant job? Obviously, given that situation, many keen Aboriginal people feel their resources are better spent staying at the school and participating in the programs as best they can. The result is: no training, no qualifications and no advancement in seniority and responsibility.

Let us consider the number of teacher assistants who have completed one year of training at Batchelor. In the 16 schools surveyed by senior education staff in the Alice Springs region, only 2 teacher assistants had completed 1 year at Batchelor. Not 1 Aboriginal assistant teacher completed more than 1 year. Only 4 had completed 6 months at Batchelor. That shows that Batchelor College is not serving the needs of Aboriginal schools in central Australia. That is patently clear.

Mr Speaker, I believe that, at the rate the government is implementing RATE, we can look to the next 50 years before we get anything like the 50% of sufficiently-trained Aboriginal teachers that Batchelor talks about in its publicity material.

In the short time I have left to me, I will just scotch the knee-jerk reply of this government. It is one that comes up every time we talk of making something work out bush. It runs as follows: 'If only Canberra would give us the money, we would do the job'. The previous Treasurer used to be forever exhorting us to understand the financial agreements. I have been through the Grants Commission reports and I see in there an allowance in the last 2 reports of about \$3m per annum, being the recurrent cost of providing education to all those Aboriginal children who do not have a school to attend but who would have one if they lived in New South Wales or Victoria. This money is additional to the amount the commission agreed was necessary to run existing schools. So where is it going? The \$3m per annum would be enough to run the program. It is not being used for this program. There are plenty of places without schools, so it is not being used there. I am happy to help the minister get money out of Canberra. I am an old hand at shaking the Canberra money tree. But I will not be put in the position where it says: 'We gave that mob an extra \$3m. We allowed for it in the unperformed services section. It has not used it in Aboriginal education - end of story'.

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

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that the honourable member for Stuart is not the minister responsible for education in the Northern Territory because I am sure that we would go broke within a week. He should look at this matter realistically. The comments he has made indicate to me very clearly that he is well and truly out of touch with his own electorate let alone the Aboriginal education system in the Northern Territory.

He referred specifically to the Aboriginal education statement in this Assembly. Unfortunately, debate did not take place on it. But I did happen to overhear the honourable member on one occasion saying that he had concerns about that Aboriginal education statement. I wanted to find out what he had to say. I wrote him a letter. I will read that letter out:

Dear Brian, during the recent sittings of the Legislative Assembly, you gave an indication that you had some concern about directions in which Aboriginal education was moving and, as I recall, you made some reference to the RATE program. I would like to have the opportunity to consider your views. Perhaps you might care to drop me a note elaborating on your concerns.

I have not had a reply in relation to that request. If a person is genuinely interested in his electorate, if he is interested in Aboriginal education and if he has been given the opportunity to get in touch with me on the matter, surely he should have done so.

Aboriginal education is an area in which I am very interested. Since I became Minister for Education, I have spent a great deal of my time visiting Aboriginal schools. I can assure you that I have covered a number and I have found out many things on those visits which indicate that the member for Stuart is way out of touch. The Northern Territory government has nothing to be ashamed of as far as Aboriginal education is concerned. We are ahead of anywhere else in Australia in that field and that was acknowledged by the National Aboriginal Education Committee. I have spoken to Paul Hughes about it and, obviously, the members on the other side, particularly the member for Stuart, have not spoken to NAEC about this particular issue because it believes that we are well and truly in front.

Mr Speaker, the discussion should have been a matter of public importance relating to the opposition's federal colleagues. They are the ones who are causing many of the problems that we are facing in Aboriginal communities. This particular document, the report of a working party on funding priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' education, was examined by the federal government in relation to funding for Aboriginal education in 1985 and has not been supported by the government at all. As a result of that, Aboriginal education on the national scene will dip out by some \$25.3m. A great deal of that money would have come to the Northern Territory. Instead of having a shot at me in relation to this, the member should talk to his federal counterparts and start making them realise the problems that we have in relation to funding.

Mr Speaker, there is no argument about the need for more Aboriginal teachers. The government has made it quite clear that we need at least 100 more Aboriginal teachers and our target is 100 Aboriginal teachers by the year 1990. Aboriginal teacher schools have had dramatic increases since self-government. There is a problem that I have with recruiting teachers generally. They might decide to go into community work with a Commonwealth department or a department of the Northern Territory. Because they have had

a background in education, they understand what it is about and they want to become involved with helping their people. They do not continue with that particular program relating to teaching. There are many Aboriginal people who have started on this particular program and they have left because they were offered some involvement with their own communities, whether it be as a clerk, a representative on a particular body or whatever.

Mr Speaker, there are many people who genuinely wanted to go on to become teachers but who were drained from the system. The ratio of European teachers to Aboriginal students is approximately 1 to 19 and that is based on the same principle as the 1 to 21 ratio that we have in urban primary schools. When you look at the ancillary and industrial staff, the number is 3 times greater than that provided in the urban schools. It is not only the best student-teacher ratio in Aboriginal schools, it is the best student-teacher ratio in any school in Australia. There are comparisons on staffing in similar-sized schools in the Territory. If we look at the comparisons, we see that, as the larger schools are referred to, the difference varies markedly. In fact, if we consider Kargaru, Alawa, Milingimbi and Shepherdson, we find that Milingimbi has 180% staffing over Alawa for the same number of children and Shepherdson college has 215%. Mr Speaker, I table that particular document. I will not go into detail on it at this particular time.

The following is a comparison of staffing for similar-sized schools in 1985: urban: Kargaru - 360 enrolments, pupil-teacher staff ratio 21 to 1, pupil-ancillary staff ratio 60 to 1, pupil-total staff ratio 15 to 1; Alawa - 332 enrolments, pupil-teacher staff ratio 21 to 1, pupil-ancillary staff ratio 66 to 1, pupil-total staff ratio 16 to 1; and for predominantly Aboriginal communities: Milingimbi - 290 enrolments, 16 to 1 pupil-teacher staff ratio, 20 to 1 pupil-ancillary staff ratio and pupil-total staff ratio of 9 to 1; Shepherdson - 282 enrolments, 17 to 1 pupil-teacher staff ratio, pupil-ancillary staff ratio 20 to 1 and a pupil-total staff ratio of 9 to 1. It should be noted that cleaning staff, literacy staff, teaching linguists, adult educators and adult education assistants have been excluded from the comparative data in order to give a valid comparison between the 2 types of schools.

Urban schools have higher enrolments and the schools listed are the closest to similar enrolments which confirms a more generous allocation to schools in Aboriginal communities. Mr Speaker, I will table that document. If there is anywhere in the world that those particular figures are bettered in similar circumstances, then I will be interested to know about it.

Batchelor College has been raised and that is the jewel in the crown as far as this government is concerned. It is a major institution as far as Aboriginal teaching is concerned and it is recognised as such throughout Australia. I am surprised that the honourable members opposite seem to think that Batchelor College is nothing special. It is unique and it is something that we are very proud of. I would refer members to my address-in-reply speech when I referred to Batchelor College and the moves that we were making in support not only of teachers but Aboriginals involved in other aspects of their communities. The college has 68 students and there are 90 students in the RATE program throughout the Territory. There are 20-plus students who are looking to coming up through the ranks and taking courses at Batchelor in the near future. As a new initiative, to address the very real problems that we face in Aboriginal communities, we have community management and adult education courses.

Mr Speaker, I will have to skip some of this because, quite frankly, I do not have time to cover all of the matters raised. However, I would like to comment on some of the other remarks the honourable member made in relation to the cost of funding of education generally. The cost of funding education in Aboriginal communities is horrendous. I will not go into the details but we have provided assistant teachers and visiting teachers. The whole exercise is enormously expensive. It costs some \$5000 per student to educate a child in an Aboriginal community. The total cost to the Northern Territory is tremendous. If we look at outstation education - and that is what this government is concerned about - there is a move back to the centralised system. That is happening at Hermannsburg. Some of the Aborigines in that community have asked that consideration be given to introducing a government presence there and I have in fact done that. However, one must rationalise the situation. The member for Stuart was talking about how everybody was crying out for teaching assistants. I can assure the member for Stuart that that is not the case. Even in his own electorate, at Utopia, a place that I went to recently, they were against ...

Mr Ede: One woman said it.

Mr HARRIS: Not one woman. The community was against teaching assistants.

Mr Speaker, when you visit these communities, you get a very real feeling of what the people want in them. There is uncertainty, that is for sure. There are different views, that is for sure. This government is addressing those particular problems in a sensitive manner and one that I believe is realistic. We are asking for comments from the communities and we are asking for comments from FEPPI which is the educational consultative group. It is important that there is a commitment on the part of these communities as well as the government putting in money, time and effort. There has to be commitment from those communities.

The member for Stuart does not have any idea of the potential for growth in the outstation movement. Literally hundreds of outstations could open tomorrow and the cost of providing facilities, the necessary teachers and teaching assistants to those communities, is unrealistic at this time. This government should not be forced into the position of footing that total bill.

Mr Speaker, in the Northern Territory, we have some 256 outstations. Next to us is Western Australia with 50 and then it drops down considerably - South Australia has 25 and Queensland has 2 or 3. There are grave funding implications involved here, and I am not going to put the Northern Territory taxpayer in a position where he is called upon to provide funds which are not realistic or are not demanded in the states. No state must provide funds like this. I will just give you an idea of the enormous cost involved in some of these outstation areas. At Lake Nash, to move 2 classrooms and 2 residences 8 km cost \$200 000. To provide 2 classrooms and 2 residences at Ammaroo cost something like \$230 000. We spent \$460 000 providing educational facilities at Kintore. In relation to Kintore, it is most disappointing to see that the commitment that was made by that community is not being upheld. I spoke to Senator Ryan about this and she supported it. We provided a pilot program, a project that would see a means of providing educational facilities to Aboriginal communities. The community was supposed to make some form of commitment and actually to take part in the work that was to be undertaken there. Mr Speaker, it has come down to: 'Oh, we want education. We want the school now. You build it and we will move from there'.

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

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I regret that the Minister for Education did not have time to finish his final point about Kintore because I would be interested to take that up. Perhaps it can be taken up later in the sittings.

I would like to commence by saying what the thrust of this matter of public importance discussion is. The thrust is that the member for Stuart and I represent extensive rural electorates in central Australia. They are extensive bush electorates rather than rural electorates; there are not too many ploughed fields in either of them. We receive considerable and numerous representations from different communities. There have been stop-work meetings in schools in both our electorates and they gave rise to this issue as a matter of public importance. If the minister had wished to head off this particular discussion, perhaps he should have made a statement a little earlier in the sittings about the representations that we received and submitted, in turn, to him and, more importantly, the stop-work meetings that have been held.

In my contribution I want to demonstrate not the lack of bona fides on the part of the minister but the government's failure generally to deliver adequate and effective educational services to Aboriginal people, particularly in my electorate. I want to do this, firstly, by highlighting some of the administrative decisions, which defy logic when they are viewed from afar, and heighten frustration to breaking point when they are experienced first hand. Secondly, I am seeking to further demonstrate shortcomings by taking a look at some of the basic provisions of physical resources in bush schools. It appears to me that the Department of Education relies very heavily on the dedication and motivation of its teachers in bush communities. However great that dedication may be, it is continually undermined by a remote and inflexible bureaucracy which dictates the rules of the game. I suggest to the honourable minister that that may be part of the cause at Kintore. I will be interested to hear more about it.

The minister continues to complain about the difficulty his department has, for example, in recruiting and keeping qualified teachers. Mr Speaker, if you were asked to live, work and provide a quality educational service under some of the conditions teachers in bush communities are expected to, I am sure you would think twice about taking it on. Many people take it on in ignorance and it is no surprise that their tenure is frequently short. I agree that the minister cannot be held responsible for the inherent clashes of expectation that characterise Aboriginal communities, vis-a-vis the Department of Education, but he can and must be held responsible for administrative decisions and lack of resources that aggravate these inherent difficulties to the point of utter exasperation.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that, if you had to comply and work with some of the illogical and unreasonable decisions that are made, you would ask yourself why you bother. Let me just give a few examples to illustrate this particular point. On the matter of teacher transfers, and looking at administrative decisions which make one wonder, I refer specifically to the appointment of a teacher based in Yuendumu to a school at Pulardi which is about 55 km from Yuendumu. Let me be quite clear that I am not disputing the establishment of the school there or the appointment of a teacher. My argument lies in the appointment of this particular teacher. The community wants an English program at the school which means the selection of a teacher there is not dependent on bilingual qualifications. What happens? A teacher is appointed who has completed 2 intensive courses in Walpiri and who is ideally placed in a bilingual program at the grade 1 level at Yuendumu school. This teacher was appointed to Pulardi but Walpiri is not the community's language. The

decision effectively removes from Yuendumu a valuable bilingual teacher and a valuable human resource is virtually wasted in an area where Anmatjira is the language. For the benefit of honourable members, Anmatjira and Walpiri are about as different from each other as English is from German. It is little surprise that exasperated teachers raise their eyes heavenwards in despair. As I said, such decisions defy all logic.

Let us turn, as a further example, to the appointment of principals. The honourable minister is doubtless aware that there has been considerable controversy about the amount of community involvement in the selection of suitable principals. It seems to me that the minister and his department are in 2 minds about the communities' involvement in the education process of their children. In a statement on education for Aborigines tabled in this Assembly last year, there is constant reference to the importance of community participation, and the minister is to be commended for this. He has released statement after statement promoting the idea of community participation. This, of course, is a fairly handy argument: when in doubt, always blame the kids and their parents for lack of commitment when the shortcomings are human and physical resources. That is a separate issue and not the purpose of this discussion. For the purpose of this discussion, we will assume the best motives on the part of the minister. He wishes to encourage the Aboriginal parents and communities to become active and to become involved in the educational process. Let me just quote from a press statement he released in October last year:

The Education Minister said today that the Territory was doomed to failure in some of its greatest educational challenges unless there was a commitment by Aboriginal parents and communities to their children's education.

That is clear evidence of the encouragement the minister has given for community involvement, but what do we find when communities are interested, motivated and concerned enough to get together and make recommendations to the Department of Education on issues which affect the education of their children? They are simply told they have no say and that is that. So much for promoting community involvement. I will give an example of this because this has been a topic of discussion in at least 3 Aboriginal schools. In each case, the Aboriginal community requested to have involvement in the appointment only to be referred to the strict guidelines within the bureaucracy. Let me quote from one letter the minister sent to the community concerned:

It is not possible for the community to choose the principal for the school because the Northern Territory Teaching Service is a career service and educational qualifications and experience in other Territory schools must be taken into account. Very specific guidelines and procedures for appointment to and for promotion within the Northern Territory Teaching Service are set down and have been agreed to by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation.

Communities are invited to contribute to the job description but the selection is made by the Secretary of the Department of Education on the advice of a panel which includes a departmental officer, a nominee of the Council of Government Schools Organisations and a nominee of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation.

All are far removed from the communities concerned. The minister will no doubt recall a further example brought to his attention by myself last year in relation to the principal position at Yirara College. I hesitate to rake over old coals and I would hope that the college is settling down to a

successful year in 1985, but Yirara College is responsible for the secondary education of students from many communities in my electorate and I would be derelict if I did not place on public record concerns that I have expressed privately not only to the minister but to parents and to learned people in the Department of Education. The basic issue is that a good principal in Aboriginal schools, particularly Yirara College, is very difficult to find. Mr Speaker, Mr Chris Deslandes had been principal at Yirara since the beginning of 1983. For various reasons, there were no fewer than 6 principals in a period of a few months. We hoped that the college would settle down for some time after this but Mr Deslandes was removed as principal on the spurious grounds of lack of eligibility at the end of 1984. If Mr Deslandes was eligible to replace the previous incumbent at the end of 1983, himself removed for spurious reasons, he should have been allowed to continue. In spite of representations from the parents of the children at that college, no response was made.

Mr Speaker, let me turn to 2 particular examples within my electorate which illustrate fairly clearly the difficulties and the frustrations experienced through maladministration and a general lack of support for teachers in bush schools. Let me concentrate first though on the situation at Docker River school. This has been a subject of considerable correspondence between the honourable minister and myself. The situation at Docker River is that it has had temporary facilities in the form of caravans since the school was established in the early 1970s. There is nothing wrong with the so-called silver bullets. I speak from experience. They make excellent classrooms but their life is not infinite, particularly when there is a high turnover of teachers. For the past 3 years there have been requests for upgrading these facilities at Docker River and, in response to representations from the community, I wrote to the minister saying inter alia:

Given the permanent nature of the community at Docker River and the impermanent and dilapidated condition of the caravans comprising the school, it is difficult to see how a decision to incorporate existing caravans in proposed changes at the school can be justified.

I want to draw the minister's attention to the stark contrast between the excellent, well-appointed school at the Yulara Tourist Village and its counterpart at Docker River. In an astounding response, the minister said:

One does not require the type of facility which is an integral part of the design concept for an international tourist complex that has been built at Yulara to provide a satisfactory education for children.

Mr Speaker, a good teacher can teach in a cow shed but let me ask you: would you like your kids to be taught in a cow shed? I said to the minister then, and I will say to him now, that that particular response was cant, pure cant.

A second example occurred at Areyonga which was one of the places that conducted a stop-work meeting, so frustrated did the staff become in that particular school. They became frustrated at the refusal of the minister's department to respond to the simplest of requests. As a result, they were forced to take industrial action. In case, Mr Speaker, you, or any other honourable members are suffering under the delusion that a stop-work action is a holiday, let me say from bitter experience that it is inevitably personally distressing for teachers. They are forced to make a decision between keeping their noses clean, keeping themselves out of trouble on the one hand, and struggling on the other to improve the schools in which they work. The reason for the industrial action at Areyonga was exemplified in a

statement issued by the staff in which they said: 'We are holding a 24-hour strike on 4 February in protest over the poor working conditions and lack of support from the Alice Springs regional office of the Department of Education'. I think that says it all.

Mr Harris: Why don't you raise it in the adjournment debate?

Mr BELL: I think it is a matter of public importance. I hear the honourable minister interjecting. If he does not think that it is a matter of public importance, I will be surprised.

Before I finish, I will make some reference to standards of living conditions that teachers in some of these bush schools are required to put up with. I said at the outset, Mr Speaker, that you would think twice about taking on a position on some of these communities if you were aware of the deplorable conditions some teachers have to cope with. At the beginning of this school year, a new teacher was sent to a community to take up a position and had to put up with arriving unannounced. The principal and community were not advised that she was coming. The house that she was to occupy had no bed, no chairs, no table and no washing machine. Really, under these conditions, can anyone blame teachers for moving on? I am advised, incidentally, that all beds were delivered to this community with the legs unattached. On inquiry, teachers were told that they had to buy screws in the hardware store to fix the legs. Needless to say, many beds in this community sit on the floor legless.

These stories are true. It is about time some people realised what administration is all about. Administration is about services and providing a service to the people who are administered. We seem to have this a little cockeyed. Sometimes one gets the impression that teachers exist only to be administered and to provide jobs for administrators.

Mr ROBERTSON (Health): Mr Speaker, in accordance with the usual practice in so-called MPis, only 2 speakers on each side are permitted to speak. For that reason and that reason alone, I guess I am obliged to speak. There was a very interesting document circulated on the first day of these sittings. It is headed: 'ALP members of the Legislative Assembly'. One finds some interesting information in it. In this matter of public importance, according to the opposition, the discussion commenced by way of a rather excellent piece of reading - no doubt prepared by someone else - on the part of the honourable member for Stuart, Brian Ede. According to this document, he has the shadow portfolios of mines and energy and Aboriginal affairs. I daresay that the latter category gives him some province within which he can address this subject although one would have thought that it would have fallen within another portfolio entirely. By the way, he is the most junior shadow minister we have. The other person who spoke read the whole lot. He was a chap named Mr Neil Bell, the honourable member for MacDonnell, whose responsibility is entirely ...

Mr BELL: Point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr ROBERTSON: I said: 'the honourable member for MacDonnell'.

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr BELL: Standing orders require that members of the Assembly should refer to other members by titles other than christian names and surnames, prefaced as it may be by 'Mr' or otherwise.

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, I have absolutely no argument at all with that particular point raised by the honourable member for MacDonnell, except that of course I was reading from a document provided by his own leader. The responsibilities of that gentleman include special responsibilities for central Australia. In fairness, he did address himself to the problems which pertained, as he saw them, to Aboriginal teacher education, particularly with administration, within the central Australian region. I suppose it gives him some province in this discussion of a matter of public importance. His 2 other shadow portfolios are lands and housing, and transport and works.

The interesting part is the absence of the person whose name appears at the top. I am told by the member for MacDonnell that one is not to mention names so we will refer to him as the Leader of the Opposition. What is his leading function as indicated in the document which was distributed on the first sitting day? His leading function is none other than education. He was not here to hear his own lead speaker read his speech. He was not here to hear the minister respond to that read speech which, of course, was not read. He was not here to hear the speech from the member for MacDonnell which was also read. He came into this Chamber during this discussion merely because he thought his intelligentsia opposite would get themselves into trouble on a point of order.

I observed where the honourable member was and I am not going to comment on that. I merely make the point that, if the opposition is serious, as we are serious, about the needs of Aboriginal communities and the education of Aboriginal people, at least we should find the leading member of the opposition frontbench, who has responsibility for education, participating in the discussion. The normal occurrence - and I think we might have to change our policy - is that the minister responsible for a function responds first to the opposition's MPI's and another minister, normally a fairly senior minister, then backs up the government's position.

The reason I am speaking in this discussion is my very genuine concern that we as a government and, in fact, we as a legislature will rightly direct our attentions very energetically towards the education of Aboriginal people. Quite often, this side of the Assembly and the other side of the Assembly have different ideas on how best to achieve it. Both speakers on the opposition side - I withdraw that, Mr Speaker - both readers on the opposition side made the point that only Aboriginal people ought to be teaching Aboriginals. To some people, that may be an objective in the very long term. Given our present circumstances and our present capacities, I cannot see that that is realistic or fair.

Having been a Minister for Education for over 4 years, I recognise that there is a language affinity between Aboriginal teachers and people from their own communities. The language affinity alone gives a rapport which cannot otherwise exist. However, until such time as we reach the stage - and I believe it will take decades - where Aboriginal teachers are trained sufficiently to do the professional job with the skill, knowledge and technique of trained non-Aboriginal teachers, there must be a great input by non-Aboriginal teachers.

Mr Speaker, we heard from the member for Stuart that there must be a continuity of social input. There is also another thing which we must remember in relation to the education of Aboriginal students. The capacity must be given to them to cope with the dominant society in which we all live. Unless we can teach the survival subjects, then we are doing the Aboriginal people a disservice.

At the moment, Batchelor has a student population of about 80 and the RATE program has 90 students in training. Both of those figures are significantly higher than those applicable at the time of self-government. There are very good reasons why that should be so. For example, when I left the portfolio of education, there were 151 Aboriginal outstations and there are now 231. That gives one a picture of the enormity of the task with which we are faced and to which we are addressing ourselves to the best of our ability.

When I was Minister for Education, I spent 8 weeks in the field with Jeff Chard, a dedicated educator. Of that 8 weeks, 7 weeks were spent talking to Aboriginal communities, not only to people in schools but to Aboriginal communities about their aspirations for the education of Aboriginal people. I would never claim to be an expert on matters concerning Aboriginals but it came through to me that a conflict constantly arose between the need to further educate trained Aboriginal trainers, be they in health or education, and the demands made on those young people in respect of the community's expectations of them and their community duties.

In order to achieve the standards, which in my view it is necessary to achieve, if at all possible, among our Aboriginal trainers, it is necessary for them to accept the need to leave the community for a given length of time. That is easy for a non-Aboriginal to say without knowing the pressures which must be applied to that person. It is not much use looking at a government and saying it has not provided sufficient numbers of trained people without understanding the reasons why it has been unable to provide the numbers it would like to. We freely admit that we have not achieved the numbers we would have liked to achieve but they are the numbers which are the maximum possible even with enormous expenditure - none of which, incidentally, is regretted or resented.

The honourable minister has mentioned figures which, to an observer, must be horrendous. Indeed, we would be talking about \$25m if we were to include the number of outstations between the time when I was minister and now. That is 100 outstations. We had 151 in my time and we have 231 now. The cost of actually creating those physical facilities - that is, 2 demountable classrooms and 2 demountable residences - would be \$25m. We are somewhat constrained in the provision of facilities which the member for MacDonnell talks about as being required and what I think is a reasonable expectation by the Docker River community.

Mr Speaker, because governments are accountable to the taxpayers, another thing that can make them a little reluctant is the question of balancing the provision of physical facilities with the willingness of communities, be they Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, to protect and ensure the safety, continuity and physical structure of those facilities. It is not unknown to many people in this Assembly that, when the Commonwealth built the Docker River community health centre for \$650 000 - a contract with Sitzler Brothers back in 1974 - before it could be opened, another \$600 000 had to be spent on repairs. That was between the time of its completion and the time of its commissioning. That happens in non-Aboriginal communities as well. I think at times that Aboriginal communities have an advantage in that they are more homogeneous and cohesive as community groups, particularly where there is the same clan group. Surely the capacity for self-supervision and control - alcohol, petrol sniffing and all the other pressures notwithstanding - puts them in a position to at least try to control vandalism a little better than can be done perhaps in the northern suburbs of Darwin where we have a multiplicity of races and pressures and all the things that go with them.

Nonetheless, Mr Speaker, in conscience, it is very difficult for the government constantly to chase the outstation movement with taxpayers' money and then see facilities smashed up and have to reappropriate money to put it all back together again and, at the same time, defend itself against allegations from the honourable member that the physical facilities are not sufficient at Docker River. There must be an understanding between ourselves and the Aboriginal people whom we genuinely try to serve. It has to be an understanding of the targets and objectives of the broader socio-economic and dominant society. Whether they like us or not, we are here and, to use the old cliché, we are not going to go away. It is the dominant society. The capacity to read, write and understand is essential and I am not knocking the necessity also for the maintenance of culture or language. We must work together. But in my view, in order to work together, we must give Aboriginal communities a better understanding and encourage a more precise and energetic willingness to reach a state of training which we have not yet been able to achieve.

The opposition derided the fact that we have achieved a higher level than ever before at Batchelor College. I think it was the member for MacDonnell who made a derisive comment about that. I think it is something for the Aboriginal people to be proud of because of their own effort, dedication and willingness to make the community sacrifice and to do that work and to study. It is nothing to be ashamed of by either side. It is something to welcome and be thankful for. But we must, at the same time, have a more broadly-based attitude or approach to communities and convince them. This applies not only to education but also to our Aboriginal health nursing assistants. It is necessary, at least for brief periods, for them to leave their communities to advance that level of training and learning.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member mentioned that Batchelor is a success for the Top End, and we all agree with that.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr TUXWORTH (Treasurer) (by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent 2 bills relating to totalisator administration and betting being presented and read for a first time together with one motion being put in regard to, respectively, the second readings, the committee's report stages and the third readings of the bills together, and the consideration of the bills separately in the committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to.

TOTALISATOR ADMINISTRATION AND BETTING BILL

(Serial 102)

RACING AND BETTING AMENDMENT BILL

(Serial 103)

Bills presented and read a first time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Treasurer): Mr Speaker, I move that the bills be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, in September 1983, my government established a racing industry working party to examine the Northern Territory racing industry. The working party's terms of reference were to examine the structure and the funding of the racing industry in the Northern Territory. The working party was directed to

consider the best interests of the community as a whole, the future structure and funding of the racing industry and the betting associated with that industry. During its 6 months of deliberations, the working party received oral and written submissions from the public, visited interstate TAB organisations and racing institutions and held discussions with Frank Costigan and his key staff. It also acquired the services of a prominent Tasmanian economist to assist with the financial analyses required.

Mr Speaker, the key recommendations of the working party last March were: (a) if its funding problems can be solved, racing should be encouraged in the Northern Territory; (b) that a gaming squad be formed immediately within the police force to work in conjunction with the Racing and Gaming Commission and Telecom to police any illegal betting activity; (c) that government, in allowing betting as a support mechanism, must be cognisant of the associated responsibilities and take steps to ensure, through adequate control, the continued integrity of the industry and the minimisation of anti-social activity; (d) that, as the survival of racing in the Territory is absolutely dependent on adequate returns from betting and patronage, the present betting system should be changed if it can produce predictable and sufficient returns both to allow the state-like objectives of government to be met and to provide for industry self-sufficiency; (e) that the current offcourse betting system should not be modified simply to provide sufficient taxation revenues to satisfy government and industry needs; (f) that, as government and industry needs can best be funded under a comprehensive TAB betting system to the exclusion of offcourse bookmakers, this system should be introduced; and (g) that a TAB commence operation on 1 July 1985.

Mr Speaker, the government took into account the role the shop bookmakers have played in the Territory over many years. The alternative of excluding them from the betting scene was considered in depth. We recognised the fact that, for the industry to survive and prosper, it would have to generate more revenue, and we also took into account the government's own revenue needs. In the first 6 years of self-government, betting turnover through Territory bookmakers reached \$267m. Revenue derived from betting during that period was \$5.2m or 1.94% of turnover. The government has only retained \$1.4m of that revenue and, in fact, for the past 3 years, we have allowed the racing industry to retain all licence fees and turnover tax.

Since taking the decision to introduce TAB from 1 July 1985, the government has moved swiftly to curb any likely attempts by illegal SP operators to take over from licensed bookmakers when they cease business on that date. An interdepartmental committee comprising police, law and racing and gaming officers spent 3 months reviewing the Territory laws on illegal betting. Its report is currently being considered by the government and I assure honourable members that a bill to amend these laws will be introduced in the Assembly as soon as it is practicable to do so. A 12-man gaming squad is in the process of being established by the Northern Territory police department and a number of the squad are currently undergoing extensive training interstate.

Mr Speaker, before addressing myself to the bills before the Assembly, I would like to inform members that the Territory TAB will be operational from 1 July 1985. The Chairman of the Racing and Gaming Commission informs me that everything is currently on schedule for opening on that date.

The major bill before the Assembly is designed to establish a totalisator administration board - TAB. The second bill is cognate and seeks to amend the Racing and Betting Act by alteration, replacement or inclusion of those

provisions effected by the TAB bill.

The bill seeks to establish a board of 4 to control the TAB and proposes that the Chairman of the Racing and Gaming Commission shall be chairman of the board. The other 3 members will comprise the general manager and 2 persons with financial and marketing experience appointed by the minister. The TAB will be a statutory authority outside of the Public Service Act and will be responsible to the minister. Members are appointed for a period of 2 years and the normal provisions relating to the board are contained in the bill. It is important to note that board members cannot have a direct or indirect interest in the racing industry. The government sees the board membership providing the expertise for the TAB to operate as a commercial operation.

Mr Speaker, this bill allows the TAB to operate its own totalisator or combine its totalisator pool with that of another state or territory. The TAB will also be able to sell lottery tickets. We see these as being government-sponsored lotteries such as the Territorian, Sports Lotto or Instant Sports Lottery. A number of state governments and the ACT already have this provision in their acts.

The powers of the board will allow it to establish telephone betting facilities and cash betting outlets throughout the Territory. I am informed that, on 1 July, subject to current schedules, the TAB will open 10 full cash betting outlets, 3 subagencies and 3 oncourse outlets. By the end of July, a further 3 agencies will come on line. Agency locations will be announced shortly, once these negotiations have been finalised.

The cost of setting up a Territory TAB has been budgeted at \$1.35m. Approximately half of this amount will be spent on computerised terminal equipment and a further third will go to the outfitting of TAB head office and agencies. This bill allows for the expenses of establishing the TAB to be made available by way of a long-term loan which must be repaid out of TAB profits. It further provides for the TAB to borrow moneys for its operations subject to the approval of the Treasurer.

For the racing clubs to prosper, the government recognises the need for improving facilities on their courses. This bill provides for the establishment of a racecourse development fund to be administered by the Racing and Gaming Commission. The amount of 1.5% of TAB net investments will be paid into this fund for the first 3 years of operations, reducing to 1% thereafter.

As a part of its overall functions, the TAB will be required to open new agencies, maintain and improve existing agencies, replace or purchase equipment, borrow moneys for operational purposes etc. The bill allows for the board to create a reserve account but limits the amount going into that account to not more than 1.5% of net investments acceptable by it. Reserve account provisions will be subject to ministerial control.

Mr Speaker, the economic problems of the racing industry have all been well aired in the press and indeed in this Assembly. As a measure of assistance, the bill provides for a sharing of TAB profits between the government and the racing industry. In the TAB's first year of operation, should the industry's share fall below that of what the clubs received in distribution this financial year when added to bookmakers fees and taxes, then the government's share will be reduced accordingly.

The TAB will be subject to audit by the Auditor-General and reports on its annual operations and activities will be forwarded to the minister together with its financial statements for tabling in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Speaker, TABs around Australia were invited to tender for accepting the Territory betting pools into their own. Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the ACT TABs accepted the invitation and made submissions. Factors taken into account were reliability, levels of service, equipment costs, maintenance costs, revenue returns generated and processing fees for services provided. After a thorough analysis of the submissions, it was decided that the Territory would link its operations with that of the ACT TAB.

The Territory TAB will provide coverage of betting on race meetings conducted in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide as well as provincial meetings. No other TAB provides such an extensive service. In addition, the TAB will operate on metropolitan trotting and greyhound meetings. This bill addresses itself to the provisions required for the acceptance, placement of bets and payment of dividends.

Mr Speaker, existing government policy allows bookmakers to bet on sporting events as distinct from horse racing, trotting and greyhounds. Whilst of course bookmakers will not be operating after 1 July, oncourse bookmakers will still be able to obtain special permits for these events. The bill allows the TAB to bet on sporting events. As extensive programming would be required to cover the wide range of events currently offered by bookmakers, it is envisaged that, for sporting events, betting on the TAB will be limited to Melbourne and Sydney football matches.

The bill also provides for the TAB to act as an agent for the collection of moneys for purposes other than betting. No specific plans have been identified at this stage but provisions have been included in the bill nevertheless.

With any new legislation, especially of this nature, there must be offence provisions. This bill addresses itself to such offences as the misconduct of TAB agencies, unlawfully acting as a totalisator employee, offences by totalisator employees and under-aged persons, removal of persons from TAB agencies and other general offences. The bill provides for the Commissioner of Police to make inquiries on behalf of the TAB and give powers to totalisator inspectors appointed by the Racing and Gaming Commission. It also gives the TAB rule-making powers.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the provisions of the cognate bill dealing with the Racing and Betting Act. These provisions are, in the main, consequential amendments required with the introduction of the major bill.

In conclusion, betting is big business everywhere in Australia. We in the Territory are no exception. I believe the proposed legislation provides for a broader spectrum of betting facilities and services for the community than currently exists. It also allows for the racing industry to receive generous benefits from the new style of operation. The future looks more secure. Mr Speaker, I commend the bills to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

NATIONAL CRIME AUTHORITY (TERRITORY PROVISIONS) BILL
(Serial 77)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to enable the Territory to participate in the National Crime Authority and to enable the authority to investigate organised crime and other relevant criminal activity in the Territory. As honourable members are probably aware, the National Crime Authority Act 1984 was enacted by the Commonwealth during June last year and came into operation on 1 July. That act followed the full-scale review and re-examination of the former federal government's uncommenced National Crimes Commission Act 1982 and several rounds of meetings between Commonwealth, state and Northern Territory Attorneys-General and Police Ministers, Police Commissioners and officials. The legislation was subject to report by the Senate Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs which, following further consultation with the states and the Territory, resulted in numerous minor amendments.

The crime authority, consisting of 3 full-time members, is established to investigate, collect and analyse information relating to sophisticated or organised crime and supply that information to federal, state and Territory law enforcement agencies. The authority is to be monitored by an inter-governmental committee, the IGC, comprising a Commonwealth minister and state and Northern Territory ministers from participating jurisdictions. The honourable Chief Minister is the Territory's representative. All states and the Territory have now agreed to participate. It is necessary for participating states to enact underpinning legislation to grant to the authority powers in the states and the Northern Territory similar to those available under the Commonwealth act for Commonwealth matters. As I have said, that is the purpose of this bill. The matter of such legislation was referred to the Parliamentary Counsels Committee which produced the model bill that has been agreed. The National Crime Authority (Territory Provisions) Bill is that bill adapted to the Territory. The Commonwealth is required to consult the IGC before referring a Commonwealth only matter to the authority. State and Territory references require the consent of the state or Territory in respect of which the reference is made.

Mr Speaker, clause 11 enables the Territory minister, the Chief Minister, to make arrangements for general intelligence to be provided to the authority. Clause 5 enables him to refer a matter to the authority with the consent of the IGC, and various sections empower the authority to investigate the matter. The coercive powers of the authority such as the right to require answers to questions, seek search warrants, surrender of witnesses' passports and arrest of witnesses likely to leave Australia are subject to safeguards and only available for special references to the authority and not for general intelligence collection. The bill provides that these coercive powers apply to Territory references. These powers can be found in clauses 10 to 20. For example, clause 12 is the power to obtain a search warrant with a maximum life of 1 month.

Mr Speaker, the power to hold hearings, which I suppose is one of the key powers granted to the authority, is contained in clause 16 of the bill as far as Territory references are concerned. Clause 16 provides that the authority may hold hearings before one or more members for the purposes of a special investigation. A hearing must be held in private. The authority may permit persons other than witnesses to be present during a hearing. A witness may be represented by a lawyer. In special circumstances, persons not witnesses may be represented by a lawyer. The authority, witnesses or authorised non-witnesses or their respective lawyers may cross-examine a witness. The authority may permit publication of all or part of evidence given to it. Where a person is being tried before a Territory court and that court considers that evidence given to the authority should be made available to that person or his lawyer, the court may give the authority a certificate to that effect.

and the authority shall thereupon make that evidence available to the court. The court may then make that evidence available to the person charged or his lawyer.

The legislation includes a number of safeguards to protect unwarranted attacks on the reputation of witnesses. For example, hearings are to be held in private and there is power to prohibit public disclosure of material which could prejudice the safety or reputation of a person or prejudice the trial of persons who have been or may be charged with offences. There are certain rights of appeal against decisions of the authority. The bill applies these safeguards to Territory references. The authority is required to report to both the IGC generally and the Commonwealth, state and Northern Territory ministers in respect of relevant references.

Mr Speaker, the bill also deals with various administrative matters. For example, provision is made for the Territory to supply staff to the authority and the status of members is recognised for the purposes of Territory law. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

WILLS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 100)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This short bill aims to allow the Territory to implement the Hague Conference Convention on the Conflict of Law Relating to the Form of Testamentary Dispositions. The Territory is the only Australian jurisdiction which has not legislated to adopt the terms of this convention. As soon as it was brought to my predecessor's notice, he requested that this matter be rectified. Once the Territory adopts the terms of the convention, Australia can formally accede to the convention. This bill has been prepared after consideration of provisions in various state Wills Acts. The Territory has attempted to use the best available. Essentially, the effect of the proposed legislation is that, where a testator makes a will in one jurisdiction and dies in a foreign one, the will is validly made if it complies with any law with which the testator may be fairly regarded as having a close connection.

Clauses 4, 5, 6 and 7 seek to apply the legislation to a will whenever made where a testator dies after amendments commence.

Clause 7 contains the essence of the proposal. This clause proposes the addition of new sections 15A, 15B and 15C to the Wills Act which set out a number of detailed rules for establishing the validity of a will by applying any law with which the testator may be fairly regarded as having a close connection. The rules proposed provide a high degree of flexibility. Under the legislation, a will would be valid if it conformed with a law in force in a number of specified situations. These include the law in force where the will was executed or where the testator was domiciled when he died or made the will or where he had habitually resided. Clause 15C covers the situation where a will is executed on board a vessel or plane. If the execution complies with the internal law in force where the vessel or aircraft was registered or otherwise has a close connection, it is regarded as properly executed.

Mr Speaker, these provisions would see a wider variety of wills being admitted to probate. I see these provisions being of great assistance in allowing testators' wishes to be fulfilled. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

LAND AND BUSINESS AGENTS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 104)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Agents Licensing Board and the operation of the Land and Business Agents Act as a whole. Some of the amendments were suggested by the Agents Licensing Board and I thank it for its assistance.

Clause 5 seeks to amend section 8. Subject to later provisions in the bill establishing the land and business agents funds control committee, the registrar and deputy registrar are to be subject to the directions of the board.

Clause 6 provides that at least half of the directors of the company or members of the firm coming under the act must be licensed agents. This is to ensure that control of the business is with licensed persons. However, it is proposed that the minister be given a discretion to make exceptions. This would be available to allow, say, an interstate company to establish a Territory office managed by a licensed agent while retaining its existing non-resident directors.

The bill also clarifies that branch offices of land and business agents must be under the effective and substantial control of licensed agents. The act presently states that a licensed agent must be in bona fide control. However, it appears that some agents have been nominally managing branch agencies with effective control being exercised by unlicensed persons. By requiring effective and substantial control, this practice should be stamped out. The branch manager should be able and willing to play a managing role in his branch office.

Section 65 of the current act prescribes certain rules of conduct for licensed agents. Breach of these rules can be a ground for revocation of the licence. One of the rules prohibits an agent from publishing an advertisement to the effect that he is authorised to sell a property without the principal's consent. Clause 7 of the bill seeks to extend the rule to cover dealings with the property other than sales.

Clause 9 provides for suspension of an agent's licence by the board pending the conclusion of an inquiry. It is felt that this power should be available to prevent further damage where an agent has been guilty of gross misconduct or fraud. Suspension of a licence would be a serious step and would only be undertaken in extreme circumstances to protect the public interest. The clause also provides that, where the licence is suspended, the licensed agent's firm or company is to be advised and that this suspension would apply from one day thereafter.

Clause 11 provides that, in taking suspension action against the agent following an inquiry, it must take into account any period of suspension previously served. Clauses 11 to 14 deal with the position of the consolidated interest account and the fidelity guarantee fund. Clause 12 endeavours to provide greater flexibility in the transfer of moneys between the 2 funds. Clause 14 provides for the establishment of a land and business agents funds control committee to supervise the operation of the 2 funds subject to determinations made by the minister. The committee is to comprise the Registrar of Lands and Business Agents and the Chairman of the Agents Licensing Board or her nominee. Clause 14 is intended to remove ambiguity in the act concerning detailed operation of the accounts. It also requires the committee to keep appropriate records and that the Agents Licensing Board is to be kept fully informed of financial transactions made. Proposed section 95C enables the committee to do all things necessary or convenient to be done. This would empower it, for example, to take appropriate investment advice subject to any relevant ministerial determinations specifying the mode of investment such as requiring funds to be placed in authorised trustee investments.

Clause 15 deals with a situation where there is more than one licensed agent at a registered office. One and one only must be nominated as branch manager and so accept responsibility for that office.

Clause 16 is transitional. It provides that, where the requirements relating to half the directors or partners being licensed agents are not currently met, the company or firm is deemed to comply with the provisions for the unexpired portion of its licence. They must, however, comply upon renewal of their licence. Clause 16 also provides that any determinations made relating to the consolidated interest account and fidelity guarantee fund prior to the commencement of the legislation remain in force as if made under the provisions of the bill. They can be revoked or varied under the new provisions. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTRICITY COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 98)

Bill presented and read a first time.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that any outstanding liability payment to NTEC of the reticulation cost and or any outstanding amount due in relation to the provision of electricity supply for an allotment is settled at the point of sale of that allotment by the vendor whether or not supply has been connected. This is to apply in presently unserved areas which will be reticulated for electricity supply under the rural distribution funding scheme and the distribution system extension policy, both of which are now in place. The liability will be a charge on the parcel of land and the proposed legislation will determine the commission's interest in the land and support the lodging of a caveat under part XVI of the Real Property Act in respect of that interest.

Under the previous electrification scheme, the cost of reticulation was shared between the initial consumers. This encouraged potential consumers to delay connection thereby avoiding their fair contribution to the scheme.

This practice was a matter of considerable concern for the initial consumers and has been a problem for a long time among public utilities attempting to provide infrastructure. The bill will bring the non-urban areas into line with existing practice in the urban areas where electricity and other infrastructure is initially provided to a block of land and accepted as part of the price and the value of that block of land.

Given that many of the parcels of land affected by this bill will already have freehold title and be subdivided, the most equitable means of recouping this infrastructure cost, where the consumer has not already elected to take supply, is at the point of future sale. This minimises the financial impact on the landholder. This bill is designed to avoid the possibility of a land vendor intimating that electricity supply is readily and cheaply available due to the close proximity of supply lines but for which there is in fact a substantial outstanding liability attached to that land.

The transitional provisions amount to a delayed action device as far as land, in respect of which there is a binding contract of sale, is concerned. In such cases, there is no liability on the seller to pay the charges established under this act but they become the liability of the purchaser if the sale is completed and the transfer of title effected. However, a purchaser might not have been interested in purchasing the land if it had been encumbered with the liability provided by the amendment so an option to rescind the contract has been provided for. As far as practicable, parties are restored to their previous positions. If the transfer proceeds, then the liability is established on the completion of the transfer. If the contract is rescinded, it is established on that rescission. Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 99)

Continued from 28 February 1985.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, if the opposition were looking for some confirmation as to the validity of the arguments that were put during the censure motion on the Chief Minister's appointment of the principal of the Darwin Institute of Technology, we have just had those arguments confirmed by the government. We have an amendment schedule to the bill which involves - surprise, surprise - what is known as retrospective validating legislation. I will read it out. The heading of the new section is: 'Principal to be Director'. It says:

Where, before the commencement of this act, an appointment of a person as the principal was purported to be made by a minister, that appointment shall, on the day on which it was purported to be made, be deemed to have been validly and effectually made in accordance with the principal act, as in force on that day, and all actions taken or things done by that person from the time of his purported appointment as principal before the commencement of this act shall be deemed to have been as validly and effectually taken or done as if he had been validly appointed on that day.

Mr Speaker, I cannot improve on the draftsman's words in respect of that amendment. Of course, I wish to express the opposition's opposition to the way in which this has been introduced in the Assembly. However, I confirm the absolutely essential nature of this retrospective amendment to confirm

Kevin Davis in his appointment, which I foreshadowed during a censure motion.

Mr Speaker, in general terms, we support the changes that have been made to streamline the operations of the Department of Education. We thought that streamlining was necessary, particularly in relation to post-school education. But it was with some surprise that, when the changes were announced by the new Chief Minister, we found that things that we had been saying in this Assembly in respect of the development of the new Northern Territory university were adopted suddenly. It is extremely confusing, I must say, to follow the kind of philosophy the government and the minister have been adopting on the university. We were not happy about the degree of total exclusion of the Darwin Community College Council, as it then was, from the proposals to plan for the Territory's university. We said that publicly on a number of occasions and the Minister for Education, in press releases which he issued, confirmed that that exclusion would be maintained. He said that the reason that it would be maintained was that the government was concerned that the university, when it was established, should not be a second-rate institution.

Mr Speaker, we failed to follow the logic of those arguments and, to our enormous surprise - I think some 2 weeks after the minister issued a statement expressing those sentiments - we found the new Chief Minister of the Northern Territory had not only embraced the proposals the opposition had been putting in the Assembly in respect of the involvement of the council but he had taken the matter a great deal further than we felt it should have been taken. We still feel that. We find that the Darwin Community College Council, now renamed, has not only become involved in the planning for the new university but substantially has the carriage of its development.

Mr Speaker, with reservations, we welcome the complete about-turn by the government on that particular issue but it poses a few problems in terms of conflict of interest in the role which is now played by the council and, particularly, by the newly-appointed principal, irrespective of the personality of the new principal. As I have said before, not only am I not an academic but I can barely manage to add 2 and 2 together. I had very little education. I have no objections to Mr Davis' appointment, as a person, at all. But I think the role he is expected to play throws up a clear conflict of interest.

The Darwin Institute of Technology is entitled to its own identity as an institute. It is entitled to be represented by councils and by principals who will pursue aggressively the interests of the institution. But they will not be able to do that because the council that is now to administer the institute will not simply be involved, as we wanted it to be, and consulted in respect of the development of the new university but it will be largely responsible for the development to take place.

A clear conflict of interest is already set up within the operations of that council. As they say, you cannot make an omelette without breaking a few eggs. The university cannot proceed, nor can a college of advanced education be established, whichever happens first, without the services of the current Darwin Institute of Technology being affected in some way. The very organisation which is responsible for developing those changes which will affect the institute is also the council responsible for politically representing the institute. I am keen to see school councils developed because that takes pressure off the staff. In schools which lack a council, staff feel that, if something terrible is going on, as occasionally happens, they are put in the impossible position of having to make representations to the department or the minister when they should not have to. That is the

political job of the school council. It is the political job of the Darwin Institute of Technology Council to represent that organisation politically. It cannot do so effectively because it has a dual role. Whatever it plans in respect of the new university inevitably will affect the interests of the Darwin Institute of Technology.

I say to the minister and the government that the Darwin Institute of Technology deserves to have its own council which has only the interests of the institute at heart. It is the government which will finally make the decisions so the institute is entitled to have the most aggressive and effective representation it can to put views to the government in an entirely unfettered manner so that the government can then make a decision on the representations it receives.

Mr Davis is in an impossible position in respect of that same conflict of interest because Mr Davis is not only the principal director of the Darwin Institute of Technology but he is also the executive officer of the council I have just mentioned. I personally think that the amount of work that is required in the development of a university of high standard for the Northern Territory is sufficient to make that position of executive officer of the council a full-time job. Before we were steamrolled with all these events happening, one of the things I was going to suggest to the government was to consider placing Mr Davis personally, and using the administrative skills he does possess, as the full-time executive officer of the Council for Higher Education, and going ahead and advertising for the position of principal of the Darwin Institute of Technology. If the government is not prepared to accept that suggestion and act on it, one thing cannot be gainsaid and that is that there is a clear conflict of interest in the 2 roles that Mr Davis is expected to fulfill.

Once again, in the cut and thrust of funding, and we all know how that is done, where departments are vying for the very limited cake which is available to be cut up, all sections of the government are entitled to the best representation they can get. It is not fair on the Darwin Institute of Technology that the head of that institute is also expected to act for an organisation which is going to be setting up another institute - and that is its very purpose - which is going to affect directly the operations of the Darwin Institute of Technology and indeed compete inevitably for the funds which will be available for the tertiary education cake generally in the Northern Territory. That is not fair to the institute.

Mr Speaker, I am saying to the honourable minister that the role of the Darwin Institute of Technology Council should be constrained and confined to representing the interests of that institute. Because the institute is affected, it is not fair to the institute that it should be closely involved and consulted and must put aggressively its views on the development of the new university and how it will affect the institute. That role should be taken up by an organisation which is separate from the institute itself. If Mr Davis is to remain as Director of the Darwin Institute of Technology, he should have the unfettered job and unrestricted job of simply representing as best he can the interests of that institution that he heads up, without having the additional and conflicting role of acting as executive officer to the organisation which is going to be putting up proposals which will take away from the operations of the Darwin Institute of Technology. It is a most unfortunate situation for the institute.

Mr Speaker, as I said in debate the other day, when the Northern Territory has established a college of advanced education, or ideally a university, then let us talk about confining the role of the Darwin Institute of Technology to

a TAFE institution and treating it as such. Until we reach that happy position of having a CAE or a university, we cannot afford to treat the only tertiary education institution basically available in the Northern Territory - certainly it is the most prominent one because it is the only one we have - simply as an arm of the Department of Education or the government. If we do that, we will stifle at its birth any development of the advanced education sector of the college. We do not want that to happen until we have a separate college. If the government is looking at the possibility of hiving off the advanced education sector of the college as an interim measure until the university arrives - because it is going to be a long way off and we all know that - then we would support that proposal to turn what then would be left of the rest of the Darwin Institute of Technology into a TAFE institution, which is what it would be. I put to the government that it consider the possibility of doing that. I do not see at all that it need involve in the slightest way any additional secretariat or staff over and above what is already there. I think it would be to the benefit of both institutions if those changes were made.

Mr Speaker, turning to the bill itself, by and large we support it. There are a number of clauses where there is some concern. In proposed new section 16 of the bill, the actual composition of the board and appointment of members is discussed. There is a section dealing with those people who shall be drawn from the trade union movement. I cannot understand why the government has provided in the bill that those appointments will simply be made by the government. In previous legislation, and indeed in other sections of this bill, the position has always been that it will accept nominees from the Trades and Labour Council as representing the trade union movement. The government has acknowledged in the bill that that kind of representation is desirable, which indeed it is because the representatives are drawn from industry and from trade unions. All I am saying is that, to avoid trouble for the government, to avoid totally unnecessary friction - because we had an example of it only 12 months ago when the government simply selected the trade unionists it would like to fulfill this requirement - it would be far more sensible to appoint a nominee of the Trades and Labour Council which operates in the Northern Territory, even if the government wanted a selection of names to be put up by the TLC. I do not even see the need for that. It has worked quite successfully in the past to just ask the TLC to do it.

Mr Speaker, when the composition of the advisory council was considered, a number of problems were raised by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. One is that the TAFE council can have potentially no professional educators on it because they are not specified. I am not suggesting that that is going to happen but the potential is there. I am not going to seek to amend the bill. I simply want some assurances from the responsible minister as to the kind of people he will be seeking to put on the council. In the same regard, 2 trade union representatives are mentioned. Under the bill that is currently proposed, the method of appointment for those 2 trade union representatives will obviously be by ministerial selection. I think that it will avoid some unnecessary trouble to just ask the TLC. Proposed new paragraph 16(3)(d) says that 2 members shall be drawn from trade unions.

The minister should explain how proposed new section 50, the confidentiality provision, will work. I think it will be very difficult to make it workable. The government has acknowledged that the council needs representatives from various organisations who will represent the interests of the organisations. It will be extremely difficult for them to do that if they cannot discuss the proceedings of the meetings of the council with their own organisations. They will be prohibited from doing that. Under the

provisions of this bill, they will be breaking the law if they do that. If there were a general confidentiality clause to confine the actions of members in respect of making public statements, perhaps I could understand that. I will just read it out:

A member shall not disclose information obtained in the course of his duties as a member, unless the disclosure is - (a) made in the course of his duties as a member; and (b) authorised by the council.

It is silly to put the council in the position of having to say at the end of each of its meetings: 'All members are authorised to go back to your organisations and discuss what we have discussed but you must comply with the provisions of section 50 of the act'. Obviously, more sensible drafting is required in order not to put members in that silly position. The majority of people do not want to break the law, but they can hardly represent their organisations if they are forced to break the law by simply discussing the proceedings of council meetings.

Mr Speaker, I noted the very unusual drafting of the bill in that it includes bulk clauses that already exist in the act. In fact, I was interested to note that the minister referred to it in his second-reading speech. It surprised me also. This is not a matter of note.

Mr Speaker, our concerns with this bill are neither great nor wide ranging. We think that the legislation can be improved in a couple of areas. I simply come home in again on what we think to be the major structural problem in rearrangements, most of which we support, in terms of potential detriment to the college. I am not suggesting that tertiary institutions should not be accountable. I am not suggesting that there are no problems at the Darwin Institute of Technology that need to be cleaned up. I am not objecting on principle to anything other than a TAFE facility being considered as a TAFE institution. The fact is that advanced education in the Territory should not be disadvantaged simply because of the small size of our population. The kind of flexibility that is required and the kind of people you need to employ to teach those degree courses necessitate a different kind of treatment from the trades area and the TAFE area of the institute. I feel that the inherent conflict of interests that exists in the operations of the council, particularly the operations of its executive officer, the principal of the institute, are not in the best interests of the Darwin Institute of Technology as a freestanding institute in its own right, because it will not be represented as freely and as aggressively as it should be in its dealings with the government. I would ask the government to consider a better structure.

In conclusion, I invite the Minister for Education to say a few words about this. We have had a discouraging and surprising dearth of information lately about the development of the university. I was unable to attend the public seminar which was held by the University Planning Vice-Chancellor, but I did listen to the tape-recording of that seminar. This is no criticism of the gentleman himself - far from it - but it was difficult to glean anything other than generalised ideas about where we are going at the moment. A concept was presented of discussions with the Senate of the University of Queensland about the prospect of establishing a college of that university in the Northern Territory. At the same time, I think the minister said that perhaps there would be face-to-face contact with students in 1992, and that the Queensland government had given approval for discussions to commence with the Senate of the university. We have heard nothing since.

I ask the minister to give the Assembly a progress report on where

we are going with the development of the university, if we are going anywhere at all. The Darwin Institute of Technology needs to have some indication as to what will happen that will affect its operations and when it is likely to happen. Is it going to be in 5 years, 8 years or 10 years? All the fuss and bother that have been caused by the changes, and particularly the manner in which they were implemented - and we now have written proof from the government that the appointment was illegal - have not enhanced the position of the college or the principal or increased the morale of the students who attend the institute. We all know it has been a very disturbing and regrettable time. Some definitive and positive statement needs to be made by the Minister for Education as to how he sees the future role of the Darwin Institute of Technology, and how, in particular - because we already know that he is defining it as a TAFE institution - he sees the advanced education sector of that Darwin Institute of Technology proceeding in the interim period between now and the establishment of the Northern Territory's university or - I hope it does not happen - a college of advanced education. The problem is that none of us knows. Perhaps the minister could give us a progress report on where the university is going and a realistic assessment of when it is all likely to happen.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has risen to add general support, not just to the amendment before us but to the general direction of where we are heading with education in the Northern Territory. That, of course, is what this government is all about. It is addressing itself to the needs of the Northern Territory as they are today and, more particularly, towards our future development. The Leader of the Opposition expressed no surprise at the action currently being taken by the Minister for Education. Once again he attempted to gain some credit by suggesting that the opposition led the way in that area.

This government, through its Department of Education, has been most successful and innovative in many areas. With the current state of development in higher education, it is time for us to reassess our direction. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned a number of problems. He was concerned about the overall responsibilities of the new Northern Territory Council of Higher Education and suggested that there may be some conflict of interest in its role. That is not so, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is no doubt that the University Planning Authority is a separate entity with its own structure and is working quite sensibly. The work is time consuming but that is the nature of the beast in gaining university status for any establishment. The council is working sensibly and progressively towards a realistic set of goals. There is no doubt in my mind that, as time goes on, this government will need to address itself continually to changes in the demands and objectives of higher education. That is part of our task.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does not need to apologise for lack of formal education because I believe, quite seriously, that his contribution, as is that of anybody else who takes time out to contribute to the education field, is quite valid and worth while. All we need is a genuine interest in education. Unfortunately, as most of us here would acknowledge, a genuine interest in the education field is lacking throughout the community generally. Amongst those who express some interest, almost everybody now is his own expert, and therein lies the problem. I have had representations over the last 15 months from a great range of students and staff of various educational facilities, including the previous community college, from parents and through discussion with people within industry and business generally. They all have their own ideas on just how education should proceed. I have always held the belief that parents can be the greatest contributors to the future education of their own children simply by taking a genuine

interest. Generally speaking, the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition is commendable and I have no hesitation in saying so. I shall wait for his colleagues to add their bit later, Mr Deputy Speaker.

There is a need for us to address ourselves to the long-term needs of the Territory and to provide secure and worthwhile employment for our young people. As mentioned in an earlier debate, students have a right to share in the future - a most glossy future, as I see it - of the Northern Territory and the only way they will be able to do that is by attaining the ultimate potential of their own scholastic skills. The secret of success in maximising our future potential, as we have said time and time again, is to train our own. To meet this ambition, we need to utilise our limited resources because, with the small population base that we have and only one major post-secondary institution with advanced educational facilities, with our limited manpower and limited building facilities, we need to maximise or optimise each of our components.

As mentioned earlier, the Territory's track record, particularly in the primary and secondary areas, is second to none throughout Australia. We have a student-teacher ratio that is commendable. We have school buildings that are second to none. To many of our southern visitors, our facilities are absolutely incredible. The parent and community involvement, through school councils, is increasing and that really is part of the major success story of education in the Territory. We have results on the board. I am sure the Minister for Education will be able to tell us more in later debates during this sittings about some of the educational successes last year.

I have had some very minor involvement in the area of post-secondary education myself, as a part-time lecturer at the previous college. I had the good fortune or misfortune to spend 6 months on limited tenure in charge of the engineering-surveying school and that gave me a fairly rewarding insight into the goings on and non-goings on of the college as it was then. I have spent some time on course advisory committees where members of the community, through business and private enterprise as well as government departments, are given the opportunity to put forward their views on what material ought to go into various subject areas. It is an opportunity for people to bring members of the college staff up to date on advancements in technology and progress within various industries. That 6-month period and other contacts I have had with the college lead me to acknowledge the quality and dedication of many of the institute's staff. I think it important to say that because there is no doubt in my mind that, given our small population base and the geographic remoteness of the Northern Territory, it is amazing that we have staff of such high calibre.

Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is not all good news for the reasons I have just mentioned. Whilst the college has offered a fairly unique opportunity for academics to develop their own reputations through the special nature of the education base there, life in Darwin is not everybody's cup of tea. We have had difficulties in attracting and retaining top quality staff. That situation will continue for some time. I understand there is an inherent pressure for the various courses and subject areas to develop along the lines that address themselves more to the pre-existing capacity within the college as opposed to new initiatives and proposals related to community needs. From my casual observation, that is where the train has gone off the tracks. It is understandable. There are pressures from limited resources, but we need to readdress ourselves, capitalising on the limited resources we have, back to what the community needs and objectives are.

As I say, there is a need to balance between the extremes of the requirements of the community and the resources available whilst keeping in mind cost effectiveness and efficient operation. The whole purpose of these amendments is to streamline the administrative management of the institute and to realign this direction into the community's needs and the Territory's needs as far as post-secondary education is concerned. As has been explained by the minister, the main demand within the institute is in the TAFE area and, quite simply, this is because, being a high growth area, we have a great need for technicians and tradesmen. Hardly a day goes by without almost all of the ads on the radio and in the newspaper being related to the urgent need for qualified tradesmen to fill many positions.

In addition, the bill provides us with a base for the overall development of higher education throughout the Territory. The community college certainly served us well in the past but now is the time for us to reassess our objectives and our priorities in the light of advances in technology generally and an increasing need for us to train our own technicians, educators and professionals to fit in with our rapidly expanding industrial and business marketplace, not to mention the increase in business and technical trades that will result from the trade development zone. All of these things underscore the need for rationalising our existing higher education facilities and for expansion to meet our future needs.

In the long term, there is no doubt that we will see a university in the Northern Territory that will handle not only the initial objective of post-graduate work but undergraduate courses directed at meeting the demands of this rapidly growing area. That university will meet the educational requirements of not only Territory students but also overseas students from the South-east Asia region. It is of interest that, currently, there are 30 post-graduate research programs being undertaken in the Northern Territory. These are attached to universities throughout Australia. Whilst the University Planning Authority is obtaining some value from that post-graduate research work, there is no doubt in my mind that the establishment of a Northern Territory university would ensure that the full 100% value of that work would be returned to the Northern Territory directly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in setting educational priorities, the considerations are basically 2: what do we teach and how do we teach it? The question of what we teach is the business of the community, that same community that I spoke about earlier which ought to be, and in many cases is, participating in the educational development of our students. That can be performed directly, through the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education and with the assistance of the Northern Territory government departments through their various resources such as the Vocational Training Commission whose job it is to address itself to manpower projections etc. There is no doubt that the courses we teach and the priorities we set are the business of the community.

The details of how we achieve those objectives are, generally speaking, the business of the academics. Together with course advisory committees, they have the job of ensuring that both quality and credibility of courses and course content are met. Contrary to recent statements by our local academics, it is not their business to set course priorities. Quite clearly, that belongs with the community itself. As I see it, that is justification for governments setting basic objectives in response to community needs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Council of Higher Education has a clear role not only in governing the Darwin Institute of Technology but also in coordinating and ensuring that all facets of higher education are related to each other and that there are not areas of overlap or gaps. It has clearly defined

objectives set down in the bill. It has a Territory-wide responsibility for integrated planning of advanced education as well as the other role of ensuring that the University Planning Authority's work does not go off on a tangent. The sensible development of the university itself remains with the University Planning Authority. The council is comprised of 10 people representing all facets of community life, including representatives from the teaching staff and student body at the institute.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in regard to the principal function of the college, the TAFE area, the bill addresses itself to the formation of the TAFE advisory council. That council certainly has representatives from trade unions. It is fairly normal practice with statutory authorities for nominations to be forwarded from various interest groups to the minister who, upon advice from his department and deliberation, will make a decision as to who is the most suitable person from those representatives to fulfill that very important role on behalf of the community. I think that is an extremely important point to keep in mind. It is not a matter of whoever happens to hold the power base in that particular organisation at the time: it is a matter of making a sensible decision from those nominations forwarded.

In regard to confidentiality, I am quite certain that it is safer to have specific restrictions on discussions of matters pertaining to the council. As individual cases come forward, specific dispensation can be given to community group representatives to talk about certain matters to their groups. That is better than blanket approval. Having sat on at least 1 or 2 meetings of the council, I know that the majority of its business does not fall into the top secret classification area. Certainly, that general point of confidentiality needs to be maintained.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is time for the Northern Territory government to rethink its objectives in relation to the major post-secondary educational facility we have. It is time for all parties to acknowledge their true and specific roles in the overall picture and to get on with the job of providing the best possible education for our junior citizens.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a few comments in relation to this bill. I will not dwell on the regrettable circumstances in which this bill is being introduced and I will not dwell on the fact that the Chief Minister has acted ultra vires, and made necessary the amendments that have been so ably criticised by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I choose to leave entirely that particular area of the debate because that has been well and truly canvassed during the sittings.

One subject that has already been canvassed is the question of academic leadership. That particular question is germane to the interest both in this Assembly and publicly in this particular area.

I wish also to make comment on what I see as a definitional problem. Speaking generally, I am rather put in mind of the unfortunate checkout girl who worked in the supermarket that served the academic community of both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard. There was one unfortunate alumnus who was having a bit of trouble with his shopping list at the checkout. This young woman was alleged to have remarked: 'Listen buddy. Are you from MIT and you can't read or are you from Harvard and you can't count?' I think that the definitional problem that is germane to this particular bill and the question of academic leadership are perhaps thereby demonstrated.

The question of academic leadership is a real problem for the institutions that currently exist in the Northern Territory. I say that as a resident of

central Australia. I do not have the opportunity to see at first hand or to talk to constituents who are students of the Darwin Community College but I want to place on record in this debate my concern that non-compulsory education in the Northern Territory should be of as good a quality as possible. I am concerned that, in order for that to happen, there is a need for academic leadership. I am quite specific when I use that phrase. I do not mean it in any snobbish sense. What I mean by that is that we should be encouraging to come to the Northern Territory people who are teaching tertiary courses and who, as far as possible, are leaders in their fields of study.

I have had the good fortune to spend a couple of years of my life studying linguistics. I regard it as great good fortune that I was able to study under, be lectured by and learn from people who were at the forefront of that discipline not only in Australia but around the world. I carry no brief for that particular discipline but I merely raise it in order to exemplify the importance for the development of the Northern Territory in both a human and an economic sense of attracting people of that calibre and encouraging the people who are already here to make their mark in the disciplines in which they are teaching.

I think the honourable member for Wagaman made some unfortunate reference to research as being something that was of mere interest to the person who was actually carrying out the research. It must be realised that, in a respectable tertiary institution, both those activities, teaching and research, feed off each other. There will be better teaching if there is good research and likewise. They used to say of mathematical ideas that, unless you could go out and explain the most complex concept to the man in the street in a short time, you did not really understand it yourself. I think I have made my point in that regard. I am concerned then that there has been a threat to burgeoning academic leadership in the Northern Territory tertiary education sector.

This brings me to the definitional problems that I referred to before. The bill itself does away with the Post-school Advisory Council and puts in its place the Technical and Further Education Advisory Council. It does away with that part of the principal act which dealt with the Darwin Community College and makes reference to the Council of Higher Education. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think there is a problem of definition because we are not distinguishing between compulsory and non-compulsory education. The old tripartite division between primary, secondary and tertiary education has been thrown out the window. That is probably quite justified. I think it is important to realise that, historically, secondary education was by no means universal. Secondary education in the last 40 years, since the Second World War, has become a universal phenomenon in most western countries, Australia being no exception. That was certainly not the case in our grandparents' time. At that stage, the word 'primary' meant the limit of compulsory education. We had to teach everybody the 3 Rs and that was it.

I have addressed before what I see as curriculum problems in the secondary area. I think that those particular problems are also definitional problems because we are not clear in our minds about what we think are compulsory aspects of education and what we think are non-compulsory aspects of education. There is no consensus within the community nor is there consensus with the schools about that.

When we turn to higher education, or non-compulsory education as I choose to call it, I think it is worth pausing to consider the changes in this regard over the last few years. The fact is that, over the last 20 years, we have

gone from a situation where there was an unequivocal bipartite division in non-compulsory education between institutes of technology on the one hand and universities on the other. Although there was some overlap between those 2 sorts of institutions, basically people were prepared to accept that institutes of technology tended to deal more with practical and less academic activities and the universities were for more purely intellectually academic pursuits. In areas like engineering or architecture, there was always some overlap. What do we see 20 years later? We see a proliferation of non-compulsory institutions. In Canberra, I remember there was a bewildering array. There was a college of technical and further education, a college of advanced studies and a school of general studies which were part of the Australian National University which was effectively 2 universities because many departments were duplicated in both sections of the university. Over 20 years, there has been that proliferation in the number of post-compulsory institutions. I really doubt that we are quite clear about the differing functions of each of those sorts of institutions.

Because of our isolation in the Northern Territory, we have had community colleges: the Community College of Central Australia and the Darwin Community College. Both of them, for reasons I am not sure I understand, are now on different administrative legislative bases. Clearly the purpose of a community college is to respond to a need for post-compulsory education in isolated places. Quite clearly, as the Territory develops, particularly with growth such as we have seen in Darwin and Alice Springs, there is a need for those community colleges to transmogrify into some other sort of institution. But I am concerned that there is not a clear definition of the roles involved.

The minister said in his second-reading speech: 'We are looking forward to significant growth in the various post-school sectors and, in preparation for this growth, it is essential that we achieve better coordination, remove duplication and establish clear lines of responsibility and control'. I think they are laudable sentiments. He made reference to various post-school sectors but I am not convinced that there has been a clear statement of what these various post-school sectors are and what the relationship between them is. I would like the honourable minister to address that point in his summing up. We have a clue in clause 15 of this bill, an interpretation clause. We see that 'post-school institution' means 'an institution which provides education services not being education services provided in a pre-school, primary school or secondary school, in an academic, vocational or practical discipline or which are of a recreational nature'. That is fairly clear but how does it key in with the arrangements for the university of the Northern Territory? I think that we need some sort of explanation from the honourable minister.

I particularly want to address a further comment in the minister's second-reading speech. Referring to the bill, he said: 'This marks the beginning of a transition from a technical and further education sector to higher-level technical studies'. Again, the definitional problem raises its ugly head with a sentence like that. Secondly, I would like to hear from the honourable minister in which areas he is expecting the expansion of programs to which he refers. I think the Assembly deserves some explanation of what courses he is expecting to be added and what courses are to be axed. Some statement in that regard is owed to us.

To sum up then, Mr Deputy Speaker, I have referred to a definitional problem. I have serious misgivings about phrases like 'higher education' because it is not clear what 'higher education' means. It is higher than what? Similarly, it is not clear what the distinction is between technical and further education and other areas of post-compulsory schooling. With these

comments, I thank the Assembly for its patience.

Mr COULTER (Community Development): Mr Deputy Speaker, before I commence my contribution to this debate, I would like to address some of the issues which the Leader of the Opposition raised in terms of conflict of interest when he was talking about the institute and the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education. He said there would be a conflict of interest and it would be difficult for the director to address those particular problems. I would like to read from the NT parliamentary Labor Party's proposal for the progressive establishment of a university in the Northern Territory. Paragraph 2.1.4 says: 'The planning for the establishment of the university should be done in the closest possible liaison with the Darwin Community College'.

Mr B. Collins: That is what I said.

Mr COULTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, we are all agreed on that particular point then.

Paragraph 3.3.1 says: 'Planning the university and developing university resources and facilities should be in close physical and intellectual contact with the people engaged in the college development'. What we have is the parliamentary Labor Party agreeing with what has been done. We now have Northern Territory higher education incorporated as closely as possible and with as much intellectual and physical contact as we possibly can. I do not believe there is an argument there. The dates are all that have been changed on that particular issue. Mr Deputy Speaker, the name of the college is addressed in the bill and that is of high importance. In the Northern Territory post-school education area we have had a proliferation of councils and committees: the Post-school Advisory Council, the Vocational Training Commission, the Darwin Community College and the Community College of Central Australia. By the way, it was not that long ago when the Community College of Central Australia was known as the Darwin Community College Alice Springs annexe. Mr Deputy Speaker, you would be able to remember back to that stage. What we have moved away from now is the parochialism of that era, where we had committees to deal with specific issues, to a situation where we have a single body that will address those problems that are significant to the whole of the Northern Territory. In June this year, when Aussat is launched, I believe that the meaning of the word 'education' will take on a new perspective. We will have available to us resources which we never dreamed possible in terms of education. That is another reason why we need such a body as the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education to address itself to the whole spectrum of higher education right throughout the Northern Territory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was an elected staff member of the Darwin Community College Council. I know the workload of the council and the interconnection of all the departments and committees that I have previously spoken about. It was a mess. Including the University Planning Vice-Chancellor and the Director of TAFE - and that is the reason why the membership has increased from 10 to 12 - on the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education, it will bring together all the resources and all the expertise in the one meeting room. That has been long overdue as far as I am concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the abolition of the Vocational Training Commission will bring about a situation whereby the Minister for Industry and Small Business will have to address some legislative changes.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Coulter has a most unfortunate effect on this Assembly. I draw your attention to the lack of a quorum.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ring the Bells.

There is now a quorum.

Mr COULTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, the college council still retains 2 full-time members of the teaching staff and the 2 representatives elected by the students of the institute along with the 1 staff member, bringing a total of 5 members of the council drawn from the very grassroots of the college itself. I believe this bodes well for representation on the council. However, over a number of years, and considering the number of councils that we have throughout the Territory, I have had some reservation about the number of people who were on the college council. If you look at the people who were represented on the Community College of Central Australia, the Katherine Rural College and the Vocational Training Commission under the order system, they were all the same people, with different hats or skirts, travelling along to the Post-school Advisory Council to speak about issues that probably had been addressed already within the Post-school Advisory Council itself. Putting the University Vice-Chancellor with the Chairman of the Technical and Further Education Advisory Council will go a long way towards rationalising the duplication of very valuable time and human resources.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to address the functions of the Council of Higher Education. It has been necessary to spell out the functions of the council in the bill because of the broader responsibilities which the council will take on. I have already addressed the coordination of the development of higher education in the Territory but, if ever there was a group of bodies spread throughout the Territory that needed coordinating, it was in the higher education sphere.

In relation to abolition of the Vocational Training Commission, we must remember that the Darwin Institute of Technology handles roughly 85% of all TAFE training in the Northern Territory. I was interested to hear the member for MacDonnell say: 'The expansion of programs - what programs?' Can I draw his attention to the growth industries that we are seeing in the Northern Territory such as the building and engineering industries. We are now looking at an apprentice population of about 1200. This area of the college has expanded remarkably. It is a growth industry that we should be very proud of in the Northern Territory. Whilst other states have suffered a decline in apprenticeship numbers, the Northern Territory has had substantial growth in most areas. There are a few exceptions but, in most areas of apprenticeship training, there has been a substantial increase. In the areas of technology and science, there has been an increase in student numbers that would have been unbelievable some 3 or 4 years ago but is now a reality. Photography and engineering have seen increases in student numbers. Largely this has resulted from a coordinated effort by Northern Territory departments such as the Department of Transport and Works to involve our young people in traineeships. These are the growth areas, the nuts and bolts of the real world around us. They are real expansion programs. These are not courses in underwater basket weaving; these are courses from which students can graduate to fulfill a worthwhile role within the community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that there are many facilities in the Northern Territory that are underutilised and to which the NT Council of Higher Education needs to address itself. I speak of the facilities that are available at the Office of the Supervising Scientist, for example, at Jabiru.

Some of the most eminent marine biologists are there and they have difficulty attracting staff to work in the Northern Territory. Their head office is in Sydney and they have difficulty in attracting people into the Northern Territory to live in downtown Jabiru. I believe that the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education has the potential to address itself to some of the resources that are available within organisations such as the Office of the Supervising Scientist to allow our Northern Territory youth to take up those job opportunities which are available there. Places like the Berrimah Research Farm are also ideal for this type of development. Indeed, in the area of biology, the Department of Primary Production has done its part in attracting trainees. The museum has the facilities to allow students to undertake research work. I would like to see the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education address these particular issues.

In terms of the further development of the college and the need to establish a university, I think it is accepted by both parties in this Assembly that it is inevitable that that will happen. However, I would like to pay tribute to the Hon. Paul Everingham for his foresight in starting to talk about a university when everybody told him he had rocks in his head. If he had not started talking about it some 5 or 6 years ago, we would not be at the stage we are at now. I pay tribute here, too, to the Minister for Education for his efforts to involve the University of Queensland in the development of a university college. I believe that this augurs well. The Northern Territory Council of Higher Education will have to implement the proposals and I wish it well in its endeavours.

In all, Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that this bill, voluminous as it is, is quite a good document. It indicates the direction in which the Northern Territory should be travelling for the next 10 years.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank honourable members for their comments. I should start by saying that I believe that there still is a query in relation to the legality of the appointment that has been made. It is by no means clear from the present act that the principal is strictly an employee of the college. It is only where he is an employee that the council has the power to appoint him. He is an ex officio member of the very body which, it is argued, should appoint him if he is an employee. This suggests that it is not intended he should be in that category.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the section of the act creating the position speaks of the principal as being 'in the service of the college'. This is the only place that the service of the college is mentioned. All other references to the staff are of them being employed by the college. There is reasonable doubt and a need to clarify this particular situation. In this particular bill we have made provision for the appointment of the director of the Darwin Institute of Technology. In the previous act, no provision was made for the appointment of the principal. Whilst this is seen as validating legislation, and the actions taken as illegal, I believe that there was still enough doubt there to say that what we have done is correct. However, the amendments that have been circulated will put the matter beyond doubt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition referred to a conflict of interest between the NT Council of Higher Education, as an authority, and the governing body of the Darwin Institute of Technology. That point is acknowledged. There could be a conflict of interest in this particular area. However, I believe that it is important that the director is a member of the NT Council of Higher Education and the chairman of the body that will make representations to the university on higher education generally. The

operation of the NT Council of Higher Education will be monitored very carefully. It is an authority which we should have in the Territory and it has been supported by most members of the community. It is there to perform particular functions and we will be making sure that they are carried out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that the Leader of the Opposition has taken out of context my comments about the institute being a TAFE college. My reference to the institute being a TAFE college was in the context of the whole public debate that was raging at the time. The point that I made was that, whether the Leader of the Opposition, academics or the government like it or not, the fact was that the Darwin Institute of Technology was a TAFE college offering advanced education courses. What we are doing is agreeing. I support what the Leader of the Opposition said. There is a need for more emphasis to be placed on advanced education and that is what we are doing by changing the name of the Darwin Community College to the Darwin Institute of Technology. We acknowledge that we need to put more emphasis on the academic aspects of the college.

The Leader of the Opposition also raised an issue in relation to confidentiality. All we were trying to do was preserve the integrity of the council. Members would be aware that harsh things are said in relation to accreditation and student affairs. Things of such a personal nature require protection as far as the council is concerned. All we are doing is preserving the integrity of the council.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I made it quite clear during my second-reading speech that we aimed to provide the legislative change necessary to bring into effect the administrative changes that were announced by the Chief Minister. I might say initially that some of the proposed amendments did not relate specifically to the administrative changes and I asked that they be removed at this time. I will be referring the particular amendments that were withdrawn to the NT Council of Higher Education because they were not under the charter that I had directed for inclusion in this particular act. The amendments were to relate specifically to the administrative changes. However, the draftsmen have taken the opportunity to clarify some of the act and I believe that most of the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition relate to matters directly lifted from the previous act. He mentioned clause 6 initially and I believe he was wrong. All that particular clause did was reflect the change of name from the Darwin Community College to the Darwin Institute of Technology and delete reference to the former VTC.

In relation to the formation of the TAFE council and the points that the Leader of the Opposition raised regarding union representations, the same thing applies in the Education Advisory Council. The government sees the need to have employee and employer representation. That is only right. However, any union can apply for membership on these particular councils. We do not see any specific union as being in control of all the other unions. Originally, we were looking for 3 names from which to choose who should be represented on this particular council. I believe unions should be able to apply for membership on particular councils or committees and that the minister should choose who should be on those particular councils or committees. I point out that it is still a union representative; it is still someone representing the employees. The provision is included in other Northern Territory legislation.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition also asked for an update in relation to the university college proposal. At this point in time, the Senate of the University of Queensland has authorised the Vice-Chancellor,

Professor Brian Wilson, to discuss possible arrangements with respect to the establishment of a university college associated with the University of Queensland. Professor Wilson has become a member of the University Planning Authority Advisory Committee. The Planning Vice-Chancellor met with the Academic Resources and Planning Committee of the University of Queensland on 10 August 1984 for preliminary discussions with respect to the establishment of a university college in the Northern Territory. The Assembly was informed about that at the time. At the present time, the Planning Vice-Chancellor is south meeting with the Vice-Chancellor to discuss the current situation of the Darwin Institute of Technology. I can assure honourable members that, if there are any changes or advances in the area of establishing a university college, I will keep them informed.

I emphasise once again that I respect the academic freedom that is required in the advanced education sector and the university sector. I do not have any difficulty with that. I reiterate that the government does not intend becoming involved in that particular area. It is important that those particular institutes have academic freedom. I respect that.

However, once again I draw honourable members' attention to the fact that, just because a person is an academic, it does not mean that he is the best kind of person to run a college or an institute of this kind. I made mention in the previous debate that many institutes in America and indeed the world are administered by an administrator rather than an academic. I guess it would depend in which area of academe a person is proficient. People with a PhD in culture or the reproductive processes of an insect would not necessarily be more qualified to administer a college than someone with a master's degree in education administration.

Mr Speaker, that argument could go in all directions. I emphasise that we are trying to make sure that our institute is of value and worth to the Territory. I believe the community college was respected throughout the community. I believe that the new institute will also fulfill a very important role in our education system.

The amendments that we have before us are worthy of the Territory. I would also like to remark about the honourable member for MacDonnell's comments on the areas in which we are progressing. I mentioned health in the address in reply. I will read it:

In the post-school section, the new NT Council for Higher Education will be taking up the challenge of planning and coordinated development of the university and advanced education areas in preparation for expected growth and the development of a university college.

Then I mentioned health, sciences, nursing, teaching and business studies as 4 areas in particular where expansion is expected to occur.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank you, Sir, for giving approval to the urgency that I have sought. It is important to note that a considerable amount of money has been lost in the past by us not being able to contract out courses to the Darwin Institute of Technology. I might just make the comment here that, by making provision for contracting out to the institute, we will open the whole scene up as far as the Territory is concerned. Places like Nhulunbuy will have access to advanced education. We will be able to give them experts in a particular field if it is necessary. I think that that is one of the important things to note in these particular

amendments. The Department of Education is responsible for TAFE. It is right that it has that involvement because the department has a presence in all of the communities in the Northern Territory. I believe that it is sensible for the department to be included. By contracting out various courses, more people across the Territory will be able to become involved and the courses that are available to those people will be broadened considerably.

Another point in relation to the urgency is that a number of short courses are being run at the Darwin Institute of Technology and the Community College of Central Australia. These courses were being accredited by the Vocational Training Commission and, unless the bill becomes law in the near future and accreditation powers are granted to the colleges, these students will complete their courses without obtaining an accredited qualification for employment and without gaining entry to further studies.

Mr Speaker, the other aspect is my concern with the students at the institute itself. I believe that the issue has been canvassed widely. I have received comments back from the students association in relation to the amendments. I have not as yet received comment from the Federation of College Academics or the staff association. I understand that the 2 major points that they were worried about have been addressed by this government. That has been as a result of consultation with those particular groups. I have spoken to all of the people involved with the Darwin Institute of Technology. I have listened to all their arguments. As a result of that, the government has decided that it is right and proper that we clarify the situation of the appointment of director. That appointment is to be made by the Council of the Darwin Institute of Technology, with endorsement by the Administrator. Also, the council itself will be the governing body of the Darwin Institute of Technology.

Mr Speaker, I once again thank honourable members for their contribution to this debate.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 to 19 agreed to.

Clause 20:

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I invite defeat of clause 20.

Clause 20 negatived.

New clause 20:

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 25.1.

This new clause puts beyond doubt the decisions taken prior to the passing of this legislation.

New clause 20 agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 26 agreed to.

Clause 27:

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I invite defeat of clause 27.

Clause 27 defeated.

New clause 27:

Mr HARRIS: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 25.2.

This insertion makes sure that actions taken by either the council or the college prior to this amendment will not be questioned.

New clause 27 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Bill read a third time.

FILM CLASSIFICATION AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 62)

Continued from 22 August 1984.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, in rising to speak to this bill, I indicate immediately that the opposition supports it. The whole question of pornography, which serial 72 covers, has caused a great deal of community debate in the last 12 months and has been given a fair degree of attention in the states. Opinion on the issue was certainly divided on this side of the Assembly. Each member of the opposition has a particular point of view on the matter. I indicate to the Assembly that, as far as the opposition is concerned, it will be a completely free debate. We have no Caucus position on the matter at all. The individual members on this side of the Assembly will be expressing their own views.

Mr Speaker, the Film Classification Amendment Bill is completely uncontentious and is in line with moves being made in the states. The main function of the bill is to replace the film classification 'not recommended for children' or 'NRC' with 'parental guidance'. The purpose, which we support, is to correct the impression that films so classified should not be seen by children under the age of 12 years. In reality, the idea is to suggest that they may be suitable with parental guidance; that is, that they are not recommended for children under 12 years unless there is parental guidance. Therefore, the tag has been changed in the Territory to bring us into line with the states, to avoid misunderstanding and to give a more suitable label.

The bill also provides for increased penalties. For example, for not indicating the appropriate classification, the penalty has increased from \$100 to \$600. As I said before, the bill is uncontentious and we support it.

Mr Speaker, the major piece of legislation in this package is the Classification of Publications Bill. As I mentioned before, there has been a considerable degree of activity in terms of meetings of the Attorneys-General of the various states and territories to discuss this. Indeed, the Northern Territory has been represented at these meetings by the former Attorney-General of the Northern Territory, the member for Araluen.

Mr Speaker, the legislation that we are considering today is largely based on the model of the ACT. It will make it an offence to sell video discs or tapes, films and publications without them being classified. The videos must be marked according to their classification. Written publications will be classified under various restricted headings and films and videos covered by the bill can be G, PG, M, R, X or refused classification. X and category 2 material can be sold or let only from a restricted area, closed to minors. R and category 1 material cannot be sold to persons under the age of 18 years.

It is noteworthy that this legislation, which is derived from meetings of federal, state and territory Attorneys-General, was intended to be uniform throughout Australia. Since then, NSW has banned X-rated videos completely. So has Western Australia and so has Victoria. The NSW and Western Australian governments have adopted the uniform legislation up to and including the R classification. Without boring people to death, I will shortly encapsulate the descriptions of the various categories of classification that I am talking about. That is only because there is a lot of confusion about this point. As I said, New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria have completely banned the X rating but have adopted the model that we are processing through this Assembly, up to and including the R classification.

Mr Speaker, it is also worthy to note - and we have taken the government at its word on this - that the honourable Deputy Chief Minister, who was acting at the time for the former Attorney-General, Mr Robertson, said publicly that it was an urgent issue and stressed that public comment would be welcome. He also said: 'If necessary changes can be made to the bill, we are happy to do this in the committee stages of the bill'. Mr Speaker, we are approaching this debate with that in mind.

There are members on this side of the Assembly - and they will be free to say so - who want to see X-rated videos banned completely in the Northern Territory. I am sure there are members on the opposite side of the Assembly who also have that view. That does not happen to be my personal view. Other suggestions have been made that perhaps the X classification should be narrowed simply to make it more difficult for videos to get that kind of classification. I do not agree with that either because I think you can really get into some very esoteric arguments about the fine lines that are to be drawn between these classifications as they now stand. If we make the classifications themselves more complicated, we will just make more trouble for ourselves.

It is significant that X-rated films and category 2 publications can be sold only in a defined restricted area and delivered only to persons who have made a request for the material; that is, it must be solicited and cannot be received unsolicited. I think that it is a fair summary of the arguments in the states - and I have given some time to this matter - that the main lobby in support of the X category, the retention of it and the distribution of the material, was the suppliers. On the other hand, it was the parent groups, by and large, who wanted to oppose the X classification altogether. School councils, for example, opposed it. At least, that is what is indicated by my perusal of the interstate press.

There was a proposal put at the meetings that I have referred to of state Attorneys-General that a new ER classification be adopted. That can be a matter for future debate and further discussion in the Assembly. I wish to commend the Northern Territory government for taking action now and not waiting for this future event to take place. Nothing that we do in the passage

of this legislation will necessarily restrict or impinge upon action that we wish to take later on, and I commend the government for wanting to take this first step now. It is a fact that this first step is absolutely essential. Over the last 12 months particularly, and I can only speak for Darwin, there has been an alarming increase in the access which young people have to this material. As I say, some people on this side of the Assembly want the X rating banned altogether. I am not of that view. If adults want to have access to this material, I am not opposed to them having such access. The facts are that the restrictions which supposedly applied to this material simply do not apply, and children are obtaining very easy access to it. Some of it is very nasty indeed.

I have noticed pornographic material in at least 2 video outlets in Darwin over the last 12 months. By video outlets, I mean the normal neighbourhood video shop, the place where you get Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, although you must be careful which Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs you get, let me tell you. I am talking about the places which just serve the normal neighbourhood needs of providing video entertainment for home viewing. It is a fact that pornographic videos are freely available from all of these normal outlets. They are currently available from various newsagencies. They are available from service stations. In fact, a month or so ago, when I had a bit of tyre trouble, I pulled into a very large service station in the northern suburbs. I went inside and found that I could buy clothing, fishing gear, soft drinks, food and X-rated videos. An amazing range of things were available to me but I could not get a tyre gauge. It was the first time I had actually seen this kind of material available in such a surprising outlet. What really brought it home to me was that, in 2 video outlets which serve the normal run of customers, X-rated videos, pornographic videos, were being sold from cardboard boxes at the cash registers. They were not hired out. They were sold. They were cheap Australian copies.

A friend of mine, who works for an organisation which has a public relations department here in Darwin, recently had to commission some video copies to be made of promotional material that that organisation was distributing to its clients. It is amazing how cheaply this can now be done in videos. It has become a very effective form of promotion. He was telling me just recently how he visited a very large firm in Sydney which contracts to copy material and produce it professionally for whoever asks for it to be done. He went into a room where there were several large 1-inch master tape machines and 800 slaves, as they are called - machines just churning out the copies. You can buy a professionally-copied video in lots of 100 or 200 for about \$7. If you wish to buy them in hard plastic cases, the cases sell for 80 cents. So for about \$8 each, you can get a video copied in lots of 100. He said that, when he was walking around this factory, he noticed that, in the same room with a mass of video tapes of Sunday School lessons for the Australian Bible Society, was some other material which was quite exceptional. He said to me what an appalling prospect it would be if the factory got the material mixed up. These cheap copies are indeed cheap copies, and they are readily available.

I saw cheap copies being sold at 2 outlets for \$20 each. They were pornographic videos. There they were in a cardboard box at the cash register. When the situation in Darwin has reached that stage, I can only commend the government on being prepared to take this action before the Commonwealth and state Attorneys-General agree to a unified position on it. We have gone far enough. We need to put the brakes on.

Mr Speaker, I will quote from a press release issued by the federal Attorney-General in respect of the meeting that was held. It was issued on 26 October 1984:

A meeting of state and Commonwealth ministers responsible for censorship was held in Sydney. Ministers unanimously agreed to revise guidelines for the M and R categories designed to more strictly limit the violence permissible in videos. A majority of ministers agreed to recommend to their respective governments the adoption of the new ER, or extra restricted, category which would be subject to the stringent point of sale and hire controls. Ministers who supported the recommended change were those from the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory was represented by the Attorney-General, Mr Robertson.

Mr Speaker, I will cover briefly some of the categories. I cannot quote completely from the attached classification documents because some of the language used in here, whilst it is classified, is not parliamentary. The ER category is basically this: 'material which includes explicit depictions of sexual acts involving adults but does not include any depiction suggesting coercion or non-consent of any kind'. For those honourable members who have not seen pornographic videos, and I am not among them, some of the pornographic videos available are extremely offensive indeed. They are freely available right now in Darwin. They contain scenes involving simulated pack rape and so on. The explicit sexual acts depicted are accompanied by acts of extreme violence and degradation to the people involved. The X category currently includes those videos.

The reason for introducing this new category of ER is not to load up the system with an additional category. It is a prelude to banning the X category altogether. The new ER category would be those videos involving explicit sexual acts but no violence, non-consent or coercion.

The M or Mature category, which is considered suitable for persons 15 years and over, contains material which is considered likely to disturb, harm or offend those under the age of 15 years. While most adult themes may be dealt with, the degree of exploitiveness of treatment will be determined by what can be accommodated in the classification. Crude language which is excessive, assaultive or sexually explicit is not acceptable in the M classification and so on.

In the R category, the restricted category for 18 years and over, the language may be sexually explicit and or assaultive and the sex may be implied, obscured or simulated depictions of sexual activity and so on. Explicit depictions of violence may be used but not detailed gratuitous depictions of acts of considerable violence or cruelty. The reason I am reading this out is to indicate what trouble you can get yourself into when you start trying to lay down guidelines for these classifications.

Mr Speaker, in the X category, no word or phrase is proscribed. In the M category, some words can be used - and I cannot read them out - if not used excessively. The M category permits simulated sex. In the X category, there are no proscriptions whatever on the language used in the videos. It allows explicit depictions of sexual acts involving adults. It can contain explicit depictions of violence. They are the current

restrictions that apply.

I indicate my support for the new classification of ER. I believe that this adult material should be available for those who need it. I simply read them out to indicate the difficulty and complexity of establishing all of these various criteria that are used to determine the guidelines. I broadly support the government's position and the comments and statements that were made by the former Attorney-General in representing the Territory at the meeting that I described. I believe the situation really has gone far enough.

In conclusion, I simply want to say that, whilst the opposition supports the legislation that is currently before the Assembly, I would prefer to see some further steps taken. I say at the outset that I acknowledge that the proposals that I will put forward now may be impractical and impossible to implement successfully because there are a lot of complex problems associated with them. I simply want to say that, in my view, X-rated material - that is, pornographic videos depicting explicit sexual acts - if it is to be available in the Northern Territory, should be restricted to those outlets which specialise in selling that kind of adult material. I recently had discussions with the managers of the 2 adult material shops that operate in Darwin. The owner/manager of one of them pointed out something to me which I felt was unarguable. He said:

Look, we have to provide special restrictions here. We have to provide special access into the shop. We are regularly visited by the police force. They come in on a regular basis to check our shelves for material which we cannot sell. We have to comply with all of this and yet, 2 doors down the road, you can walk into a normal video shop and buy precisely the same X-rated videos which we are selling in here from a cardboard box on the counter at the cash register.

It is very hard to argue with that. I do not argue with it.

Mr Speaker, my view is that that material should be available in the new category of ER. I think that the current X rating should be banned altogether. The material contained in the new ER category should be restricted to those outlets where there is no question of access by minors, which is the current situation, and there is no problem with having this material mixed up with other material in the shop. I have personally experienced it and I know at least one other member of the Assembly has experienced it. Material was mixed up in the shop and I took something home that turned out to be quite different from what I thought I was getting. The access must be restricted to the extent that it is under the full-time control of the shop management. That is not the case in some video outlets where the material is contained in a cupboard with a sliding door on the main floor of a shop. This applies to a major outlet in the northern suburbs where it is not under the control or supervision of the staff. People have only to slide a door open to obtain access to it.

Mr Speaker, the amendments proposed in this bill largely prevent this from happening but I would like to see it taken some steps further. What has to be avoided are the mistakes that have been made elsewhere in Australia. Whilst the intentions were right, the results were pretty horrific. The minister responsible for the carriage of this bill publicly pointed out, in an article which appeared recently, problems that occurred in South Australia where the government moved to ban X-rated videos altogether. It has banned

them. It gave 6 weeks' notice to the suppliers that it would do this and, as a result, they flooded the market for 6 weeks with the cheapest discount pornographic videos available in the country. Some dealers in X-rated videos took advantage of that situation and were buying, almost as a wholesale operation, those South Australian pornographic videos at \$7 a piece and then re-retailing them for anything up to \$80. It was a boon to the porn industry in some parts of Australia. It had the result of placing such videos permanently in homes all over South Australia. Certainly, that is not a situation which we want to see in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I conclude my remarks by saying that I hope that there will be some further amendments. I will be happy to support them if that is the position that we finally arrive at. I hope that there are further amendments in line with some of the things I have said, although I realise the impracticality of some of the propositions. I conclude by saying that all members on this side of the Assembly will be able to express their own personal feelings on this issue rather than a party view.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition said, the amendment to the Film Classification Act is pretty non-controversial but there are 1 or 2 points that may need to be looked at. I can see the reason for it although I do wonder a little about the parental guidance classification. If a child under 12 went into the Cinema Darwin, would he be stopped from going in under the restriction PG, would it be assumed that he had his parents' permission or should he carry a note? I do not know just what the classification PG covers. Under NRC, it was certainly not recommended but kids could go in. Obviously, it was assumed that they were free to do so. The increased fines that will be imposed on people from cinema houses who break the rules are well in line with what they should be. Obviously, it has to hurt if somebody is breaking this sort of rule. I support amendments to the Film Classification Act.

Mr Speaker, of all the bills that have come before this Assembly during the year that I have been here, this one has caused me the most heartache and concern. I see the bill as touching on the fundamentals of all that I believe in and I know that many of my constituents want me to speak out on it. In fact, it is probably the only issue that has prompted a lot of comment to me, in writing and verbally, from all around the Victoria River electorate. While I see the bill as a genuine attempt on the part of the government to come to grips with a very serious and traumatic problem, I cannot accept the premises on which some persons have based their reasons for believing that it is right for us and the best we can expect for the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, a fair bit has been said in newspapers - and I have a stack of clippings here - about church interference in this matter. It is said that the opposition is coming from the churches. I think that is great. That is what churches are all about: keeping up the moral standards within the community. Being a member of a church, I learned a prayer which we say in this Assembly every day. We stand and commence proceedings with a prayer. That prayer traces back to the very beginnings of Christianity. In fact, I believe that it was left with us by the very founder of Christianity. Mr Speaker, in case some members need to be reminded, the prayer begins: 'Our Father which art in heaven' - this is the way it is said here - 'hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven'. I am quite sure that no one will believe that pornography, however mild the form, can be said to be the will of God. That prayer is the very foundation on which all decisions of Christian government should

be based. Certainly, not everyone in this country is Christian but every religion that I can think of has a very strict moral code and does not see pornography as a means of building a community.

Mr Speaker, in the Weekend Australian of 23-24 February, a short article made the following observations:

The kind of government action which 10 years ago sought to keep Portnoy's Complaint out of the country has disappeared. In its place are federal government instructions to customs officers which are more likely to result in the hard core pornographer being greeted with a smile and a pat on the back.

The same article goes on to quote Mr Peter Bennett, vice-president of the Customs Officers Association: 'Customs officers have been told to see pornography and not to see it'. The philosopher, Lauchlan Chipman, visiting Professor of Jurisprudence at Sydney University, believes that blue movies erode the conception of what it is to be human. It seems that most Australians support this view. According to the same article, an understandably little-publicised poll by McNair Anderson indicated that 77% of people wanted more restrictions on pornographic and violent movies and 3% wanted fewer restrictions.

Mr Speaker, 5 state governments have banned X-rated videos. I heard the Leader of the Opposition say it is 3; I believe it is 5. I am sure that Queensland is included. I do not know the other states but I have been told it is 5. However, it is likely they will accept a new ER category. Senator Gareth Evans admitted last year that 95% of what were formerly X category were to be included under the ER classification. The Leader of the Opposition told us what the X category was and the sorts of things that we could expect to find in it and the sorts of things that are available in the X category now in Darwin. They will probably be included under the new ER classification. Is this what we want for the Northern Territory? Here in the Territory we have a very high rate of crime, violence, murder and rape and a high disregard for the rights of other people. It has been said time and time again by people who should know better that Territorians should be able to do what they want if they are not hurting anyone else. I say that whatever we do, even in the privacy of our own homes, can eventually have a quite serious effect on other people. What we do in our homes is seen by our kids. What do we do? Lock ourselves away? Leave the kids locked in a bedroom? That has an effect on its own. If we have these sorts of things in our homes, it will affect our kids and it will affect the community.

Recently, a young man charged with the murder of a young woman in Darwin was quoted as saying: 'I would do it again. It is no different from killing any other animal'. This shows just how easy it is for someone to become desensitised to cruelty, murder and the abuse of other persons to gain some lopsided personal satisfaction. In the showing of pornography and violence, even in the privacy of one's home, the chances are that the effect will be a general feeling of acceptance and the idea that this is normal behaviour. It is easy to say that parents have the right to allow their children to see whatever they wish. They obviously do; I have seen it happening. The eventual effect will be that children will accept this behaviour in their own lives, and that will certainly affect the people with whom they come into contact. I will put a proviso on what I just said. There are some people who allow their children to see this sort of thing. I believe they are limited in number, but we are looking at a country with 13 or 14 million people. It may be a small percentage of parents who allow their children

to see this sort of thing but it will have an effect on those and that can only spread.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I understand the problems that the Territory would face if it ended up with an act that was out of step with the Commonwealth act or even with the acts in the majority of the states. If ever there has been an act that requires uniformity, this is it. Be that as it may, it does not give the Northern Territory the right to be dragged meekly along in this very important area. To use the argument that pornography will come into the Territory anyway, even if totally banned, does not hold water. There will be certain videos and publications that will be banned. Those unclassifiable publications will be banned as will those that incite terrorism. How do we propose to control them if we find it impossible to control the videos that are not quite so bad?

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that where there is a will there is a way. Very soon we will debate proposed legislation that will ban a long-established practice that has been legal in the Territory for years. We will not base our arguments on any idea of morality or even justice but on cold hard cash. In banning operator X, we will establish operator ER and set up a police unit to catch and punish him. I leave it up to honourable members to work out what piece of legislation that might be. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. If we, as legislators, are genuine in our desire to keep video pornography out of this country, we will legislate accordingly and put every pressure possible on the federal and state governments to do the same. I, for one, do not wish to accept meekly what the federal government wants to dish up for us.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been drawn to my attention that a problem exists with regard to leaders attached to rated children's films. I am told some leaders or trailers, as they might be termed, are totally out of step with the category of the main film. I suspect that some of these leaders are placed there deliberately by producers to start the rot. I am told that there is big money in the industry and I have no doubt that unscrupulous producers are using this method to broaden their market. This legislation must take this into account and ensure that all leaders and trailers of films that are rated suitable for minors are of the same classification as the major film.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I find myself in the position of knowing that what is proposed in this legislation is better than what we have had. We have had nothing and I support it to that point. It goes a long way but not far enough. We have had the opportunity to look at it. It has been sent out to other people and then back to us. There has been considerable discussion and obviously it has been a genuine attempt on the part of the government to do something about the matter. I am firmly of the belief that further reform is necessary.

There have been submissions from all sections of the community on this proposed legislation. I would like to pick up some of the suggested revisions. Firstly, in relation to the composition of the board of 5 - and I realise that the composition proposed in the bill will allow for this without making it compulsory - it should be as evenly balanced as possible with men and women. I think it would be reasonable to stipulate that a minimum of 2 members should be women and 2 should be men. Where possible, the position of chairman should alternate between male and female. I believe that the membership should be rotated frequently. I can find nothing that says that the board members can be moved for anything other than misbehaviour,

going bankrupt or whatever. They should be rotated. However, there should be some form of continuity by standing down 2 members at regular intervals, perhaps every 3 years. I have not put enough thought into how to get through the first period but there would need to be some way to maintain continuity. Hopefully, by this system of rotation, some reality would be retained with regard to what is acceptable to the community at large and what is not acceptable. I cannot find anything in the legislation about board members having a restricted period of tenure in the position.

The federal Attorney-General, Mr Lionel Bowen, announced the reappointment of Mrs Janet Strickland as Chief Censor for a further 3 years on 15 January 1985. Mrs Strickland, in giving evidence to the Senate Select Committee on Video Material on 12 December 1984, stated: 'The board tended not to use the obscenity test and found the term "blasphemous" was a difficult one for the board to interpret'. Mrs Strickland also agreed that she had promoted the X-rated category. I put to honourable members that this would tend to indicate that 3 years is too long a time to be subjected to base and outrageous pornography and violence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wonder whether there is any contradiction between the definitions of 'objectionable publications' in the bill at page 3 and again in clause 29(1)(b) and the proposed definition of 'infant' circulated later in the schedule of amendments at 24.2. The bill refers to infants. It does not say that all infants are under 16 but infants who have not attained the age of 16 years. The amendment describes them as persons who have not attained 18 years. I believe that 18 is the accepted age for an infant under the Interpretation Act. I think that there may be some confusion in that area.

I assume that the exemptions found in clause 4 are proposed because these films are covered by other legislation. Perhaps the Attorney-General could throw some light on that. If it cannot be explained in this way, why are they exempted?

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe this proposed legislation to be a genuine attempt to get a workable act and is possibly someone's perception of the best we can expect. I cannot go along with that. If we can draw the line at one point and say we will not go beyond that, we can draw the line at a more acceptable point and make that the rule. I believe that, if we are to stop the rot, if we are to say that is enough, we must ban both X and ER categories. The ER category will have, in the words of Senator Gareth Evans, '95% of the X-rated movies' stuck right in it. If we do not draw the line, 10 years from now, only 20 years since that Portnoy's Complaint was banned finally, we will be discussing whether or not we should go one step further and accept child pornography, inhuman violence and terrorism because, in the eyes of some, they will then be acceptable.

Be assured, Mr Deputy Speaker, there are people in our world, in our country and in this Territory who desire the breakdown of community sensitivity for their own personal gain whether it be for money or for power. These leeches, these bloodsuckers of the world would like nothing better than to see a debauched populace accepting anything, so long as it is not the desire that we state in our daily prayer in this Assembly. Are we just paying lip service to our ideals or are we genuinely concerned? Are we genuinely concerned as men and women about what our children see and hear? Are we concerned about what our children and their friends and our neighbours' kids will grow up believing in? If we in the Territory want to take advantage of the great way of life that is available to us, if we want to go on enjoying

the ability to exist without being subjected to the disintegration of our society, then we, as members of this Assembly, must take a stand and fight video pornography to the limit.

I call on all honourable members to seek the banning of X and ER-rated videos. I know that we are not discussing ER now but I suspect that it will be incorporated at a later date, as was suggested by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I suggest that we should ban all X and ER-rated violence and pornography and, once and for all, stop the fall of standards in our society.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a few comments in this second-reading debate. I have similar thoughts to those of the honourable member for Victoria River, although I will not be expressing them with quite the same vehemence. There really are many issues involved with the proposal to allow X-rated videos that this bill makes possible and I would like to address some of those. Before I do so, I should point out that I believe that, operationally, the appropriate course of action would have been to ban X-rated videos in the Northern Territory at the same time as they were banned in the majority of the states. My fears are those of the honourable member for Victoria River. I understand that the only places that X-rated videos are not banned are the Northern Territory and that wonderful creche for adults, the Australian Capital Territory.

I am sure that, during this debate, somebody will say that I have changed my mind. I admit quite freely that I have. If some of us did not change our minds once in a while, not much would change. In April last year, not being fully conversant with what was involved with X-rated videos, I suggested in relation to the physical restriction of access to R and X-rated videos that X-rated videos were acceptable. Subsequently, I viewed the 4-Corners program which gave a very clear and unemotional depiction of the question of censorship and what should be censored and what should not. Having seen that particular video, I changed my mind considerably as far as X-rated videos were concerned. For the benefit of honourable members who may not have seen it, I found quite stunning the depiction of simulated violence and actual sex. It was not on the program itself, of course, but what I found even more disturbing was the reaction to it of the censors. It was almost as though they had become desensitised to much of this material.

Mr Deputy Speaker, having seen that, I changed my mind and subsequently adjured the Attorney-General to move against X-rated classifications. That was in October 1984. My feeling was that, operationally, that would have been the most appropriate course of action. It is much easier to keep the reins fairly tight than it is to let them go completely and then try to regain control. If, after a good 12 months of access to X-rated videos, they are suddenly chopped off, there will be many problems. In terms of managing access to these within Northern Territory communities, as is our responsibility, we have done rather less than well by the people of the Northern Territory. That is something that I think should be picked up by the minister responsible for this bill. I can quite reasonably point out to the honourable member for Victoria River that my public opposition to X-rated video tapes does not start from today. I have made my opposition to them quite clear on a number of occasions.

To turn to the principles involved, I think that we have first to look at the history of the availability of pornography, erotica or whatever you choose to call it. There are definitional problems there again. I do not have a clear instinct about the difference between the 2 and, judging from

the comments of the member for Victoria River, he would see no distinction whatsoever - it would all be pornography. I do not have a clear instinct in that regard. Let us just consider that, 20 years ago, there was considerable judicial effort and litigation resulting from the bans on 'Lady Chatterley's Lover', the D.H. Lawrence novel. With respect to that particular novel, I tend to concur with one critic who said, 'I would be happy for my children to read that. My only concern is that it might make them a little too serious'. Clearly, that person was saying that that was a depiction in writing of essentially loving relationships between people, and it is my feeling that that is not unacceptable. I am not sure of the reaction of the honourable member for Victoria River. Perhaps he would like to see the novel 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' removed from the bookshelves. However, I think it is worth while pausing in the context of this debate to see how and, hopefully, why values have changed and why we should take this debate seriously.

The next step was the introduction of the R classification which was supposed to restrict the particular material from being viewed by people aged between 2 and 18. That is the point that we are at today. We are now debating the acceptance of more extreme forms of moving images.

Let us look at some principles for a minute. I think that we have no trouble in determining what is universally accepted as suitable for general exhibition. On the other hand, we have no problem in determining what is universally unacceptable. None of the western societies have any hesitation in banning child pornography. They have no hesitation in banning the so-called 'snuff movies' because they are illegal acts in themselves. There is no problem with determining the unacceptability of those. Bestiality is another example. I found it interesting that, included in the universally unacceptable section, according to the federal Attorney-General, were graphic explanations of arms and explosives. I can imagine that they would be of concern, particularly to people in public life. I sometimes wonder if the man in the street would be so worried about them. Obviously, that sort of material is being banned for quite different reasons. It is not being banned for reasons of morality in the same way as depictions of sexual activity or depictions of actual violence are banned.

Let us come into the middle ground, Mr Deputy Speaker. It seems to me that our concern, on one hand, is with R-rated videos that permit simulated sex and simulated violence, and X-rated videos that permit actual sex and simulated violence. I believe that we are fundamentally allowing human beings to be degraded by allowing the depiction of actual sex and simulated violence in the way explained on the 4-Corners program to which I referred. Perhaps some of my instincts in that regard stem from similar questions of religious background in the way that the member for Victoria River explained. I like to keep a fairly clear distinction between the moral principles one applies in public life as opposed to personal moral principles and spiritual life as it were. This is perhaps an artificial distinction and it is right that our deliberations be blessed in the way they are. But I think that, if we are legislating for the community as a whole, we must try to seek out principles that will be accepted sufficiently widely in the community. I think that religious questions need to be kept out of that in order to ensure that the resulting legislation is respected. There are a number of questions involved in that too because there is the matter of black marketeering. One of the concerns about not legislating in a way that follows the community's wishes is that it permits an uncontrolled black market which may lead to a worse situation than permitting certain classifications. I am not defending X-rated videos. I am opposed to them but I think that we have to be very clear about the various arguments that are involved.

However, as legislators, we have a responsibility not just to follow but, in some sense, to lead. I think that, to some extent, we have been derelict in that regard. I have a very strong instinct that we need to give leadership in this regard and that X-rated videos, in these terms, ought to be banned. In case I appear to be suggesting that R-rated offerings are acceptable, let me say that I believe that, with much of the R-rated material, the people who perform in them are degraded and that much of the simulated violence that is involved is not important for telling a story. The depictions are essentially gratuitous and, when you add simulated sex to that, I have no hesitation in saying that many of the R-rated offerings are somewhat less than desirable.

My original interest in this issue was raised by going down to the local video shop with my own kids. I must admit that I find it pretty hard to take when I see R-rated offerings side by side with Mary Poppins and Mother Goose because that very juxtaposition gives kids the idea that really there is not much difference, only 1 letter different here or there. I think there ought to be a far greater physical separation of R-rated videos from other videos in the stores that display them right now.

It is probably instructive in the context of this debate to mention the concern that many sections of the women's movement have about video pornography. Quite clearly, the opinion seems to be that it is essentially reinforcing sexual stereotypes. My impression is that the depictions are of women being put into situations over which other people have control. Personally, I do not find that abhorrent exactly but, if we are looking forward to a world in which people share equal human relationships and are able to establish rich and full relationships with each other, these sorts of offerings do not serve in that regard.

Mr Speaker, I have attempted to give my opinion, firstly, of what is operationally desirable in terms of how we handle this issue as a legislature. I have attempted to look, from an historical perspective, at changing attitudes to pornography and erotica. I have attempted to discuss in those terms some of the principles that determine acceptability and unacceptability. In closing, I want to reinforce the point that I wish to see these particular X-rated videos banned. I am afraid, Mr Speaker, we may have missed the boat.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, regarding the bill before us, I would make 2 points. Firstly, this term PG is not widely known. It is to replace NRC which, over the years, has been quite clear - not recommended for children. PG - parental guidance - will take some time to sink in. Although we have increased the fines for breaking the law here, I wonder just how well it will be policed or whether it will be one of those matters where it is far easier not to create a scene but just to turn a blind eye.

The bill which has created the greatest interest is the Classification of Publications Bill, which includes videos - this new phenomenon which has burst onto the scene over the last few years. I was basing my thoughts on this in relation to exactly the same article that the member for Victoria River raised, the one called 'Government Silence on Porn Explosion' by Bill West in the Weekend Australian of 23 February. I commend the member for Victoria River. He may have become a little emotional but I see this as an emotional topic and it deserves to be treated with emotion. I have not seen very much of this sort of movie. What I have seen was by accident when I walked into somebody's home when there was one on. But I can read. I know what is being described and it is not for me. There are many other people who feel exactly the same way.

Over the last 10 years, there has been an explosion in pornography. I think the honourable Minister for Mines and Energy said that, before 1960, there were virtually no complaints. There was no need to classify material because it was all acceptable. It may have been a bit corny but it was good stuff. In the last 10 years, from the time the federal government tried to keep Portnoy's Complaint out, we have let just about everything in.

Last year the federal government allowed X-rated videos to be imported. The honourable member read out a section which I felt was worth reading out too: customs officers are told to see pornography and not see it; turn the blind eye; wink at it; and let it come in. We are now somewhat out on a limb on the matter of pornography. Queensland never did allow it. Other states, perhaps through political expediency, have done their little surveys of how people feel about things and are starting to realise that people do not want this particular material. I have spoken to 1 or 2 people who believe that X material should be available. They definitely do not want it for their children. That would be the last thing that they would want. The very fact that it is around means that kids will get hold of it. That is as sure as night follows day.

We are proposing a step forward. In this bill, we propose to get it off the shelves where it is freely available. I do not own a video but we hired one for a while. My wife wanted to see some particular videos on music that people had sent to her. We decided one evening to stop by the local store and select a couple of videos for the night. I was absolutely astounded. I found no more than 10 titles which I felt were for family entertainment. The descriptions on the covers of some of those videos were enough to make your hair sizzle. There it is, freely for your kids to read. I am afraid I do not want it for my kids, nor do I want it for myself. We settled for little old Steptoe and Son - good old family entertainment. It is a little bit ribald at times. We all sat down to watch it and within 2 or 3 minutes we were into a strip show. There was absolutely no indication of that. Do not get me wrong. I appreciate the female form as well as any other male in this Assembly. If anybody reckons he does not, there is something a little bit wrong. But I am afraid it is not what I want to drape in front of my kids. As the honourable member for MacDonnell said, I felt it was degrading to the woman in question.

The problem with the states seems to be that, after making big announcements about banning X-rated videos, they are starting to go soft. Under the ER classification, 95% of what is available now in the X classification will still be available. That is according to Senator Evans. If it is 95% today, I do not think it will be very long before it will be 100%. People will become desensitised and dehumanised, which is a very important word. They will accept these things. I think the ABC is an example of this. Only 5 or 10 years ago you would never see on the ABC the things you see these days. It is sneaking in. It is like taxation. Sneak it in little by little and gradually it gets accepted. Try and double taxation and hear what people say. I wish the government would try it, not that we would have any money left. If it tried it, it would have a riot on its hands.

The article that I mentioned said: 'The state of the art here in Australia is that we produce virtually everything that is going'. That was rather enlightening to me because, naive as I am, I had a funny feeling that all this stuff was coming in from the United States. We have a great industry going ourselves, according to this article. It covers every angle and every obscenity that you can think of: young children in sex acts to snuff movies, or thrill murders, as they are called.

I well remember seeing Lawrence of Arabia for the first time. Members may recall how Lawrence saved the life of one fellow by going across the desert and picking him up on a camel. That same fellow killed somebody because of a family feud. The only way of stopping bloodshed between 2 groups within Lawrence's troops was for this fellow to be executed. Lawrence raised his pistol and shot this fellow. He was describing it to some of his British officers. They asked him about it and he said: 'I enjoyed it'. That was real shock value to me. Whether these things are staged or whether they are real, they are still horrific.

Apparently we are making deplorable material freely available. It is the product of sick minds for sick minds.

The article also mentioned that the US Senate held an inquiry into paedophilia, or child pornography, and Australia received a very dishonourable mention. Apparently, there is a sex syndicate working in Australia which is using young Filipino boys who are brought to Australia under the delightful concept of foster parent support groups. That is lovely stuff. It goes on to say that 100 people in Melbourne were charged over the last year for committing sexual offences with children. It brings to mind a particular case in the Territory in which someone in a trusted position was involved. One should not reflect on it too much. I find it very abhorrent. I believe many other people were not very rapt with the decisions. As I said, these things are the products of sick minds. They are for people with sick minds. They are made for a quid. I wonder whether we should not consider some form of treatment. We try and treat our alcoholics. These people might need to be treated too.

The view that pornography is harmless is definitely under challenge. This article mentions that research by the American Psychological Association shows that pornography gradually desensitises both men and women towards sexual violence. That is something which many of us instinctively feel is the case anyway. But it is good that there is some scientific evidence from this association which points that way. As the honourable member for Victoria River said, Chipman made the statement: 'Blue movies erode the conception of what it is to be human'. Chipman is indeed supported.

According to a McNair Anderson poll, 77% of those sampled wanted greater restrictions on this material. I believe that decent Australians, who might occasionally have seen some of this material, would be prepared to do without it. Only 3% wanted fewer restrictions. That worries me because I wonder how much further we can go. It can only be into child pornography and snuff-type thrillers. If you extrapolate those figures, about 1 in 33 people in Australia wants this absolutely sick material, and that is worrying. Perhaps the poll was only small but it is certainly of concern to me that 1 out of 33 has a sick mind. I am glad that members are expressing their own points of view on this. I would say that the whole Assembly should take cognisance of what the community wants, be prepared to set a standard which is higher than what some would call the community norm and take some positive and effective action. Of course, it is very easy for us to say that we have done this, that and the other and there it is in legislation.

I will throw a little herring into the can and mention that terrible word 'abortion'. We have legislation about which the ordinary person, on reading it, would say: 'That is pretty good stuff. There must be 2 doctors who consider that the person's life is in danger etc'. When I first read it, it sounded pretty good to me too but I have come to realise that we were

possibly making the mistake that all doctors are honourable, highly moral people who have a considerable care for life and that they would do this sort of thing only if a person's life was indeed in great danger. It only takes 2 who are desensitised, and I use that word very strongly, who are prepared to give abortions and there is abortion on demand. Believe me, Mr Deputy Speaker, I have heard a doctor in our fair town described by some nurses and social workers, who have been present at some of these operations, as acting like an animal. I certainly shall not be mentioning any names but this person was totally desensitised.

I believe that people expect firm action and strong leadership from this Assembly. We should not be waiting for Canberra. There is this battle over the ER rating which embraces 95% of X-rated videos. I believe we must try to stir the states and speak with a clear voice, without any uncertainty in it, for the banning of X-rated material. That is the position I take. The electorate expects a firm lead. We will collect some flak but who cares? Let us stand up and be counted for the moral fabric of the life of people here in the Territory. I am against the X classification. I would prefer that it be banned and I state that categorically.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, my views on this matter have been covered by a number of other people. The matters I wish to speak on have probably been fairly adequately covered by the Leader of the Opposition. It would appear that the pendulum has swung and we have moved from the fairly liberal attitudes of the 1970s into a more conservative era in the mid 1980s. I would caution all honourable members against overreaction to what are perceived as being community requirements. I know that it is our role and our obligation to reflect community standards and community requirements in this Assembly, but I would caution honourable members against overreaction, particularly in a matter as sensitive as this.

Not everybody shares my particular view of the world or need necessarily share the view of the world of anyone in this Assembly. It is very difficult to impose a moral standard upon persons who do not happen to agree with you. I can remember the debates back in the 1970s about what constitutes art and what constitutes pornography. Undoubtedly, those debates will go on for time immemorial. It would seem to me that what we are basically discussing is the encroachment of technology and the availability of this material rather than whether or not it has existed in the past. My reading of history is very limited but it is my understanding that we are confronted with no more than people have been confronted with many times in the past. In trying to formulate some degree of control or indeed reflect community standards, we perhaps need to reflect on history. I do not think that anybody in this Assembly would suggest for a moment that we go back to putting doilies around the legs of piano stools. I think that the Victorian era has taught us a lesson in that regard. I don't adhere to the argument that the control of materials within reasonable standards, whatever those standards may turn out to be, contributes greatly one way or another to the prevention of or the control of crime. Indeed, the Victorian era spawned some of the more notable authors of erotica and some of the more gross characters - one was the notorious Jack the Ripper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that the Northern Territory community, as perhaps does the broader community of Australia, expects something of its legislators. However, I hope that this Assembly will not overreact. Certainly, some legislative initiative is perceived to be needed and it is my feeling that the Leader of the Opposition's response to this bill and what he would see as a first step would seem to be eminently sensible: to restrict the access of children to these materials. These materials should be controlled in much the same way as other visual material, such as magazines

and books, is controlled at the moment. We have a Classification of Publications Act. In the time since it was enacted, it has controlled the various publications in the Northern Territory with a high degree of credibility. The video film is an audio-visual medium and the same principles need to be applied.

The various moral attitudes of individuals in this Assembly will in the end mean very little to the people whom they represent or other persons in the Northern Territory. It is not a question of whether or not this material exists or will continue to exist because, quite certainly, if it is driven far enough underground, another thriving black market will appear as has happened in the past. With those few words, I suggest that what is being proposed by the government in this legislation is to be supported. I hope that the government does not overreact or react in a knee-jerk way to some of the speeches that have been made in this debate. To me it would seem to be a shame to move from a time from where reality has been accepted - as grim and as ugly as that reality may be - to a period of shoving one's head in the sand and pretending that that will make it go away. I hope that the government's bill enjoys the support of this Assembly. I look forward to its final form. I believe that amendments to it will be proposed. As I have said already, the need to restrict access to this material is perhaps more imperative than making value judgments on what it may contain.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Undoubtedly, on a subject like this, there are as many views as there are speakers. The important thing for us to keep in mind is that, in the final analysis, if it were possible to put the range of views on a scale of 1 to 100, I am quite certain in my own mind that the distribution of those views would fall within probably a range of 10% and, in fact, 98% of views would fit there.

I think it is important for us to keep in mind that this bill is really about 2 things. One is the actual classification of material and the second is the access to each of the categories. As has been acknowledged, currently we have no control so there is no point in our debating points such as those that have been raised earlier that relate to the current situation and the current classifications. The whole thing needs to be tied together. I am sure we all share the view of the joint meeting of Attorneys-General on what tightening is needed in each classification. We see it as correct to get rid of what we all term 'nasties', grossly pornographic material. The Leader of the Opposition read from that proposal. In simple terms, what we will end up with is the removal of undesirable material from the R and X classifications but also from another classification, M. Ms that I have seen were enough to curl the hair of most people, never mind those under-age people who are permitted, under the act, to view them of their own free will.

As I see it, there is a need for national uniformity on classifications. There is no point at all in having our own internal system of putting under an R classification, for instance, what is banned in R across the border. With transport and communications and even Australia Post, if you are game, the work of setting a standard different from others would soon be undone without any problem at all. When it comes to the practicalities of classification, the thousands of items of material that need to be classified would be beyond the scope of as many people as you could get to offer their services on a local board. I am quite sure that, if we all took our turn at participating in the classification and censorship business here, the greater majority of Territorians would be bent and twisted by the time we had finished. There is no doubt that the material that is coming forward and is put aside as unclassifiable is enough to desensitise the censors. At the

Commonwealth level, censors are rotated for that very reason. There is the capacity to bring in people who are qualified to make realistic assessments of what material belongs where. However, it would be ridiculous for us to try to duplicate that system. I think that is an important point for us to keep in mind.

We have heard a lot of emotional talk about pornography and about X-rated movies. When we come to the crunch, by the time we have finished amending these various classification guidelines, we will need to keep in mind exactly what we are talking about. In simple terms, X-modified will be explicit sex or erotica-type material but excluding explicit violent material. I will talk about that in a moment. To my mind, there is no point in our trying to accept compromises by renaming that particular classification.

One point I would like to make is that I believe it is an absolute nonsense to rename X-modified as ER for the very reason that classification X raises an emotional response the minute you say it to people, even from members of this Assembly. I believe that the rating X should be retained because it means something to parents. If they see a cassette tape with a big X on it, they know it is stuff they should not take anywhere near the children, or allow their children to have. It is very clear what it means. As the member for Sadadeen said, what is in the lettering NRC versus PG? I should address myself to that as well.

I will have a little beef about the violence content. I think that is something that we should address ourselves to more vigorously than the sexual content. I am not suggesting for 1 minute that the Commonwealth censors are not correct in excluding all of the grotty debased material but that, at the same time, they should be removing the material that has such an impression on young people, in particular, and on many adults, which has a profound effect on the community. I refer to explicit violent material. Tongue in cheek, Mr Deputy Speaker, I would rather see the kids in my neighbourhood with their shorts around their ankles than clobbering each other over the head. I think that is the kind of comparison we are talking about.

Mr Bell: Can you just explain that in pictures?

Mr B. Collins: Just ignore the honourable member for MacDonell.

Mr FINCH: I will explain for the honourable members' benefit, Mr Deputy Speaker, that, if they have their shorts around their ankles, they cannot run and they cannot clobber each other on the head.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if we remove the R and X ratings altogether, aside from suggestions of black markets - and that is a reality in Canada - which I do not take as a major argument, there are still times when explicit material is used; for example, in sex education in schools. I would suggest that, if we remove R and X, we would be faced with the ludicrous situation of having to classify educational sexual material in an area of its own.

The second matter for consideration is accessibility. I believe the act, with its restrictions and controls on labelling and the provision of separate areas for X-rated material, answers all the concerns of the community, concerns not only of those people who have gone to the trouble of contacting me but people I have actually prodded comment from. Until about 3 weeks ago, the only representations I had had in response to the honourable member's appeal for comment were from either church-based or women's groups. While they are valuable comments, and I accept them, I believe that the community as a whole

needs to be quite aware of what we are talking about. I do not have any monopoly on wisdom and neither do these particular groups.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have some points which I am sure the regulations can take up. In regard to the labelling, I believe there is a necessity to show dates of classifications so that people can make their own checks and ensure the material is classified legally. That is one of the provisions of the act. I also believe that there ought to be facilities within each outlet for people to check, at random, what is classified and what is not. That can be covered simply by making it compulsory for Gazettes to be held by each shop outlet. There is no doubt that the regulations covering labels, opaque covers etc are warranted. I believe that the requirement for X-rated material to be in a separate area should also apply to R-rated material. If those 2 categories are kept separate and away from children or people who do not have any desire to be confronted with them, that will answer a legitimate concern of the community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, some of the other concerns that have come forward include advertising. This is a matter I have taken up with the honourable minister in relation to cinemas as well. When my children ask me if they can see a film at the cinema, usually on Saturday night, I need to know what is on and what it is about. The almost total absence of classification labelling in newspaper advertisements is totally undersirable. When we get down to it, the onus for all of these things comes back to the parents. As responsible parents, we need to know the contents of videos and films at cinemas and so on. Other concerns include TV advertising and trailers.

There is no way that we can solve the problem of the irresponsible parent. If we look at what is happening on the education scene, what is happening in relation to drugs, crime in the community and social behaviour generally, we realise that we cannot legislate for and implement an effective and practical means of solving all the evils of the world. I think that this legislation, together with the revision of the guidelines by the Commonwealth, will go as far as we can go in protecting the innocent and the protectable. There is no point, however, in our being moralistic about this issue without being realistic at the same time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, diverse and emotional views have been put forward. I am quite confident that this legislation, the forthcoming regulations and the consideration of points of view put forward by honourable members will meet 90% or more of the community's broad concerns.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, first I will address the Film Classification Amendment Bill with specific reference to the parental guidance classification. Whilst it may create a uniform classification around Australia, I am not so sure that it will assist parents any more than did the old classification. The new classification relies on parental guidance for what children will see at the cinemas. This cry is coming from all corners of society at the moment - that parents ought to have more control over what their children are doing. For that reason, and probably for that reason alone, I think that the classification is a good one.

However, I have some difficulty with how parents make up their minds about what might be suitable for their particular child. Let us face it, that is exactly what the classification is all about. It is trying to say to the parent: 'Have a look at what show is on at the movies. Have a look at your own child. You know what that particular child is able to absorb so you decide whether or not that child ought to go and see the film'. I fail to

see how parents are able to give that guidance unless they first see the movie. Realistically, I do not think that that will happen. They cannot even guide their children by sitting beside them in the movie house because they do not really know whether the next scene will affect the children or not. I worry a little about whether the parental guidance classification will be more effective than the old classification. However, I applaud the fact that it is saying: 'Come on parents, you do have a role to play'.

I now turn to the Classification of Publications Bill. A new monster is before us and it is not just that it is now possible to make pornography more readily available for people to view at home but also that video tapes and video machines have had an enormous impact on society. I wonder how many children spend hours in front of television sets rather than doing homework or simply being involved in healthy, physical activities outside. Aside from that, obviously they enable us to watch various types of movies in the comfort of our own homes. Some of those movies are on sale or hire at the moment and they are given an X-classification. Others are available through various means and certainly find their way into homes. They are the ones that people refer to as 'hard porn', the ones that are only available through the black market.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe one of the things that this legislation and, for that matter, censors throughout Australia must really look hard at - and the Leader of the Opposition touched on it - is properly identifying what types of films are available within each classification. I think that is the major task at hand when it comes to censorship. Even if it is in the parental guidance classification, parents should be able to be confident that a statement from censors classifies a movie far more tightly than is the case today. I certainly lean on the side that X-rated movies ought to be available. I think the classification ought to remain and the other classifications of R and so on down the line ought to be there as well. My appreciation of the X rating certainly leaves out what I believe to be hard porn, such as violence, sexual violence and all the other things. I think that depictions of explicit sex certainly should be able to be seen by those adults who want to see them. Nobody sticks them down your throat; they are there if you want to go and get them.

I think the crux of what I want to say today relates to how we control the distribution of those videos once they have been classified. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the business of hiring out X-rated videos - and no doubt R rated as well - should be through what are commonly called 'love shops'. I believe that is not the way to go because the result would be a proliferation of love shops. The fact of the matter is that there is a market for what we now call X and R-rated movies. I am sure there are enormous profits being made throughout Australia by people hiring and selling R-rated movies. If we simply take them from the video outlets now and put them into the love shops, there will be a large increase in the number of love shops around the shopping areas.

I believe that control ought to be within the normal video outlets. Firstly, the person should indicate to the staff in the shop that he is looking for an R or an X-rated movie. The staff should then take the person to a separate room within the premises. That room ought to be securely fastened or locked at all times.

Mr Bell: At all times?

Mr DALE: At all times except when you enter it. Inside that room, the

movies could be displayed in the usual way. They should then be placed into a plain, opaque wrapper or cover that should have on it only the particular rating or classification of that movie. It can then be taken outside, the room can be locked again and the rental transaction can take place. I do not think you need to remove the whole deal from the present video shop setup to control it properly. It can be done within existing premises.

The Leader of the Opposition touched on the cardboard boxes. He later mentioned the fact that the black market in the various states that have banned X-rated movies has certainly stimulated activity as far as the availability of these movies is concerned. There is no doubt about that. I cannot see any logic in allowing a movie to be sold but banning its hire. If people have an X-rated movie permanently in a house as against an X-rated movie that might be there for 12 or 8 hours, I cannot see the logic in that.

Mr Speaker, I am cynical enough to believe that there is a very clear and defined market for these X and R-rated movies. To ban videos within those classifications will encourage a black market. There is no doubt that these things are available and there will continue to be a market for them. We must realise that those market forces are there. We can argue constantly about the moral feelings of various people within society but the simple fact is that there is a market. I can remember selling newspapers in Melbourne as a boy. Depraved old fellows would show me all sorts of photographs. We can say that we are going to stop it from happening and we can dream all we like but the best approach is to keep it under some sort of sensible control by way of legislation and by securing its distribution.

Mr VALE (Braitling): Mr Speaker, I am not going to speak very long because most of what I wanted to say has already been said most eloquently by the last speaker and by the honourable member for Wagaman. I am probably a little bit older than the member for MacDonnell who spoke about Portnoy's Complaint. In my day, the book with woolly pages that did the rounds of the school was Peyton Place. I remember some comedian on television one night taking off the weather forecast and saying it is such and such a temperature in Tokyo, such and such a temperature in London, such and such a temperature in New York and it is as hot as hell in Peyton Place. I read Peyton Place a couple of years ago just to see what all the excitement was about when I was at school. It just shows how, over the years, standards and public acceptance alter.

The member for Victoria River and other speakers talked about the desensitisation of the human race. What happens to the censors who must view the videos? Will we have to lock them up at the end of their term of office? How do we reverse the procedure? Are we going to have a great chase if they get out in the community late at night? I think probably the base line is what our kids can get at. This is the real concern.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about states banning these videos and trucks loading up with them and taking them to a state that has yet to ban them. I guess you could say that Australia at present is witnessing the great video chase. Queensland is the state that I would have to regard as the most hypocritical of the lot. It has the most conservative legislators in the country. In a press report some months back, the state Attorney-General said that he was so embarrassed and ashamed whilst viewing some of these videos at a conference of Attorneys-General that he had to get up and walk out. I was in Mackay a few weeks ago at the North Australia Development Conference. One morning, someone said: 'Did you see the blue movies in the motel last night?' I said: 'No, I got back fairly late'. I thought that

they must have been coin slot machines or something like that. I went back next night and, in this motel on the main drag in Mackay, on came the blue movie at 9.30 pm. There was not only one; there were 3 or 4, right into the early hours of the morning. I know because I checked it out. I checked with some Queenslanders at the conference the next morning and they said that they had them right across Queensland. You cannot tell me that the bright, alert Queensland Premier and his Attorney-General do not know that their home state is showing X-rated - and I mean X-rated - movies to every hotel guest across the state.

Mr Speaker, I presented a petition last week, as indeed did the honourable member for Sadadeen and some other members. I was a little offended by the comments of the NT News the next day. From the way it was worded - and like the Leader of the Opposition, I did not have a very good formal education - I am not sure whether it was having a shot at the petitioners or at me. I regard it as my right to present a petition regardless of its content. I also believe that it is a democratic right of anyone who lives in my electorate or anyone else in the Territory to ask me to present a petition. I take offence at the wording in that journalist's column.

Mr Speaker, one matter that does concern me is that of labelling. Other members have spoken about labelling with initials - PG, R and X. Whatever the vote on this bill, I believe any matter that contains offensive words or scenes must be clearly labelled: 'Caution, contains language and scenes which may be offensive'. I will give you an example, Mr Speaker. My office is in the Head Street complex near a video shop. My kids asked for some money to hire a video one afternoon. They took \$5 and went down and obtained what I believe is a popular video. It was one with John Travolta called Saturday Night Fever. They took it home and were watching it. It was only by luck that I walked in because the language on it included the magic words. There are 2 versions. There is one for kids or there is a PGR. I do not think even the PGR version should have that language. That aside, I think it must be clearly indicated that, regardless of the classification, it contains scenes or language which might be offensive if that is the case.

Mr Speaker, I have one final comment. As I said, other speakers have spoken much better than I could speak on this legislation. I believe the bottom line is the kids. As long as my kids cannot view any of those scenes of sex or violence that are depicted on many of the videos today, then I will be most happy. I believe the R and X-rated videos should be taken off the front shelf and displayed in rooms which are available only to mature adults.

Mr HANRAHAN (Flynn): Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition chose wisely to speak first because he had the opportunity of having first say on a subject that has been covered rather diversely in today's debate. I am sure he is sitting there at the moment saying: 'Do I have to hear it all again?' I will not be spending too long on the subject but, if there were 2 speakers whose comments I did welcome, they were the members for Nhulunbuy and MacDonnell. They both spoke about overreaction and changing values. I believe that it is worth reiterating the comments on the changing values of our society today. Only the other day, I was having a conversation about the news service that we watch every night. When we talk about X-rated, R-rated and ER-rated classifications, could I draw honourable members' attention to the news service that we all watch. As a youth 10 years ago, I can remember never having seen a dead body in my whole life. Now I can watch the news any day of the week and I see dead bodies, mutilated bodies, the results of train crashes, accidents, murders, rapes etc. It is all over the screen. It is in the prime time viewing period of any television station

in Australia. It is not rated. It is not classified. It is there for you to sit down with your wife, your kids and your grandparents to see it. That represents a changing society and changing values.

Overreaction is possibly what we need most of all to address ourselves to tonight. Society today is diverse. There are different classes. Everybody has varying opportunities. Even the house you live in, your work opportunities and the social pressures from your peers determine the way you grow up. There are many in today's world who have not had the advantage that most of us have had of a basic Christian upbringing and a good education. Those are the people whom we may be trying to protect.

Mr Speaker, in listening to the debate tonight, I asked myself 3 questions. Who are we dealing with? Where does it break down? That is in relation to what we are trying to introduce. What are our responsibilities? It may be a bit glib to use the word 'our'. What are my responsibilities? We are dealing with a minority. I think that has been alluded to by every person who has spoken tonight. We are dealing with a minority. Why does it break down? It breaks down because of control. The control is something we also need to address ourselves to. We can legislate to put it in a dark corner and therefore we are addressing the problem for a minority that wants to go and get it. What you cannot control and what you will never control is a member of that minority going home and showing it to his kids. We will never stop that. It is another aspect of the black market except that it is open.

What are our responsibilities? Once again I refer it back to myself. I see it as my responsibility. It is to implement the maximum control to protect the child, the unwary and the innocent. In that context I do not agree with the total banning of X-rated movies nor am I against the introduction of an ER classification. Quite simply, it is a matter of control. That is all we can address ourselves to because, no matter what controls we introduce, we will not stop that person who really wants to get hold of that movie from going and getting it. If he wishes to be irresponsible, then it is the same situation as the drink-driver. You can have 0.08 and 0.05 but you cannot stop him drinking. You will never stop some people from doing something irresponsible.

Mr Speaker, as I see my role as a parliamentarian, it is to endeavour to introduce a system of legislation that, to the best of our ability, will establish effective controls and prevent the child, the unwary and the innocent from seeing something that I am sure we all abhor.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): I will be brief, Mr Speaker. I have listened with interest to the debate this evening on these 2 bills. A couple of things have come through very clearly to me. Probably they need to be addressed in another place but certainly this is a good place to start. The trauma and the public debate that is going on in this country today about the accessibility of unsuitable films to people in the community, and particularly the young people, must clearly be sheeted home to the federal government. I am not saying the federal Labor government because this matter did not come to pass within the last 2 years. It has come to pass over a long time. I believe that we are probably reaping the harvest of having had a man in charge of customs many years ago called Don Chipp because that is probably when the rot set in.

What we have in Australia today is a situation where, because of the incapacity of the Commonwealth to deal with the issue of censorship and the

circulation of unsuitable films and material for consumption by the community, particularly the young community, the responsibility is being foisted onto the states. In a desperate attempt to try and resolve the matter, they are coming to grips with the impractical problems of controlling something that is outside their control because the censorship, the customs control and the distribution through Australia Post all lie with the Commonwealth.

Mr Speaker, we have had it pointed out a dozen times today that 6 states have banned X-rated videos. I do not know what sort of signal the Commonwealth needs from the states to put itself into gear. If ever there was a signal for the Commonwealth to do something, this is it. It is an indication of how the people of the country feel because they are 6 very divergent states in terms of points of view and interest. They cover all the political spectrum. The answer to this whole problem lies with the Commonwealth.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say that one of the great difficulties that I have as a legislator, a citizen of the community and a father of 3 children, 2 of them teenagers, is that I find it almost impossible to understand the classification system. I do not even know whether to go to the pictures any more with my children because I do not know what is coming on the screen next. I think somebody else said that earlier. I went and saw a picture recently that was classified as an M movie. My daughter is 16 so we went and saw this movie. It turned out to be one of the best movies of the year in terms of audience viewing. The theme tune of the movie was in the hit parade for a few weeks. It was a great movie. But when I went inside and had to sit through it with my daughter, it was one of the most uncomfortable periods of my life. Because it was based around the services, I expected that it might have had a couple of rough war scenes or activity of that nature. On the contrary, there was some pretty explicit sex in it which I found distasteful. I did not particularly like sitting in a theatre with my daughter, condoning her presence.

Mr Speaker, when we start to talk about what we do with R, with X and with M, I do not know what to do with any of them because most of it is pretty terrible viewing from the point of view of youth. That is the problem that we are going to find ourselves dealing with tomorrow when we conclude this legislation because, while we will make it more difficult for some of this material to get into the public arena, a great deal of it will still be floating around that should not be there. I do not know where to draw the line.

The consensus that I have picked up this afternoon is that most people are not happy with the present state of affairs for a range of reasons. They are certainly not happy. When I say most people, I do not mean just the members of this Assembly but most people in the community whom I have come in contact with. People are very concerned. They are concerned not so much for themselves as adults who can take it or leave it or watch it and not be worried about it. They are concerned for their children and the exposure their children may get to this material without their consent or guidance.

There is also a very serious need for remedial action to put to rest some of the fears that people in the community have. I am not absolutely sure what that remedial action ought to be. Total banning would seem to me to be very difficult in a practical sense and a fine cornerstone on which to base the next episode of organised crime in the Northern Territory. I do not see that as possible.

Mr Speaker, what I believe concerns people is the presentation and the

availability of this material to just about anybody in the community who wants it. In Tennant Creek, if you want to buy an air ticket, you have to walk past racks of it. It is in the BP service station in Darwin. It is in the bread shop. It is just about anywhere you want to go. How do we come to grips with the presentation of and the access to this material? The other part of the question is : how do we police it? How do we determine what we want to do? Some time tomorrow, we will have to address the answers to those questions.

One point I would come back to is that of changing standards. I accept that there are changing standards on a whole range of issues in the community. But I have a strong belief in my fellow man in that there are general bounds of common decency that do not change terribly much over the years. They are the sorts of expressions of decency and general behaviour that most people expect of their fellow man.

Setting aside the sex, there are movies floating around which simulate people being chopped up by chainsaws. I just do not know how material like that gets on the market. It is revolting for adults and it must be revolting for children. It is the sort of thing that I do not believe changing standards will ever find acceptable. I can accept that some community standards may change and individuals may have tremendous variance in what they find fun, acceptable, unpleasant or whatever. But there are certain basic standards that just will not change. They are the things that we ought to be addressing ourselves to when we conclude this debate in the next 24 hours.

I am one of those people in the community who would be quite happy - and I say it without any shame or reservation at all - to ban X and R material and do whatever in the hope and the knowledge that that would solve all the problems of the world and that we would never see any more of those films about. I could then go about not worrying about whether my children were being exposed to it. What that does not take account of are those people in the world who make an awful lot of money illegally out of people like me who are bright eyed and bushy tailed about the things that legislators can do simply by passing acts. Tomorrow we must conclude this legislation in a way that I believe will reduce the availability and the presentation of this material. We will never make it acceptable to the community because most of it is not. But we may, in the final analysis, prevent damage being done to people who should not have access to the sorts of videos and printed material which are being made available and who could be affected unreasonably by that at a very young age.

Mr Speaker, I will be supporting the bill and some of the amendments tomorrow. I just hope that the effort that we make, although it will not be to the total satisfaction of everybody in the community, goes a long way to reducing the impact that some of this material has.

Debate adjourned.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I move that leave of absence be granted to the honourable Minister for Lands, Primary Production and Conservation. He is away interstate on business associated with his portfolio.

Leave granted.

JUSTICES AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 66)

Continued from 22 August 1984.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I must say that the previous debate typified for me the most predominant feeling that I have when I see porn and that is how boring it is. That was not an aspersion on anyone's contribution. It just went on for a very long time.

Mr Speaker, the bill contains 3 amendments. There is an expansion of the list of JPs to include all judges, magistrates, clerks and assistant clerks of the court. There is a relaxation of the requirements of whose presence is necessary for the taking of the oath of office. It can now be sworn before the Attorney-General or a magistrate or before a Commissioner for Oaths if you live more than 30 km from Darwin or Alice Springs. Vacation of office provisions are now automatic if a person is bankrupt or mentally defective. Before there had to be removal from the roll once those events had occurred. In addition, responsibility for keeping the roll of justices is transferred from the Crown Solicitor to the head of the Department of Law. The opposition considers this to be far more appropriate.

The amendments are uncontentious and in our view supportable. The last 2 amendments streamline procedures, while the first amendment will assist in court processing when documents require the signature of a JP. The opposition supports the legislation.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, I support this bill as well because I am very much aware of the need in society to have JPs to sign documents from time to time. This bill will allow a great deal more flexibility and efficiency in my view in the appointment of Justices of the Peace. It makes sure that justices are more readily available where and when they are most needed.

Clause 5, particularly, makes reference to the court area where there is a great deal of paperwork to be processed and quite often justices are required. The provision that people who are appointed to a position thereby become justices is a wise move and will greatly improve efficiency. Previously, the process was much longer and the efficiency of that office was downgraded, which caused a great deal of inconvenience to the public. I think that is the major part of the bill. As far as I am concerned, it is to be applauded.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Bill taken as a whole.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 21.1.

This is to insert a new clause after clause 4. By way of explanation, this new clause empowers the Administrator to appoint a Justice of the Peace during the time a person holds a particular office, the appointment ceasing when he no longer holds that office or job or resides in that particular location. I think that is probably self-explanatory.

Amendment agreed to; new clause inserted.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported, report adopted.

Bill read a third time.

POLICE ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 36)

Continued from 22 August 1984.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Speaker, basically this bill expands the regulation-making power to enable the prescription of fees for certain services. In introducing the bill, the former Chief Minister foreshadowed that services to be allowed would be: services to private persons such as traffic escorts, provision of reports, statements and photographs on accidents and witnesses in civil cases. Such fees are levied by police departments in the states.

I will read some of the charges that are levied in the states. In Victoria, for instance, charges are made for persons who require escorts for money, wide-load transport, accident information, loss assessor reports, traffic surveys, clearance certificates, witness' costs and for police attendance at sporting events and at entertainment venues. In Queensland, police charge for wide-load escorts, football matches, witness' costs and filming companies. However, in Queensland, they have a particular trait. They allow off-duty policemen to carry out the function of an escort at various entertainment venues. I would hope that the Northern Territory never gets to the stage of allowing off-duty policemen to perform such tasks in their own right. In NSW, similar charges are levied for wide-load escorts, accident insurance reports, photographs and witness' costs. In NSW, there is no charge on entertainment escort duties. In Western Australia, there are charges for escorts, accident insurance reports, photographs and witness' fees. These charges are fairly universal throughout Australia. I have not listed South Australia and Tasmania but I would not be at all surprised if they have similar charges.

Mr Speaker, the opposition certainly supports the bill. However, I hope that the Northern Territory Police Force never gets to the stage of the Queensland police and allows officers to charge for certain off-duty work.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Speaker, I think it relevant to point out at this stage that the Northern Territory public has had available to it one of the best police forces in Australia and quite often has not been charged the appropriate fees when services have been sought on a private basis. As the honourable member for Nhulunbuy rightly pointed out, I can recall as a young policeman in Victoria going to football matches knowing full well that the football club had to pay even in those days something like \$40 per day for the services of each policeman. So it is rather sobering to look at the MCG on grand final day and see the entire oval ringed by policemen. I do not know what they are charging these days but 15 years ago it was about \$40 a head. These fees and charges were able to be charged under police general orders.

This actual amendment is appropriate in that it clears up the legal aspects of claiming a debt. I do not know whether anybody would hang out on the police force. This puts it all into perspective and debts can be claimed.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

SOURCES OF THE LAW BILL
(Serial 69)

Continued from 29 August 1984.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, honourable members might be forgiven for thinking that this is a very dull and boring bill but I will now deliver an extremely interesting speech which should take us through to at least 8.30 tonight. It will be so interesting that honourable members will ask for an extension of time so that I can continue.

Mr Speaker, this bill lays down that, apart from statutes specified in the schedule, the laws of South Australia in force before 22 September 1863 were also in force in the Territory. The excluded statutes basically relate to landholdings and mining. Problems have apparently arisen because the Territory, before its annexation to South Australia in 1863, was using the New South Wales legal system. Hence, there have been questions of the applicability of early New South Wales law. In 1978, in a case before the NT Supreme Court, Rogers v. Squire, Gallop J. found that New South Wales law was the applicable law before 1863. Everyone had always proceeded on the basis that South Australian law applied.

Mr Speaker, the only thing that puzzles me about this particular piece of legislation is why it took so long to get into the Legislative Assembly.

The situation remains unclear and this legislation should remove all doubt. The amendment is a technicality. The Attorney-General maintains that research supports the position as set out in the bill. Given the Supreme Court's comments, I am not so sure. Nevertheless, the position should be clarified.

Mr Speaker, all jokes aside, I did a little research on this bill and turned up something which I did not know before. I would like to quote some sections from the judgment of Judge Gallop. This is quoted from Rogers v. Squire, 23 ALR 111 pages 116, 117 and 118:

On 26 January 1788, when Governor Phillip founded the colony of New South Wales, he proclaimed that the boundaries of that colony extended westward to the 135th meridian of longitude and as far north as Cape York. Now the present western boundary of the Northern Territory lies 6 meridians further west than the 135th meridian so that, at the foundation of the colony of New South Wales, only one-third of what is now the Northern Territory fell within the colony of New South Wales.

In 1824, Captain Bremer took possession of the coastline as far west as the 129th meridian, the present boundary, and in 1828 the western boundary of New South Wales was extended to that meridian. Apart from the evanescent settlements of Fort Dundas on Melville Island, Fort Wellington and Raffles Bay and Victoria on Port Essington, the only other political action until 1863 was the brief life of the colony of North Australia set up by Letters of Patent on 17 February 1846. This order in council was issued under the Australian Constitution Act 1842.

Although the colony existed for a time, and although Sir Charles Fitzroy was commissioned as Governor, the government never functioned and the order in council was revoked on 28 December 1847.

Mr Speaker, I found it extremely interesting to discover that there had been a Crown colony of North Australia with its own government because I did not know that such a thing had existed. I will continue from the judgment:

By an order in council, dated 6 July 1863, the Northern Territory was annexed to the colony of South Australia, pursuant to section 51 of the Australian Constitution Act 1842. Under and in pursuance of reciprocal legislation made by the South Australian Parliament in 1907 and the Commonwealth Parliament in 1910, the Northern Territory became a territory of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1911. It is clear that, subject to the effect which the creation and extinction of the colony of North Australia had, the law applicable in the eastern area at all times, until 1863, was the law applicable in all New South Wales, being either imperial laws, applying by virtue of the common law or of the Australian Courts Act 1828, or later colonial statutes passed by the legislative bodies from time to time existing in the colony of New South Wales...

The brief existence of the colony of North Australia had, in my opinion, little, but a lasting, effect. From the view that I have taken of the application of laws upon the creation of a new colony out of an old colony, the creation of the new colony of North Australia involved a process analogous to cession and, by the rules of international law, upon cession of territory, the existing laws in force in the territory continue until altered by the authority accepting the ceded territory. The only lasting effect that the creation, and the subsequent extinction, of the new colony had was to exclude from operation in the new colony all New South Wales statutes made between 17 February 1846 and 28 December 1847.

Mr Speaker, the learned judge went on to lay out the reasons for the application of the law in the case. I felt that I should read that out for the interest of honourable members because, as I said, I had no idea that an actual Crown colony of North Australia, with its own government, had ever existed in the Northern Territory's history.

Mr Speaker, with those few comments, we would indicate our support of the legislation.

Mr DALE (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will be very brief. This bill is a forerunner of several other tidying-up operations that need to be done as far as legislation is concerned in the Northern Territory. A backbench committee called the Statute Law Review Committee has been created and we will be presenting to this Assembly, probably at the next sittings, a proposition to repeal many hundreds of acts that are presently in place. I am sure that will add to the future good management of the Northern Territory.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADMINISTRATION AND PROBATE AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 71)

Continued from 29 August 1984.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Deputy Speaker, this bill provides that the Public Trustee does not have to file accounts in respect of estates he administered unless otherwise ordered by the court. Apparently, questions have arisen as to whether the Public Trustee can draw his commission validly in respect of the administration of an estate unless he has filed and passed his accounts as is required of other executors and administrators. The new provision is identical to the New South Wales provision except for the changes in tense. The bill also contains a validating provision to cover payments made to date for commission where the Public Trustee has not passed his accounts in the court but merely filed them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the bill that I have just outlined is a simple one. The changes that it brings in are necessary. The whole question of probate is an important one. The problems that are caused by difficulties with probate legislation can have a serious effect on members of the family who have to hassle with them after a member of the family has died. These problems can create difficulties for all sorts of people. I read recently an extremely amusing book called 'Miscellany at Law' which contains a great many absolutely true anecdotes about the law and its practitioners and some anecdotes about judges. I read about a very famous English judge who sat as a probate judge for 30 years and then died intestate. That story was absolutely true and it demonstrates the strife that people can get into at times in respect of probate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the changes made to the legislation are uncontentious and the opposition supports them.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, on a first reading of this bill, it may appear that the proposed change to the legislation will relieve the trustee of accountability on financial transactions ensuing from affairs voluntarily put into his ambit by action of the general public. In the current situation, the court acts in the capacity of auditor to make sure that beneficiaries are not cheated of their rightful inheritance by the executor taking overly-large commissions. At present, the Public Trustee charges a flat rate of 4% of capital and 6% on interest to administer an estate. If the Public Trustee did anything untoward, the Auditor-General would pick it up. The proposed amendment is to save double auditing. There is still an inbuilt safeguard. The court can still order the Public Trustee to file and pass accounts but there is no charge for this above the flat rate of charges that I mentioned previously.

In view of these facts, Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the proposed amendments.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

LOTTERIES AND GAMING AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 65)

Continued from 29 August 1984.

Mr LEO (Nhulunbuy): Mr Deputy Speaker, the bill makes 2 amendments to how moneys in the lotteries fund shall be applied so that costs incurred in promoting and conducting lotteries can be drawn directly from the fund. Currently, these must be paid by the Racing and Gaming Commission which is reimbursed from the fund. Secondly, it enables funds to be paid to charitable organisations or bodies promoting the welfare of the community. Ideally, the first amendment will streamline the present procedures and the second, I am quite sure, will make funds available to very worthy charitable organisations within our community. The opposition supports the amendments.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr TUXWORTH (Treasurer)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): I will be brief, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to address this issue today because it occurred today. It is in reference to a public statement which is alleged to have been made by the member for Jingili and which appears on the front page of today's Midweek Territorian. The honourable member for Jingili has been paying a great deal of attention lately to juvenile crime, and I am not decrying that. However, I was somewhat taken aback this morning when I read a public statement made by the honourable member which suggested that juvenile offenders should be forced to wear shirts in public which identified them as criminals. Mr Deputy Speaker, I will quote from the article from the Midweek Territorian of Wednesday 6 March:

Jingili MLA, Rick Setter, has hit out at juvenile criminals by proposing an embarrassing scheme where convicted offenders should be made to work in public wearing shirts identifying them as criminals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, having had some experience of petrol sniffers in Aboriginal communities and having no magic solutions to that problem, the one thing I do know about petrol sniffers is that they have a dreadful habit of forming themselves into little clans which are then ostracised by the rest of the community. All that does is entrench the anti-social attitudes that the children exhibit and increase those attitudes to a point where sometimes the children are beyond redemption.

I was quite horrified by that suggestion. Like many other politicians, I suppose, I am a student of history and I can only think of one example of this sort of suggestion. Maybe there were others but I can only think of one horrible example of this kind of public action and I am sure all honourable members will know what I am referring to.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I recall another scheme similar to the one being proposed and perhaps I can help the honourable member for Jingili by suggesting that, if he wants to proceed with this particular proposal, the colour of the shirts should be green. That is what happened in Germany prior to and during the Second World War. For the honourable member's benefit, the colours were in triangles which, by law, had to be affixed to the shirts of the people concerned. They were green for criminals, red for political offenders, purple for Jehova's Witnesses, black for 'shiftless elements', pink for homosexuals and, lastly, a yellow star of David for Jews.

I can assure the honourable member that it is a regrettable fact of history but his idea has an unfortunate precedent. I do not want my words misinterpreted. I am not calling the honourable member for Jingili a Nazi or suggesting anything even approaching that. I believe that the honourable member should be aware of the historical comparisons that must be made about his suggestion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Jingili is a new member of this Assembly and I can understand his attempts to establish himself as a public figure in the Northern Territory. He has been concentrating on the serious issue of juvenile crime, and I support the concern that he is expressing. However, I do not think he does himself or the cause of doing something about juvenile crime any good by suggestions such as that carried on the front page of this newspaper. I would hope that the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory would indicate, if such a thing were necessary and perhaps it will not be, that the Northern Territory will not countenance any such proposal. It would only lead to the ostracism of the children concerned and increase the anti-social attitudes that they already exhibit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the one thing that needs to be done, however fruitless an exercise it may be, is for us to give every opportunity to the children who are committing these offences to come back into the mainstream of society, not to mark them out and isolate them from it. I suggest that the new member would be wise to measure his words and ideas before he puts them to the public because he has a responsibility. That responsibility is quite simple. There is a great deal of flexibility attached to being in opposition. It is a fact of life that oppositions, and I do not believe they should, certainly have a greater degree of flexibility in their public statements than governments do. That applies to all members of government, because, by virtue of the fact that the politician speaking is a member of the government, it is clear to the public that that person is a parliamentary member of the party that is in power and is in a position to put such things into legislation. I believe there is a heavy responsibility on opposition members to be responsible in their public statements but I say that the responsibility on government members is heavier.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have drawn a comparison with the only event in history that I am aware of personally where a similar scheme was implemented, and that was in Nazi Germany. I have made it clear that I am only using that as an example. When we consider the horrendous attitudes that existed in that country at the time and the result of those attitudes, it is difficult to understand how men and women in the 20th century could allow themselves to be seduced by such an ideology. It is a matter of history that that seduction was slow and piecemeal in prewar Germany. It came piece by piece and, in some parts, it was the fault of people like all of us who allowed such events to take place.

I again qualify my comments. I am not arguing that we can expect those

events to repeat themselves. But all of us are obliged to ensure that we do not create public beliefs by our statements and comments that may lead us down paths we may later regret. I regret that a sentiment like this has been expressed on the front page of a newspaper, not that the honourable member was responsible for it appearing on the front page. However, I seriously suggest to him that the very nature of the comments themselves ensured they would be on the front page. Nothing will be served at all by such a proposal being put into effect. I do not seek unnecessarily to occupy the time of the Assembly, particularly on a long sitting day, but I did not want this to be any more than 24 hours old when I raised it here. I would invite the honourable member for Jingili to confirm or deny that he made this statement. I find it difficult to believe that any newspaper could print such an explicit statement containing the sentiments it does from a member who did not give it some cause to print it. I give the honourable member the opportunity to stand up in the Legislative Assembly, to affirm if he wishes what he wants to see put into practice, or to place his own interpretation on the quote that has been used from him by this newspaper.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, a matter of particular concern to me is the type of housing provided for families in Aboriginal communities. This is a subject that I believe I have a lot of experience in and I should be able to provide some relevant comments on it. Let me say that I agree with the government's policy that the Northern Territory should have responsibility for the housing of all of its residents and that we should continue to push that policy, provided the necessary funds are forthcoming.

I believe also that only housing that is suitable to the needs of Aboriginal people should be built for them. Of course, that will vary from place to place but I have grave doubts about the style of housing that is being built in Aboriginal communities at present. I have doubts about the timber-framed houses that are being built and the panel-system houses. I am not trying to knock that style of housing. There are people who need to sell their timber and they have plenty of outlets for doing that. There are panel system houses and they obviously want to sell their buildings but I say that those sorts of houses are not really fit for the Aboriginal lifestyle. I am talking about Aboriginal lifestyle in communities. Equally, unsuitable houses are built for the usual Australian lifestyle, the sort that are built in the Darwin suburbs, and I would have some doubts about their effectiveness in this sort of climate, because their floor plans are not necessarily suitable to the Aboriginal lifestyle and Aboriginal living requirements.

I have had the opportunity over the years to design and experiment with housing styles for a number of Aboriginal communities and many of the homes have proved to be totally unsuited to the requirements of the people concerned. I have to admit that it was a learning process for myself. Generally, I believe that housing in Aboriginal communities should be of solid, ground-level construction. Without having any vested interest in the concrete masonry companies in this town, I would say that concrete masonry is the optimum material. They should have concrete floors, timber and steel roofing and a very open plan. The details of the floorplans would depend on the needs of the inhabitants of the particular community or the house.

The bush timber and corrugated iron houses built at Peppimenarti, and I do not know whether anybody here has seen them, have proved to be particularly suited to the needs of Aboriginal people. They are solid, open-planned and very easy to care for. I see no reasonable excuse for the extremely high cost of

housing in Aboriginal communities. I am personally responsible for the design and construction of 3-bedroom homes in remote Aboriginal communities that are built for well under \$40 000 per unit. This includes the cost of barge freight and it employs usually a couple of Europeans and maybe 6 or 8 Aboriginal people right throughout construction.

It is pleasing to see that the NT Housing Commission is now able to foray into the area of housing in Aboriginal communities and I believe that we should have the right to offer some ideas on Aboriginal housing. We should have some input into the type of housing provided by the government. I hope that the Housing Commission will consider very carefully the style and durability of housing it provides to Aboriginal people in communities. There is no validity in the argument that both Aborigines and their white advisers in communities should share the same style of housing. I emphasise the word 'style'. Very few Aboriginal people are comfortable in a standard Housing Commission house. We have had a number of cases in Batchelor of Aboriginal people living in very hot, brick Housing Commission homes who moved a few hundred metres into the bush leaving the house empty while they lived under canvas. The house is left vacant. There are few people who are really comfortable in that style of enclosed housing.

I do not say that the quality should be less or even the cost. I am not talking about quality and costs really; I am talking about the style. The style and the floor plan should be suited to the needs of the people that the house is designed for. Durability of materials should be suitable to the lifestyle of the people who are using it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there has been considerable discussion in the Assembly over the last few days and even today on juvenile crime and its perceived impact, particularly in the Darwin area. Juvenile crime is rampant in many other areas outside Darwin. Late last year, I commented on the condition of housing facilities and services in Aboriginal communities and the apparent lack of responsibility accepted by the community for the condition of those services. I could be said to be knocking Aboriginal people, and that is not my intent. I have no wish to knock Aboriginal people in this regard. I spoke to the honourable member for Arnhem today in regard to this. I raise it only because it is a matter of real concern to me that we are providing facilities in communities that come in for a lot of damage. Mention was made here today by the Minister for Education of the cost of repairing a building before it was officially opened, a building that had cost some millions of dollars and required a further \$600 000 to be expended on it for maintenance and repairs before it could be opened.

I have a real concern about the lack of responsibility demonstrated in communities for the services that this government provides. We have heard comment today, particularly from the honourable member for Stuart, that we do not provide enough, that we need new buildings, new services and all sorts of things, particularly in the education area. But I know from my own experience, being responsible for a number of schools in Aboriginal communities over a number of years, the high cost of maintaining those buildings. Every year, we would have as much as \$20 000 or \$30 000 worth of damage to buildings. That is rather heartbreaking considering that some of the buildings would have been treated with pride in any town in Australia. I think of some of the more recent buildings at Port Keats. Some really serious damage has been done to them over the last few years.

It has been my observation over the years that a very large proportion of the vandalism in communities is a direct result of children or young adults

• running wild, and I come back to juvenile crime. Sometimes they are drunk on alcohol, sometimes under the influence of petrol fumes and sometimes just plain bored. This, in itself, is probably not very different from the real reasons behind juvenile crime in Darwin and other Territory centres. It has always been my view that parents are responsible for the behaviour and actions of their kids, whether or not they are neglected kids. I would certainly want and expect to take responsibility for anything that my children did that affected anybody outside my own home. It is equally my view that widespread vandalism and crime is a direct responsibility of the community in which it occurs, particularly in closed communities. Aboriginal communities are closed communities; they exist for that one group of people and very few outsiders get access.

Recently, I read of a group who were seeking funds from government in order to overcome the problem of petrol sniffing in their communities. The results of petrol sniffing are shocking. I do not know how many members have seen the results of petrol sniffing in Aboriginal communities. It is a terrible thing. Mainly young people are doing it. It does far more damage than even alcohol. The effects on the brain are way beyond anything that alcohol is likely to do to a person. If money could fix the problem, I would support the request all the way.

The honourable member for Arnhem suggested that showing videos depicting the effects of petrol sniffing would be of real value. I support that. I really think that that sort of thing would be very beneficial. However, I repeat that no amount of public funds and no amount of sympathy will overcome the problem.

What will help in this regard is the recognition by the communities that they have a responsibility no matter what the consequences. I say no matter what the consequences because recently, at a community in central Australia, we saw the results on a couple of kids who had been petrol sniffing. These kids drove at very high speed through a crowd of people who were meeting with us at this particular community. They could quite easily have killed someone. It would have been just so easy. As many as 100 people were meeting in a group. There were a number of kids. This car drove through at high speed, slewing about. There were 2 or 3 politicians and 100 local residents. The danger was to those local residents, not to the politicians.

Eventually, a couple of members of the community stopped the car. They pulled the electrical wiring out of the car and they belted the kids a bit. When they came back to us, they said: 'Now this is the real problem we face. What are you going to do about it?' I must admit that, when people say that to me, I just say: 'Well, what are you going to do about it? How can I fix it? How can our government fix it? It is a problem here in this community. What are you going to do about it?' They said: 'But we can't touch those kids. Those kids come from further out in the desert and their parents aren't here. If we hit them hard and we kill them, their parents are going to come in and kill us'.

I accept that that is the case. That might happen. But the problem still is a problem for the community. The community residents are the only people who can overcome it. They could pick those kids up and take them back to their parents in the desert and refuse to allow them to come back. If they do come back, pick them up and take them back again. Make sure they do not come back. There are ways of stopping that, I am sure. It is the responsibility of the people. No matter what the consequences, it is their responsibility, particularly if they wish to retain the fabric of Aboriginal society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the saying that you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink applies very much here. If there is one thing that I know well after 20 years of close association with Aboriginal people, it is that, while government finance and advice might be one wheel of the vehicle that carries Aboriginal people to an equal quality of life with the rest of the Australian people, the other 3 wheels, the motor and the body are the Aboriginal people themselves. I do a lot of travelling around the Northern Territory. I quote one incident at Elliott last year. I walked up to a group of people sitting on the median strip in the middle of town and said hello to them. There was a fellow there who did not know who I was. He jumped up and he said: 'What are you going to do about our drink problem?' I said: 'What do you mean what am I going to do about your drink problem?' I believe I had the right to come back in the same way. I said: 'What can I do about it? I am here as often as I can but I am not here as often as you are or all of the rest of you people here. You are here all the time'.

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

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to place on the record this afternoon a few points which came out at question time this morning. In Alice Springs in my electorate there is a block of holiday units called 'White Gums' of which I am particularly proud. These units came into being because a number of people in Alice Springs, not particularly rich people at that, got together, put some money in, bought a block of land with a suitable title and building covenant and then went to find the finance to build these holiday units. Our principals in the group went to the bank and found that they could borrow a certain amount. They went to the NTDC to borrow some more and eventually these units were built.

It was an act of faith in one sense, as every business transaction is. We had talked about it at some length. We felt that Alice Springs needed holiday units. With the imminent sealing of the South Road, these units will be ideal for families who drive up that South Road. They need a car to get out to Ayers Rock and around the place. We have bituminised many roads. I would say to anybody today that it is a good investment. We invested. We borrowed money. We built the units and they operated very well, as well as ever we could have expected.

A gentleman, Mr Dave Dunn, came to our principals. He wanted to buy the units. He set his heart on them. He said: 'Give me a price. Give me a price'. We did not want to sell. Eventually, he wore our principals down and they called a meeting of the shareholders. We met. They said: 'Look, he is driving us mad. What say we give him a price which we are pretty sure he will not meet? If he does meet it, well we will not be unhappy'. That is indeed what took place. However, to our surprise, no sooner did we state a price than a 10% deposit was down and we were in a binding contract and that was the end of it.

I had 4 shares in that. There were 13 of us. When the NTDC loan was applied for, I let the then Chief Minister know about my intended involvement. The loan seemed to take a long time to come through. I rang Mr Ted Simpson, who was head of the NTDC at the time. I said: 'Look, if you are having a problem with me as a member of parliament being involved in this, I will bow out. I will not do it happily but I will bow out'. He said: 'Well, you are only one of 13 shareholders, and a minority shareholder. I do not see the point. It is reasonable to me'. The loan came through.

In the process, we made a profit. It seems to be bad to make a profit. If we had made a loss, I suppose it would have been fine. The upshot of this is

that, through the entrepreneurship of some 13 people, there is an excellent set of units in the town. The NTDC received its money back very quickly indeed. I bet there are a few other projects that the NTDC has put money into and from which it would like to get its money back just as quickly. It was a perfectly normal business transaction.

Mr Dave Dunn sold the property a couple of months ago. He told me what he sold it for. The interesting thing is that, if we had not sold when we did, instead of converting \$20 000 into \$40 000 and making \$20 000 profit, which I admit is a very handsome profit, we could have made nearly another \$40 000 profit. Believe you me, with my present project, that would be very useful money to have. That was the story.

The honourable member for giant pinholes tried to make it sound as though I had owned a whole motel. The involvement was a pretty small one. I am proud of White Gums units. It is in my electorate. The people who own it now have had an excellent season. I was around there only a fortnight ago. They were completely booked out throughout the so-called off season. They are doing very well and they are very pleased with the price that they paid.

That was the sum total of my involvement. The funny thing about it is that, in declaring my interests as a member, if I had not stated that an NTDC loan was involved, then I doubt whether anybody would have found out. If I had felt guilty about it, which I certainly did not, I would never have mentioned it in the register of members' interests. There was no requirement to put it in, absolutely none.

Mr Ede: That is a hole in the act.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: That is very interesting. I would not mind if it was amended to allow that. I know I am not the only past or present member of the Assembly who has had an NTDC loan.

The other matter is the innuendo surrounding a block of land I bought at Ti Tree and the provision of power. The member for MacDonnell said Mr Dahlenburg had been eminently successful with his grape growing. Little does he really know about the situation. Mr Dahlenburg certainly did not have any ground on the market because he was financially well off. It was only his misfortune that allowed me to get in. He knew of my interest for many years. I had worked with him on a farm for a few days pruning. He certainly knew my interest. Before he took it to the real estate agents, he said he would have dirt for sale. I then determined that somehow I was going to get hold of one of those blocks. That indeed has come to pass.

The honourable Chief Minister had spoken to the Dahlenburgs about their immensely costly problem of putting all their money back into fuel to power their coldroom, their home and the pump to obtain water. They mentioned how electricity would be a great aid to them.

Mr Dahlenburg himself arrived at that block with just a small tractor and an axe. To get himself established, he slept in an iron shed under the mulga trees for a year. That sort of pioneering deserves the greatest credit. He started to cultivate table grapes. He made many mistakes. He freely admits that. He tried to grow grapes for all seasons. He soon learned that, because of the overheads and transportation costs, it was not profitable to compete with the southern grape-growing season. He had a host of grape vines planted and he had to rip them out and replant. In fact, the total area that he actually picked from this year is not more than 4 acres. That will increase to about 12 acres over the next year or 2.

There is great talk and pictures in magazines about grape growing in central Australia. It all relates to only 4 acres. He has done the pioneering work. He made it very clear that the only way we would have an advantage would be to get those early grapes. I benefited from that and I give the credit very much to Mr Ian Dahlenburg.

To get on with the saga, they had said to me that they had spoken to Mr Tuxworth and that he was toying with several options. Power was one. I said to them: 'If the power comes on, 10 to 1 someone will raise it in the Assembly and say that it was all done for me'. I was a bit afraid - not for my own sake but for the Dahlenburgs' sake - that the minister would decide that it was a bit dicey, that there would be flak and it would be better not to take the power down to the Dahlenburgs. But he is not a spineless person; he took the power down.

My next involvement was with the NTEC chap in Alice Springs, Mr Dick Allen. The Dahlenburgs had cleared my block with a bulldozer. There needed to be a path cleared for the power lines to reach the road reserve. That is the first time I actually contacted him. I told him there was a bulldozer available. I knew that it would cost \$2000 to bring a bulldozer from Alice Springs. Arthur Dahlenburg, Ian's son, cleared the pathway. To say that the first the Dahlenburg's knew about it was when the transformer was being put on is nonsense. The power was put on. It comes right past my block.

As far as the charge to the Dahlenburgs is concerned, I really do not know. I know that I will fit into the rural electrification scheme when I get connected. The NTEC fellows were a bit disappointed that I did not connect immediately but I could not have used the power even if I had had it connected. Money was another problem. I intend now to put a bore down and equip it with an electric motor. I have applied to put the power on. I will be paying the \$5000 which is the normal rural connection. Just for the record, the nearest power to the Dahlenburgs was only 3 km away.

This morning, \$90 000 was being bandied around as the cost to the taxpayer of putting the power on. The NTEC workers were saying the same thing at the time. I checked with Mr Allen and he made an estimate of about \$55 000. That is still a lot of money. It is an advantage to me. I do not think the Dahlenburgs will mind. They still have some debt problems. They intend to sell another larger block of land which will help them. They may decide to sell at any stage. If they do that, I will lose my water supply and I will have to become self-sufficient. When I am not there, which is most of the time, they turn the valves on for the drippers when the plants need water.

I mentioned in the address in reply that so many things are possible when there is a constant power supply. I will be able to put detectors in the soil which will indicate when the water moisture level is getting low. When that happens, they will trigger mechanisms and valves which will set the motor going and water the plots. At this stage of the game, because of lack of finance, I cannot afford a manager. In 18 months or 2 years I might be in a position to put someone on. I never asked for the power. I cannot prove that I did not ask for it. I am not particularly worried.

This is a great venture, which I embarked on thanks to Mr Dahlenburg's encouragement. It is something that I have always been interested in. I believe it will be for the good of the Territory. It will certainly provide jobs, possibly 3 permanent jobs. Table grapes are not like wine grapes. You have to thin bunches, trim bunches and spray them with special plant hormones

and so forth to bring the bunches up to size. There is a lot of labour involved in the early stages as well as during the picking and packing stages. So there is an opportunity for employment.

A bloke is a fool to get involved because 6 out of every 10 vines on that block are planted for the tax man. As we all know, we are in the 60% bracket. Therefore, out of any profit that I make out there, 60% will go straight to the tax man. Things could go well. It is one of those risky investments. I am a gambler. I have to be. A crop could look beautiful and then a severe storm could come through and damage it. It happened to Mr Dahlenburg right at harvest time. Rain could split the grapes and you could lose the lot.

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

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to pass some comments concerning allegations that were made just a few minutes earlier by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I thank him for drawing my attention to that article in the Isaacson press this afternoon. He had the advantage over me. I had not seen the article so I really did not know what it had said. However, I appreciate the fact that he was good enough to lend me his newspaper so that I could read the comments that I had allegedly made.

Nevertheless, I am very pleased that those comments made the front page of that particular newspaper because I believe that, the more we can draw attention as a government, and the more I can draw attention as a backbench member, to the problems of juvenile crime, particularly in the northern suburbs of Darwin, the better. I am very pleased indeed that they are on the front page of that paper.

My thoughts concerning juvenile crime are well documented. I refer you to a speech that I made on 28 February, which was recorded in Hansard, and again on 5 March when I finished off my comments. I would like to quote from Hansard of 28 February. In particular, I refer to a ...

Mr BELL: Point of Order, Mr Deputy Speaker!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr BELL: I appreciate that, as a new member, the honourable member for Jingili may not be aware that quoting from the unedited Hansard transcends the bounds of the standing orders of this Assembly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order! There is no standing order covering the question of reading from Hansard. It was a ruling of the former Speaker. The honourable member may quote from the unedited edition provided it is relevant to his topic.

Mr SETTER (Jingili): Thank you for that ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker. I quote from the unedited version of Hansard of 28 February 1985:

Let me read some comments that were made on 8DN Talkback on 27 February 1985. These are comments taken at random from people who telephone in. One person said: 'The name and address of offenders should be published at the discretion of the magistrate'. Another said: 'Publish the name and addresses of parents'. Yet another said: 'Perhaps there should be a restitution clause included in the Juvenile Justice Act'. Another caller was asked by Col Krohn if householders were preparing to take

the law into their own hands. She said: 'Yes, many people are'. Another person said: 'There is no sympathy for victims, only for the criminals'. Currently, names of juveniles cannot be published because it may hurt the feelings of their parents. That person suggested publishing names and addresses of parents and instituting restitution for damage, loss and so on. Another said that the community was not responsible for the children; the parents are.

Those comments were made on 8DN Talkback by concerned citizens in the community. To me, Sir, that indicates that there is no support out there in the community for juvenile offenders. I believe that, in some way, juvenile offenders who are perhaps sentenced to community work orders or whatever should be identified in some way. I do not agree with the remarks that have been attributed to me in that particular newspaper. I believe that the journalist involved must be taking licence, as journalists quite commonly do. In fact, I am quite sure that the Leader of the Opposition has himself, on many occasions, been subject to such journalistic licence.

I was surprised and disgusted at the comments of the Leader of the Opposition when he likened my alleged comments to the sort of thing that happened in Nazi Germany 40 odd years ago. There was certainly no such intention in my comments. They do not indicate that I intended any such feeling whatsoever. I think he completely overstepped the mark when he made such comments. Certainly, I do not feel that way at all. To enable identification of a young offender by putting a green shirt or a black shirt on him, such as happened in Nazi Germany, is absolutely ridiculous and I totally reject it. I would suggest to you, Sir, that this evening the honourable Leader of the Opposition was trying out the new boy. I can assure you that he has failed dismally.

I would now like to turn my attention to what I intended to discuss tonight. I think the greatest problem that is facing young people throughout the nation is unemployment. Particularly in regard to young people, the Northern Territory is no exception. We are caught up in this unemployment problem, the same as the rest of Australia. However, we have a responsibility to address this issue using whatever means are at our disposal.

In the Northern Territory, we currently have an industry with the capacity to provide substantial employment opportunities for Territorians. I am referring to the tourism and hospitality industry which has the ability to absorb many thousands of our local people into employment at all levels, positions from management down through the various levels to domestic-type employees. In his media release of 25 January the Chief Minister noted that, in the 24 months ended June 1984, 3000 new jobs were created in the Territory tourist industry. He further stated that the value of the industry was \$376m, it supported almost 10 000 jobs, and that, during the next 3 years in Darwin alone, a further 1500 jobs will be created through such developments as the Beaufort Hotel, the Sheraton Hotel, Suttons Knuckey Street motel development etc. Similar situations exist in the southern area with the development of the Sheraton Hotel and the Kings Canyon project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will realise from my comments that the potential for job creation, especially for young people, is considerable. We do, however, require trained people with the right skills at all levels within the industry. It is widely acknowledged that the development of tourism is a major priority of this government. In fact, one could say that tourism is considered a cornerstone of our economy.

The federal Minister for Tourism, Mr John Brown, was reported in the NT News of 22 January 1985 as saying that the tourist industry was set to smash all records. He further stated that the latest figures showed that the number of US tourists to Australia increased by 32% in the year ended 30 June 1984. The number of tourists visiting from Japan had also increased by 25% while visitors from the rest of Asia were up 32%. You can see that the tourist industry is a fantastic growth industry.

In the same NT News article, the Northern Territory minister responsible for tourism, Nick Dondas, was quoted as saying that, with the development of Yulara, the casinos and the new hotels planned for Darwin, the tourist future here also looked very bright. Even during the off-peak season, hotels in the area were well supported. It was expected that the Top End would be even more popular with tourists from home and overseas this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as part of our tourism masterplan, we are spending millions of dollars to encourage people from overseas and from within Australia to visit the Northern Territory. Government and private enterprise have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the construction of a range of accommodation from first-class hotels to caravan parks and camping grounds. It is obvious from my preceding comments that the Northern Territory government places great emphasis on tourism and development of its support infrastructure.

Let me return, Mr Deputy Speaker, to my opening remarks regarding the importance we, as a government, should place on the employment of Territorians in this rapidly growing industry. Regrettably, it would be true to say that the large majority of people currently employed within this industry would be transient and, in the main, have very poor skills. Because of the limited training facilities we have in the Northern Territory, there are very few Territorians qualified to work in the tourism and hospitality industry at the standard required. One has only to visit restaurants around Darwin to realise that some staff have had no formal training at all, and I have been a victim of that on a number of occasions.

This does little for the reputation of our industry, especially among those international travellers who expect to receive caring attention and to be serviced by staff who have the necessary training and qualifications. We are creating numerous opportunities for employment in this industry and yet the facilities we have for training Territorians are very limited indeed. We have Gillen House where the School of Tourism and Hospitality is located as an annexe of the Central Australian Community College in Alice Springs. Gillen House provides a high standard of training across a limited range of courses. Regrettably, Gillen House is inadequate to supply the demand for staff required to fill our new tourist facilities. Complementing the Gillen House courses, we have occasional short-term courses for waiters and waitresses and perhaps a few other classifications at the Darwin Institute of Technology. These are generally filled by people recruited by the Commonwealth Employment Service on the basis of their length of unemployment and not their aptitude for the particular position.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I can give you an example that illustrates the need in Darwin. Recently, the maitre d' at a local restaurant advertised a waiting and waitressing course in the paper. He ran this in his own right. This particular person charged \$120 for this course which ran for 6 hours. It was over subscribed and he has since trained those people and is now conducting another course. That shows that there is a tremendous need if people are prepared to pay \$120 for 6 hours of tuition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have this wonderful opportunity to train and employ thousands of Territorians in this industry yet the educational facilities available and the courses provided only have the capacity to supply dozens of staff, not the thousands that will be needed. The government has a responsibility to address this problem now. It must plan either to construct or purchase a building in Darwin with sufficient capacity to train the volume of people required to service the needs of tourism and the hospitality industry adequately. It must consult closely with the industry in the setting up of this facility. We must develop our tourism and hospitality facilities with a unique Territory image. Our architecture, interior decorating and landscaping should all reflect the Territory's character. We also have the opportunity to create employment opportunities for people who live in the more remote areas such as Yulara, Kings Canyon and Kakadu. I refer, in particular, to Aboriginal people whom I believe should be offered training and subsequent employment at the level to which they aspire. I recently visited Yulara and I was struck by what appeared to be a total absence of Aboriginal people employed within the tourist complex and support facilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will note from my comments my concern for the employment of local people within the tourism and hospitality area and the provision of adequate training facilities in Darwin. I hope this will be noted by the government and the matter will be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak extremely briefly tonight. After listening to adjournment debates in the Assembly over the last 2 weeks, particularly those relating to juvenile crime and other such evils, I am delighted to report on one probably not so well known group of young people in our community, the St John Ambulance cadets. I am sure all honourable members are familiar with the general work of St John Ambulance and, of course, the younger fraternity but there is one facet of its activities to which I would like to draw honourable members' attention.

In addition to the traditional first-aid duties and activities and the associated training, St John Ambulance cadets have a community service system that leads to the awarding of a special service shield. As I understand it, there are something like 650 cadets throughout the Northern Territory. Approximately 500 of them are in the Darwin area. Cadets range from 10 years of age and those with their first-aid certificates are from about 11½ onwards.

Of these cadets, approximately 100 are currently participating in a fairly unique program of community service. When I say 'unique', I understand from a memo circulated by the Chief Staff Officer during his recent trip to the Northern Territory that it is a program that he is advocating nationally and overseas as well. The Chief Staff Officer was impressed with the high standard of appearance in uniform and the general behaviour of local cadets but he was delighted by the most impressive program of community service.

Cadets participate in such activities as home nursing, the Homemakers Program and visits to Chan Park and the Harry Giese Centre for Special Children. Through the Council on the Ageing, they assisted in Senior Citizens Week and helped out on the last social day of that week. They also help out in Darwin family centres and other community projects. The local cadet unit set out with a fairly high ambition last year to reach a total of 10 000 hours of service in this area. That ambition has been attained. I understand that, since the scheme started, a constituent of the electorate of Wagaman, a young lady by the name of Joanna Van Den Berghe has reached the incredible level of service of over 2000 hours. Last year, His Honour the Administrator presented certificates to

approximately 50 or more cadets and I was pleased to be present when young Joanna received a certificate for over 1000 hours on that occasion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thought it was worth mentioning such a positive program within our community. We hear so much about the evils of kids. The program not only provides kids with the first-aid ability to help in emergencies but it also teaches them a positive attitude towards responsibility within the community. Such a system can only be commended.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a few points first regarding a couple of comments made by the member for Victoria River and by the Minister for Health. First of all, what was said today regarding the vandalising of the Docker River Health Centre should be put in its proper context. It should be remembered that the Docker River Health Centre was built with funds from the federal government and in the face of the community's request for a much smaller service. It built the centre to its own specifications. A similar thing happened in Papunya around the same time. It was a very expensive exercise which was completely out of tune with the community's actual needs. The point about Docker River was that it built the centre and it did not have the staff to put anybody into it.

The community went to the powers that be. I believe that it actually went to DAA. The people said: 'Look, it's no good leaving this Community Health Centre unoccupied and unattended. You ought to give one of our old pensioners a couple of bucks and put him in as a watchman'. That was refused. I think the sum requested was something phenomenal like \$20 a week, just so that an old person could keep an eye on it. Even though the community did not like the design - it was not what it had originally requested - and the government refused to put somebody in as a caretaker, that certainly was not enough to justify the damage that was done to that health centre. However, I think that it should be put in the proper context. There were approaches by the community. It was not as though the community washed its hands of it and said: 'We want nothing to do with it. You put it there. We will knock it down'. A process was gone through to try to work out how that health centre could be safeguarded.

I am not aware of the problems that the member for Victoria River has in his area with regard to the European-style housing being put in there. In the Centre, we have a couple of very good plans going. The Tangentyere Council, for example, which has built most of the housing, believes that its first job is to establish where people will be in relation to the land that they are on. Having established which particular families will be at which particular localities - and getting avoidance relationships and everything out of the way - it then spends a considerable time working out the particular housing design that will suit particular groups. Tangentyere now has its maintenance costs well below the Victorian Housing Commission maintenance costs.

Also happening is the distribution of plans around a community so the people have a number of different plans to look at. They work through these things, look at little pictures of them and so on. Then they can say: 'That is about the sort of thing I want'. I really think that that is the answer to the problem.

It has been told to me that the member for Victoria River himself organised and designed various houses and that they were very successful indeed. I compliment him on that. He said that this was after many years of working through the problems associated with Aboriginal housing. Certainly, I do not deny that there are enormous problems in trying to work out a housing design that

fits in with the aspirations of Aboriginal people throughout the Northern Territory. There is a very wide variety of ideas of what housing means and what it should do. I like what is happening now between the ADC and the Housing Commission. They are spending a lot of time on a lot of different designs. They work it out so that people can choose from a smorgasbord of offerings what they think is best.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in today's adjournment debate, I want to address briefly the application of the Yipirinya School Council to acquire a piece of land in Alice Springs to relocate the Yipirinya School which is functioning at the moment at another location; in fact, on a piece of land that belongs to the Tangentyere Council. That school is functioning very effectively, I might add, in very difficult circumstances. In fact, I am worried that the agreement under which it was established and registered may be in jeopardy simply because it has been unable to acquire another block of land. The block of land that I refer to is lot 5643 which is an area of particular significance to Aboriginal people. It is a significant site on the Yipirinya dreaming which people believe is particularly appropriate to the Yipirinya School.

For cultural reasons, it is actually the only suitable site available in Alice Springs. The government has been made fully aware of that by comprehensive submissions and personal representations. There can be no excuse for ignorance concerning this issue and, in that context, it is most disappointing to note the intention of the Planning Authority to change the purpose of the lease of lot 5643 to allow medium-density housing. That is a provocative and, may I say, very unfortunate act. Incidentally, again it is a reflection of the totally inadequate planning that continues to exist in Alice Springs. It is just a rumour at this stage and perhaps the minister will enlighten me on it. But the rumour is that the site is required for accommodation for the staff of the new Sheraton Hotel.

The subject of planning in Alice Springs has been the basis of considerable debate. It has been spoken about a number of times. I would like to mention a couple of things on this issue. On 27 September 1984, for example, the then Minister for Lands issued a press release which said:

A large block of land has been made available for the construction of a new church in Alice Springs. The Lands Minister, Mr Marshall Perron, has offered 5000 m² in Cypress Crescent to the Assembly of God for a church manse community centre. The offer is for a 6-year Crown lease.

I am not disputing for a moment the justification for any of these. I am going to explain to you how it would appear that certain groups are able to get land and others are not. That church, no doubt, will provide a great service to Alice Springs and I wholeheartedly recommend it, just as I recommend the Yipirinya lease.

On 28 September 1984, another press release was issued by the Minister for Lands, Mr Marshall Perron, and it read in part:

A new motor-bike and trail-bike complex is likely to be developed near Alice Springs. The Lands Minister, Mr Marshall Perron, has offered 60 ha of land for this purpose to the Alice Springs Motor-Cycle Club.

Again, that is a noble purpose. On 9 October 1984, a press release was issued by the acting Minister for Lands, Mr Jim Robertson, and it read in part:

'The scouts in central Australia have been offered nearly 30 ha of land in Alice Springs to develop an activities park'. The minister knows full well that I fully support the application of the scouts for that particular area of land. I have had full discussions with the scouts about that land and I am totally in favour of that lease.

The point I am making is quite simple. It is that there seems to be a double standard here whereby some groups are able to acquire land and other groups are not. With due respect to the groups mentioned, I believe that lot 5643 has infinitely more significance to the Aboriginal people involved in Yipirinya School than the particular pieces of land that those other groups have applied for. It is entirely possible that alternative sites could have been found for the other groups. However, it is not realistic to believe that an alternative site can be found for the Yipirinya group. I know that one of the objections that has been raised is the proximity to Telegraph Terrace. What if those poor kids on that block right next to Telegraph Terrace run out on the road and somebody is run over? To me that is really clutching at straws. We have Traeger Park School right on Gap Road.

Mr Vale: It is not on a national highway.

Mr EDE: We have the Catholic school in Alice Springs which is surrounded by far busier roads than Telegraph Terrace. It may not have the classification of a national highway. However, it has a far higher traffic density than Telegraph Terrace has. The plan for the school incorporates a fence which, if constructed, will solve those safety problems.

I do not think that anybody can deny the work of Yipirinya School as an educational institution. Its progress is being watched by educationalists throughout Australia and overseas. The essential point is that Yipirinya is working. Aboriginal kids, who were not attending school, are now attending. The results are encouraging. It is my belief that Aboriginal kids attending Yipirinya will grow up with a sense of identity in terms of their own culture and with functional skills in terms of western culture. Therefore, it seems ironic that these aims are being thwarted by a government supposedly committed to Aboriginal education.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Yipirinya School has immense potential as an institute in its own right and, perhaps more importantly, as a model for some of the ideas that we ought to be looking at in terms of Aboriginal education as it applies right across the Territory. In the Yipirinya situation, we have an opportunity for this government, whose Minister for Education this very day restated his commitment to Aboriginal education, to put its policies where its mouth is. I believe that a lot of good can come from the location of Yipirinya School at the desired site on Telegraph Terrace. A lot of goodwill has already been generated by Yipirinya School. I do not know whether honourable members realise the number of trips which have been organised by Yipirinya School and the primary schools in Alice Springs. Young kids in grades 4 and 5 from the town schools and from Yipirinya School go together to collect bush tuckers. They are taught by those Aboriginal kids how to find the various tuckers and cook them. I think that is good for Alice Springs. It is good that those kids are growing up together and have these cross-cultural programs. Yipirinya gives those kids the pride in their own culture to be able to mix with those other kids. Later on, they will grow up and, in years to come, they will say: 'I know that kid. We went out on a bush trip together'. I think that is good. I think that Yipirinya should be encouraged and that this fairly small block of land should be provided by the government, just to give them a break.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, in the adjournment debate today, I would like to comment on an answer to a question I asked of the Minister for Lands yesterday morning. I asked him what was the future of Melacca Swamp and Black Jungle on the Koolpinyah pastoral lease. In asking this question, I had an interest from several points of view, the first being that they are in my electorate. The second is that, if something is not done fairly soon, these 2 areas will be vandalised even more than they have been. The third reason is that they are of particular conservation interest. A fourth reason is that they are both near Darwin urban settlements and are suitable for recreational purposes.

I believe that proceedings commenced for their acquisition by the government on 9 December 1982. They may even have commenced before that. Far be it from me to condone acquisition with a blanket approval. Nevertheless, in some cases, I believe it is necessary and, in this particular case, having regard to the use to which the pastoral lease is being put, I see no cause to argue against the acquisition of these 2 areas.

The honourable minister spoke of Black's Jungle. It is my information that it is named 'Black Jungle'. The last time I went there, which was not very long ago, it was early afternoon and I was driven through by a friend. We went into the jungle area and it was nearly black. It was very hard to see and, although it was bright sunlight outside, it was dark enough to have been about 7 or 7.30 at night. It was tropically luxuriant in the jungle itself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Herbert brothers used to be the pastoral lessees of Koolpinyah Station. The last Herbert brother died in 1973. Then it was taken over by the current owner. A little bit of history that interests me because of my connection with the family in the rural area is that May and Ted Yates managed Koolpinyah Station and its outstation, Humpty Doo Station, from 1951 until 1974. Mrs May Yates is now deceased but Mr Ted Yates is still very much alive and well. It may be of general interest that, some years ago, when May and Ted Yates were on Koolpinyah and Humpty Doo Stations, Black Jungle was not called Black Jungle. It was called Auntie May's Black Jungle because Aunty May was a lady of many parts and interested in many things. I might say some more about her personal attributes later. She was a pioneering lady and I do not think that many people nowadays could hold a candle to her.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I was very concerned when one of my constituents drew to my attention in the year before last that vandalism was occurring in the Black Jungle area. Palms were being removed. Since then, I have pretty well identified these people. You could say that they are connected with palms. During my first trip through, I was not able to find out exactly from where these palms were removed. Of particular interest in Black Jungle is the palm *Ptychosperma bleeseri*, which grows in abundance there. It is quite an interesting and spectacular palm.

Black Jungle is a wet monsoonal forest which is close to Darwin. It is also a wetland bird habitat. It is being affected at the moment by the adverse actions of cattle, buffalo and pigs. Having regard to the fact that it is part of a pastoral lease, until it is actually acquired, I do not think we can do much about those animals creating that damage in Black Jungle. When I was first taken through that area, I was greatly impressed by the botany. We went from the Howard Springs end and travelled through to the Lambell's Lagoon end. There were about 4 or 5 completely different botanical habitats that one could pass through. It was quite an interesting trip. The person with whom I was travelling identified a stolen vehicle on the road on our way through. We nearly collected an orphan buffalo calf that took a liking to me when we got out

to walk around a bit. We saw some of the original fence which would have been erected in Ted Yates' time, in the 1950s. We also saw vandalism that was caused by somebody who had come from Darwin looking for cheap beef. We saw something that I hope I do not see more of - a shot and partly boned-out heifer. Just part of this beast was taken, a practice that I would like to see stamped out as would other people who have properties on the outskirts of Darwin.

The Melacca Swamp is an area of 2064 ha. The area of Black Jungle is 3500 ha. Melacca Swamp is an invaluable bird wetland habitat and also receives conservation attention as a crocodile breeding ground. Together with Black Jungle, it is important as a public recreation area. I hope that the previous vacillations of the relevant government department are terminated pretty soon and these 2 areas are taken under the wing of the Conservation Commission to restore them, if necessary, as areas of conservation interest and to preserve them for the future enjoyment not only of people in the rural area but also for people in the city.

I would like to touch on another item of interest concerning people living in my electorate. There is a particular pastime that has been increasing of late. It is strictly illegal but, nevertheless, if one can get away with it, there are quite a few dollars to be made by it. I refer to the practice of certain people growing marijuana in the rural area, not on their own land but on somebody else's land. This was drawn to my attention at the weekend by somebody whose character is beyond reproach. He was thinking of doing a little bit of burning off on his block. He went down to a thick overgrown area near a creek which runs through his block and there he found a tidy and flourishing marijuana plantation of 32 plants which were growing very well. They were fenced off and the plants were mature. There were also containers of fertiliser and it was quite obvious that these plants had been tended very lovingly for some time.

This is not the only example that I have had drawn to my attention. There have been areas on other blocks in the rural area that the owners have not walked over recently. At this time of year, marijuana grows pretty well. I am about to exhort my constituents to inspect their blocks from time to time. If these sorts of happenings continue, we may end up with a noxious weed in the area which may turn out to be quite interesting but quite expensive to eradicate in the future.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will never cease to be amazed at the arrogance of the ALP. I thought I would take this opportunity to have a prime example recorded in Hansard. Earlier in the sittings, the Leader of the Opposition referred to his belief that, had the Chief Minister not put out a particular press release during the election campaign late last year, then the electorate of Jingili would be represented by an ALP member. Mr Deputy Speaker, did it ever dawn upon him that the people of Jingili might not want an ALP representative? Did it ever dawn on the ALP that it might be its attitude or its policies that people have rejected? It does not seem so. It seems that it must find that shred of an excuse, that document which, it says, ruined the whole election for it. Despite the clear lessons of the past, it just will not learn. I do not know why I have to give the ALP a short lesson, but I will do it anyway.

In 1974, it had no members in this Assembly. Of 19 members, there was not a single ALP member. It improved slightly after that, until 1983, when not only did it get a thrashing at the polls but the Leader of the Opposition only just clung on to his own seat by the skin of his teeth, scraping in on preferences with something like a 25% swing against him. For a leader, that is not really comforting news.

Let us look at one example - and I use the Jingili by-election - of how the ALP really demonstrates its arrogance towards the electorate. No doubt the ALP was trying hard to learn from the monstrous bungling of the federal Senate ballot paper 2 weeks earlier. It was trying to take in the lessons from that awful Senate paper which was such a disaster across the country as far as informal votes were concerned. The local ALP outdid itself with its how-to-vote card for the Jingili by-election. It had 2 candidates and it thought that that could be complicated for its supporters. It would have to lead the voters very carefully through that election. No doubt the campaign committee sat deep into the night agonising over how to come up with an infallible how-to-vote card for this very important election for the seat that had been held by the former Chief Minister of the Territory.

Lo and behold, what did the brilliant political strategists come up with for their how-to-vote card? There were 2 candidates so they had to separate those 2 in the eyes of their voters. They put in one square - very conveniently the top square - the number 1 in heavy black letters. In the second square, they put the number 2 so that the voters could clearly distinguish between the 2 candidates. Thus, they could lead those who wished to vote for the ALP to vote correctly with a formal vote. Then came the coup de grace, the stroke of brilliance which would clinch the election by ensuring that every single person who wanted to vote ALP could not possibly make a mistake. They had 2 squares: the number 1 in one and the number 2 in the other. The coup de grace was an arrow alongside number 1 saying: 'Start here'. Mr Deputy Speaker, my case rests.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I think the best that can be said about that is at least it was brief. I trust that I will follow suit.

I will not bother to remark on the offerings this evening of the member for Sadadeen except to say that I will study his comments in Hansard tomorrow with some interest and let him know that there are a number of thoughts circulating about the activities of Territory Grape Farms Pty Ltd and the provision of power in the vicinity of his holding. Of course, it is possible that I will not be able to provide statutory declarations that would satisfy him or other members of this Assembly. They may be forthcoming. The only reason that such statutory declarations would not be forthcoming would be because of the small size of the population in central Australia. Some people believe that they may run the risk of being victimised to provide such statutory declarations. The reason I say that is because I have been accused by members opposite of being malicious in this regard. Suffice it to say that I have researched the particular issue quite carefully and I stick by my allegations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the reason I wish to speak tonight is in relation to policing at Santa Teresa. Honourable members may recall that a news item was heard on the 8HA news on the morning of 18 February. It went like this:

A police constable is being treated at the Alice Springs Hospital after being stoned in an incident at Santa Teresa on Friday night. Police said he was a member of a patrol which had gone to a camp at Santa Teresa after 11 o'clock to arrest a man. The patrol was stoned. The constable was hit on the forehead and taken to the Alice Springs Hospital where he was treated and allowed to leave. The incident is the second stoning of police within a week. It is being investigated.

I think that that news item encapsulates a particularly severe ongoing problem at Santa Teresa with respect to public order. It has been the subject of representations made to the Police Commissioner and his assistant in Alice Springs over a number of months. I will not take up the Assembly's time by describing it in detail. I have, for example, one letter of 11 December 1984 sent by the administrative officer to the police at Alice Springs detailing incidents over October and November. They were regrettable and they were particularly serious. I believe that I, as a local member, cannot possibly ignore it. It would be derelict in the extreme to do so.

In addition to the letter of 11 December 1984, I recently received a copy of a letter from the progress association at Santa Teresa reporting on behalf of the council and enclosing a copy of a letter sent to the Assistant Commissioner of Police in Alice Springs. That letter says inter alia: 'Many pleas have been forwarded to the police department for permanent police to be stationed at Santa Teresa to no avail. Council reiterate the need for police to be stationed here on a permanent basis and suggest that this could vastly affect the problems experienced of late'. The situation is that there would not be expensive capital works required to establish a permanent police presence at Santa Teresa. There are existing facilities that could be utilised for their accommodation. My basic point is that, although the police are attempting to do their best with patrols, there is no doubt in my mind that policing by people who are not well known in the community is less likely to be as effective as policing by people who have been around the traps for a while and who are known to people.

I hope that some fairly immediate assistance can be given in this regard. The problems have been going on for a considerable length of time. I note just from my own experiences as far back as September last year that there are similar problems with the policing of the dry area. The dry area at Santa Teresa includes a provision that people are able to bring beer onto the Santa Teresa lease. What is forbidden are flagons of wine, and these are causing the damage. There have been relatively few confiscations of motor vehicles. That has been effective in other areas. What is of particular concern to me is that right now there are too many people in physical danger at Santa Teresa. It is an immediate problem. I know that people will leap up and say: 'There goes the opposition calling again for more government expenditure. The community should look after the problem for itself'.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Precisely, it should too.

Mr D.W. Collins: The Central Land Council should accept the responsibility.

Mr BELL: I am starting to get a few bites there from the backbench. They are not to be wondered at. I am reacting to an immediate human problem, Mr Deputy Speaker. I have thought about it considerably. I have seen some of the human misery that results and I do not think that you can demand that a community overnight comes to terms with these problems.

Mr D.W. Collins: Tell the Central Land Council to stop using its vehicles to take the grog out.

Mr BELL: The honourable member for Sadadeen is making some more idiotic allegations. It is a bit of a shame that he does not come out to Santa Teresa and view some of the problems for himself.

Mr D.W. Collins: How do you know I haven't been there?

Mr BELL: To return to the point, there will be a great deal of expenditure required in providing a permanent police presence. I would hope, and I am sure honourable members would hope, that the community at Santa Teresa would be able to come to terms with the difficulties and police them itself. All I am saying is that lives are going to be saved by the stationing of police there in the short term. It is not a long-term solution but I do not think that the short term needs in that regard can be ignored. There are precedents for it elsewhere. There is a similar permanent police presence, for example, at Hermannsburg, not considerably further from Alice Springs and not a particularly larger community.

I could address this matter at greater length but I think that the comments I have made this evening in this regard will undoubtedly convince members of the need in this regard. I will be making further representations to the honourable Chief Minister, who is responsible for police, in the hope that such a permanent police presence at Santa Teresa can occur in the near future and bring about an improvement in public order.

Mr HANRAHAN (Flynn): Mr Deputy Speaker, I certainly do not intend to keep honourable members here for much longer. There are a couple of issues that I would like to address. One is basically the reporting of some issues that concern the electorate of Flynn. The other is to touch on a few of the comments made in the Assembly today. The honourable member for MacDonnell certainly had his say. To use his words, I call them very despicable comments. I am very pleased that he is leaving because that is the sort of standard that we expect. We stay in the Assembly and are prepared to debate any issue for the benefit of the honourable member for MacDonnell. The honourable members of the opposition take every opportunity to leave this Assembly at their convenience. I might also add that, rather laughably, at various stages during the last 3 days of these sittings, they have called attention to the quorum in the Assembly. I think that in itself is indicative of the very abuse of privilege.

Let me raise my concerns. Last year, I reported to the Assembly some very severe problems that I was experiencing in the electorate of Flynn. One was the flooding at Emily Hills. I am pleased to say that the succession of Ministers for Transport and Works have addressed the problem and tenders have now been called and are expected to be let in March this year. That certainly will go a long way to alleviating some of the problems that are being experienced by some of my constituents.

Another concern is the Heavitree Gap bridge which represents a government commitment of some \$3m to \$4m. The Minister for Transport and Works has a very pained expression on his face. Maybe it is about \$2.5m. I may well be wrong. The bridge will solve not only the problem of access in times of flooding but it will address what I see as a very serious situation: access during times of emergency. I ask all members to recall March 1983 when we were honoured by a visit from their Royal Highnesses, the Princess of Wales and Prince Charles. Those floods created some huge problems for their access to the main town centre. My constituents endured 4 days of isolation before they were able to traverse the normally dry bed of the Todd River.

Mosquitoes have been a problem. I believe that, in his speech on the address in reply, the Minister for Transport and Works mentioned that the government was anticipating the expenditure of some \$6m to remove the sewage ponds out to what is called the Brewer industrial estate. That is one of the greatest things that I have heard and actually succeeded in lobbying for because the mosquitoes in my particular electorate are my biggest problem. I have had

my door beaten down from noon till dusk by mosquitoes. It is a big problem because, in that particular electorate, there are 5 caravan parks, and there are likely to be another 5. When the tourists sit outside trying to have a barbecue and are savaged by mosquitoes, believe me, it is a problem. I commend the action of the Minister for Transport and Works in having those sewage ponds removed. I know he is laughing with tongue in cheek.

Mr Deputy Speaker, one thing the honourable member for MacDonnell has not mentioned at any stage of these proceedings is the opening on 15 February, in Alice Springs, of a facility that actually employs 11 people permanently. It is located 30 km south of the town. It has been constructed by the owners of the Mereenie production lease and they include Magellan, Moonie Oil, Transoil, Flinders Petroleum and Oilmin. The operators of this facility are locally based in the Northern Territory and their business is conducted by a locally-based company, Territory Fuels Pty Ltd. That facility, which is in the electorate of MacDonnell, located in the Brewer industrial estate, is probably unknown to the majority of members present. I would suggest that any member who travels to Alice Springs take the time to go out and have a look at what private enterprise has done with that facility. It is going to expand. It will become a production facility. It will be the receiving end for the Mereenie pipeline. The oil is being transported on a daily basis in trucks and it really is a magnificent facility. Australian National Rail has established virtually a head station there and all its rail trucks come in and take the oil down to Port Stanvac. Various products are coming out of the facility. Some 3% to 4% of the Territory's needs in diesel and so on will be met. I know it is only a small amount but it will be a very good start. I can assure members that, when that facility is up and going and when the gas pipeline is built from Alice Springs to Darwin - and there has been a great deal of debate on that issue here today - I will be pushing for some local ownership in that whole scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what I mainly rose to speak about tonight was simply this. As far as I am concerned, there was a despicable breach today, not only of privilege but everything that we stand for in this Assembly, by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for MacDonnell and the member for Stuart who took time out to suggest that the honourable member for Sadadeen had been totally dishonest and corrupt in his dealings. Might I suggest that, if you follow the logic of what has transpired in the business activities of the member for Sadadeen, and he is quite capable of defending himself, you would agree that the logic and the mentality of the honourable members opposite is something that the people of this Northern Territory surely need protecting from. All the honourable member for Sadadeen has done is to involve himself as a shareholder in a business dealing that raised funds, privately and through the NTDC, to build a facility for tourists in Alice Springs.

I happen to know a little bit about it because I was involved in real estate and I was involved in the original negotiations. What the honourable members opposite are saying is totally deplorable. In fact, it is totally unacceptable that any member of the public - and really we are no more than members of the public - who deals honestly in business, can no longer go out there and strike up a deal. Let me simply ask this. If you buy or build a property, and you borrow money from a bank or the NTDC, and you happen to sell that property somewhere down the line for a profit, what is wrong with that? The particular property over which the honourable member for Sadadeen has been virtually accused of corruption was sold for a profit of some \$200 000. In addition to that, it has made such a profit and such an impact on tourist

accommodation availability in Alice Springs that the purchaser who bought it from the honourable member for Sadadeen has sold it again for another \$200 000 profit.

Mr D.W. Collins: And the other 12 shareholders.

Mr HANRAHAN: And the 12 shareholders that the honourable member for Sadadeen has reminded me of, Mr Deputy Speaker, are no more than business people abiding in a community and making their living. But let us bring it back into context. It is illegal as far as the honourable members opposite are concerned. You cannot do that. You cannot raise money. You cannot make a profit. You cannot do anything.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like the Leader of the Opposition, the member for MacDonnell and the member for Stuart, if they have such a point at issue, to raise it under standing orders and, under their right in the Assembly, bring the matter on. Let us debate it. Has the man done any wrong? What a hypocrisy! If you take it all the way down the line, Mr Deputy Speaker, it is just so laughable. I would like to mention this. We heard this morning total agreement by the honourable members opposite to the building of the pipeline, the financing of the pipeline and the Territory guarantees for the pipeline. It is so good for the economy. It is going to do this. It is going to do that. It will lower the rates of subsidy that we get from the federal government. It will lower the cost of electricity. That is fantastic! But why an isolated case? Why not the tourist industry?

In the same sittings of this Assembly, the honourable members opposite have taken time to tell us all that we cannot build Yulara. We cannot develop Kings Canyon. Nothing should be done with a Territory guarantee, with Territory financial backing from the NTDC. They are the biggest bunch of hypocrites who have ever sat in any one place together and I reiterate that the Territory people need protection from them. Thank God they do not have power in the Northern Territory.

Mr FIRMIN (Ludmilla): Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening I would like to take a few moments of the Assembly's time to bring honourable members up to date with the activities of the National Enterprise Workshops, the very new and innovative program that we have been working on for some time now and have managed to bring to the Northern Territory. This year the Northern Territory will enter the National Enterprise Workshops for the first time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Territorian is a very inventive person. We do our fair share of thinking up new ways of doing things, inventing new items of equipment and modifying old ones. However, our record for getting those ideas into the market place is not very good. In fact, it is extremely poor. Hopefully, the enterprise workshops which we are planning to bring to the Northern Territory this year will rectify that. The workshops are encouraging and training entrepreneurs. They aim to increase innovation and entrepreneurship, in selected individuals, by teaching business skills forming participants into teams and giving each team an invention for which to write a business plan. At the end of the workshop, the plans will be judged and the selected team will represent the Northern Territory at the national finals later this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, imagine that you are enthusiastic about an idea for a new business. You think the idea has an excellent market, great prospects and it fits in with your skills, your experience, your personal values and your

aspirations. What are the most significant risks and problems? What are its long-term profit prospects? What are its future financing and cash flow requirements? What is the marketing and pricing strategy? The answers to all these questions will be given to you when you sit down and work out your business plan. In the preliminary workshops you are taught how to work up your business plans. It causes the entrepreneur to think through his problems and work out all the facets of his new venture. He will finish with the ideal document to present to a venture capital company to acquire the necessary capital to get that invention onto the marketplace.

Let us have a look at what an entrepreneur is. We are led to believe that entrepreneurs are very different from other people. They are not perfectionists. Attention to detail is a trait that they admire in others but almost never exhibit themselves. They usually run by the old adage: he who considers everything before doing anything will do little wrong, but he will do damn little. Paradoxically, they are rarely satisfied or at ease with their own achievements. Even when their own goals are surpassed, you will find them updating their expectations. This attitude is usually prevalent in money matters. Often, the money is not a goal in itself but simply a scoreboard on how they are doing in the game they have chosen to play. One of the more redeeming qualities of an entrepreneur is persistence. Stories abound of men and women who believe in an idea and push it through years of concerted opposition to see it come to fruition.

We have several people in the Territory who have demonstrated those talents in spite of quite incredible pressures against them, not the least of which was solved just recently by the introduction to the local market of a patent attorney's agent for the first time. Several of those people I would mention. Brian Mund of the Mundsonia Bricks operation spent 4½ years working his way through his own invention. Finally, he managed to get himself into a situation where he produced his first lots of bricks for marketing. As a lot of people in this Assembly know, Bob Neate from Neata Glass spent a considerable amount of time, energy and entrepreneurship in developing a very innovative set of french doors which are now under production in the Northern Territory and are being sold not only within the Territory but all around Australia, and he is now seeking overseas markets.

The objectives of the enterprise workshops are to prepare selected persons to establish technology-based new companies, to foster innovation within established companies and to facilitate the commercialisation of Australian inventions. The workshops achieve these objectives by selecting persons with potential, or proven entrepreneurial skills, providing the above workshop training which includes grounding in the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to assess an invention's commercial potential, to prepare a business plan investment proposal and to launch a company. In the Northern Territory, we will be starting off our first workshops this year in April and a group of Territorians will be sought to go to those workshops to develop some of those entrepreneurial skills. From those workshops hopefully we will have about 30 persons who would be interested in running teams this year to compete in the Northern Territory finals in September. One of those teams will then go on to the national finals in November in South Australia.

The invention selection criteria at the particular time when the teams come together have several required and ideal criteria attached to them. The required criteria of an invention are that: it is technically feasible; it has not yet been exploited commercially; it has a potential for all elements of a business plan; it is available to the workshop for working up into a suitable

business plan; and, it has a reasonable working potential. The ideal, but not necessarily required, criteria are that: it is technologically advanced; it is available for post-workshop development; it has export potential; it has an employment potential; and, it might be a prototype or a model.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Territory and Commonwealth governments and private enterprise are coming together on this project for the first time in the Territory. The Northern Territory has announced a grant of \$29 340 to the first workshop. The Commonwealth is contributing some funds and other support by way of personnel assistance for a possible 4 to 6 month period by sending up a senior officer of the Department of Science and Technology to work with our enterprise workshop teams to work up the business plans prior to going to the finals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, another reason why I am speaking about this tonight is that we must also try to raise some funds from local business people to help this enterprise workshop this year. Over the next 4 to 6 weeks, the committee of the Territory Enterprise Workshops will be approaching Territory business houses and manufacturing operations for sums of money to the total of some \$15 000. I hope that they will open their purses and help out what I believe to be a very worthwhile project.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

Mr Speaker Steele took the Chair at 10 am.

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay on the Table a message from the Chairman of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Executive Committee relating to Commonwealth Day, 11 March. I have had copies of this message made for distribution to all honourable members and the local press.

On Commonwealth Day, which falls on 11 March, I extend greetings to all my fellow Parliamentarians. On this day, we rededicate ourselves to the principles of international peace and order, liberty of the individual, faith in the inherent dignity and worth of human beings, eradication of all forms of racialism and racial prejudice, elimination of colonialism, achievement of a more equitable international society and international cooperation contained in the Declaration of the Commonwealth principles adopted in 1971.

As members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), we hold these principles dear, and in our various meetings and conferences it has been our endeavour to re-emphasise them.

The hallmark of the various Commonwealth organisations has been cooperation and consultation. In the same spirit our Association brings Parliamentarians together on one platform where they exchange information and experience in a free and cordial atmosphere. In our parliamentary institutions and the ideals underlying them, we have much in common because of the Commonwealth connection. Valuing the democratic processes, the CPA through seminars and other means has been engaged in broadening the understanding of, and promoting the respect for, parliamentary institutions. The Commonwealth link has lent a great stability to our Association, and a sense of belonging to its members.

The Commonwealth has evolved with the times. In the process of transformation the Commonwealth has shown great dynamism and resilience. It has grown in membership as well as in the range of its activities. It has been a common meeting ground of the developed and the developing countries and a forum of excellent opportunities, where Parliamentarians meet freely and gain a better understanding of each other and forge personal ties.

In times of crisis the Commonwealth has provided a healing touch. The common parliamentary culture, the same medium of speech and frequent meetings have fostered among members a sense of kinship and emotional attachment.

During the tenure of my office as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I look forward to meeting a number of leaders, representatives of the Commonwealth countries and members of the Association and to exchanging ideas as to how best we may further and strengthen the activities, understanding and cooperation among the various members of the Association.

DR THE HON. BAL RAM JAKHAR

Chairman of the Executive Committee
COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until 10 am on Tuesday 16 April 1985, or such other time and date set by Mr Speaker pursuant to sessional order.

Motion agreed to.

TABLED PAPER

Road Safety Council Report 1983-84

Mr MANZIE (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, I table the 1983-84 annual report of the Road Safety Council of the Northern Territory.

In tabling this report, I would like to make a few comments. There is very little joy for me in saying that, in 1984, 50 people died on Territory roads. The only time that I will be satisfied in full by the council's report is when it shows that there have been no fatalities. The most significant factor in road deaths in the Territory is the increasing incidence of single vehicle accidents. This points to one thing: people have a scant regard for their own safety. Already this year, 11 people have died on Territory roads and 10 of them have been as a result of single vehicle accidents. The huge majority of such accidents are the result of driver error. Certainly, drink, fatigue and other human conditions can cause road accidents. It is apparent that, in order to tackle the problem, we must go to the root cause: the drivers themselves. If drivers take into account their own condition and the environment in which they are driving, they should be able to avert nearly all accidents.

Mr Speaker, I noted some comments from the Leader of the Opposition over the need he perceived for a comprehensive random breath testing program. I certainly believe that the Leader of the Opposition was genuine in his comments even though they were very inaccurate. I found it strange that what he was actually saying was that the Territory Insurance Office had incurred a loss because of the government's attitudes towards random breath testing and the resulting road accidents. He said that in a debate on the TIO report. I found it incredible and rather sad that the Leader of the Opposition was actually using the tragedy of road accidents for a political point-scoring exercise in relation to the TIO incurring a loss to intimate somehow that it was the government's fault. But, as I said, the comments were probably made in good faith.

Mr Speaker, it would probably be of benefit to indicate the facts relating to random breath testing. Last year, a total of 14 747 random breath tests were carried out and a further 2015 breath tests were carried out in the course of normal police duties. It is appropriate that this Assembly be aware that the police actually do have a program of utilising specific areas and specific hotels. This year alone, random breath testing was conducted near the Beachfront Hotel, the Nightcliff Hotel, the casino and the Humpty Doo Hotel. They were specific exercises in relation to areas where people congregate to drink. There was a reading of 0.35 obtained in one of those exercises.

There has been an almost 20% increase in the number of vehicles registered in the Territory since 1980. The number of drivers' licences has also increased at around that level. In the same period, the number of motor vehicle accidents has increased by only 16% so there may be some sign of improvement in the escalation of traffic accidents occurring in the Territory. Significantly, the number of alcohol-related fatal accidents has decreased from more than 70% down to 62.2%. That is an indication that there is some improvement occurring in that

area. Nationally, alcohol-related fatal accidents are around the 50% mark so there is a long way for us to go in changing the behaviour of drivers.

Of the 14 747 random breath tests carried out, 1.22% were found to be positive and those people were then required to undergo a breath analysis. In comparison, the Victorian average is 0.85%. In the Darwin urban area, 0.89% of those tested failed. That indicates that there is a greater awareness in Darwin. It is apparent that no amount of testing or lower blood-alcohol limits will ever put an end to drink-driving. One thing that will have an effect on the number of road deaths is the awareness of all drivers of their own capabilities. That includes most definitely an awareness of how drink affects those capabilities. If that is ignored, accidents will happen. The Road Safety Council and federal and state governments attempt to bring that message home. The bottom line has always been the public's perception of itself as road users. To reduce the road toll, road users must first be aware of the need for total responsibility towards others at all times. I intend to see that this aspect is stressed in the future.

In relation to the report, I would like to comment on the program for road safety for Aboriginal communities. Unfortunately, on a per capita basis, there has been a greater number of deaths amongst the Aboriginal community than the rest of the Territory population. That indicates that much more will need to be done by the council and other people involved in road safety issues in relation to education in Aboriginal areas. The road safety program has been developed with terms of reference for Aboriginal liaison. Hopefully, that program will be implemented this year. It is significant that there has been a decrease in the number of vehicles with open-load space. The number of passenger-only vehicles is increasing which is possibly a result of the education program's highlighting of the dangers of travelling in the back of open vehicles.

Pages 19 and 20 of the report contain survey figures on the wearing of seat belts. There has been a 14% increase in the number of people who are now wearing seat belts. In all areas, there have been increases. Only 46% of rear seat passengers are wearing restraints. The percentages relating to children are of concern to me: 63% of children travelling in front seats are wearing restraints and, in the rear seats, 60% are wearing restraints. Until parents realise what occurs with accidents, the situation will not change. It is pretty serious. A motor vehicle travelling at only 20 km an hour, and which strikes an immovable object and therefore stops immediately, causes an unrestrained child to strike the inside of that car with a force that is equal to falling from a two-story building on to concrete. If parents realised the situation that they create when not utilising safety harnesses for children in motor vehicles, I am sure that most parents would do something about it. I believe it is ignorance but it is the sort of ignorance that does not become evident until tragedy strikes. That is another area where there will be more education.

I asked the Road Safety Council to give me some advice on legislation that is being put into practice in Queensland and Western Australia. It restricts the blood-alcohol concentration of people under the age of 18 to 0.02%. I have had some indication that there may have been a 17% decrease in Western Australia in the number of accidents involving people in that age group since the introduction of that measure. I am very interested to see what is occurring and to hear comments from the Road Safety Council on that. It is a matter that may have to be considered in relation to what is occurring here. Much more research will be done in relation to the number of accidents that occur in that age group. I have asked also for comments from the Road Safety Council on seat belt legislation, penalties and provisions in the states and for statistical evaluations of any significant changes that could be put into practice in the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the report.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, a number of issues come up from time to time in this Assembly where the opposition makes a very determined effort to assist the government in a bipartisan way by supporting measures that need to be taken. I must say in relation to the comments just made that there are some government ministers who make it extremely difficult for the opposition to continue to proffer that bipartisan support. We have just seen a classic demonstration of that.

Mr Speaker, in relation to road accidents, the honourable minister has just made a very serious accusation that I used the Territory's road fatalities to score a few points in the TIO debate, and what a shameful exercise that was. Could I refer the honourable minister to the speech I in fact made? I will quote from it because the context in which I made my comments was in support of a position which I know the honourable minister himself supports, and he has said so in this Assembly. By his actions in this Assembly, the minister makes it very difficult to continue to give some bipartisan support. He advanced arguments for not decreasing the limit in random breath tests from 0.08 to 0.05. That is the minister's position and I support him. It is appalling that, when I put an argument in debate supporting that position, I am accused of scoring points off people's deaths and accidents. I will refer to 2 pertinent quotes from what I said in the debate on Tuesday. The honourable minister has accused me of blaming the government's losses in the motor vehicle area of TIO on its lack of action in respect of random breath tests. I will quote from what I said in the debate on Tuesday 5 March.

Mr Manzie: What were you debating?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, would the honourable minister like to advance in the Assembly an argument that the whole question of drink-driving is not a matter of the most serious financial concern for every state government insurance office in this country? Is he seriously going to suggest that, in a debate on financial losses of the Territory Insurance Office, the matter of drink-driving is not relevant to that debate? There has been some nonsense already from the minister this morning. I am sure that he does not want to compound the nonsense by suggesting that. The remarks were made in the context of the financial drain and, as I will point out from my speech in a minute, the legitimate financial drain, which we have to cop, of drink-driving on government insurance offices. I suggest that the minister will do his own party a service in respect of trying to obtain some bipartisan support if he rereads what I say before he misinterprets it in the gross fashion he did this morning. He accused me of scoring points in debate off dead bodies and injuries. I will quote from my speech: 'I am prepared to concede that the losses the TIO faces with motor vehicle insurance are losses that we must cop'. I am not quite sure how much more categoric I am supposed to be in debate.

I will quote completely from the paragraph where I introduced the arguments about tightening up random breath testing. The comments were not made in relation to the financial losses at all. I established that we would just have to cop these losses but I then went on to say:

Mr Speaker, I also want to say a few things about motor vehicle accidents in the Northern Territory, particularly in respect of some recent public comments about 0.05. As far as I am concerned - and I said this publicly at the time - 0.05 will be unnecessary until we start getting serious about 0.08. I would like to drive that home to the gut. There is a ridiculous philosophy abroad in the community

relating to the police operating effectively on behalf of the non-drinking drivers of the Northern Territory, who deserve every degree of protection on the Territory's roads. In view of cutting down the horrendous drain on public resources that the actions of these irresponsible people, indeed criminal people, who drink and drive causes, there is a philosophy in the community that, if the police pick you up for 0.08, it must be a fair cop. It is not a question of whether you have broken the law, whether you are guilty of the offence or whether you are endangering yourself and every other road user, it must be a fair cop.

Mr Speaker, how much more clearly can one put an argument in debate? First, I acknowledged that TIO losses on motor vehicle insurance are something that we just have to cop. I then said that I do not think it is justifiable to further restrict the random breath test levels. Indeed, I recall the honourable minister in the debate confirming that he does not think it would work either. I put an argument in support of his argument and I am accused this morning of scoring points from death and injury.

Mr Speaker, if the minister would like to read the entire debate, he will see that I then indicated that I would be willing to engage in bipartisan discussions with the government in an attempt to improve the efficiency, if that can be done, of random breath testing before any consideration is given to tightening it up and moving from 0.08 to 0.05. If the honourable minister would like to refer to Hansard, if he would like to use his brain before putting his mouth into gear, he would see that he grossly misinterpreted the statements that I made in support of his own position on random breath testing.

Mr Manzie: You cannot hide the fact that you were talking about the TIO and you brought in road accidents.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether the minister is naturally ignorant or whether he has taken lessons in ignorance. Would the honourable minister in charge of this portfolio like to stand up - and we will give him leave to do so if he wishes to - and seriously put the argument in this Assembly that the problems caused by drink-driving are not a major cause of concern for every state government insurance office in this country? If he wants to be foolish enough to do that, he should resign from his portfolio and go back to work for the Police Force. It really is an appalling performance by the minister. If the minister would like to refer to my speech on the TIO, he would see that I was careful enough to divide the losses into 2 sections: the \$8m loss on motor vehicle payouts and the \$4m loss on reinsurance. What I said in the speech was that the loss on motor vehicles was a loss we would simply have to cop. No blame was attached to the government on that. The loss, however, on reinsurance was due to what the government and, indeed, the TIO in its own annual report, have acknowledged: incompetence and mismanagement. The result, I am sad to say, is the suggestion in the TIO's annual report that senior officers of that government insurance office may have to be prosecuted for certain offences.

I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that a government minister who does not think that drink-driving and road safety are of immediate concern to the operation of the Territory's government insurance office is not fit to hold his portfolio. If the minister would take a bit of his leisure time today to read through the speech and confirm that the comments that I made about random breath tests were in support of his own position - that the Northern Territory government should not be bulldozed by public comment into moving from

0.08 to 0.05 - then I think he would understand the position he has put me in. It is very difficult to continue to try, as I did in the very speech he referred to, to adopt a bipartisan approach to the serious issue of road safety and drink-driving.

Mr Speaker, the minister himself gave the figures in the TIO debate - the worst road statistics in the country. I acknowledge the efforts the Northern Territory government is making, has made and will make in the future to bring those statistics down. I do not think that we should be panicked into making moves which, although they may have some cosmetic appeal, will not result in any real improvement. I refer to the proposals - and perhaps the minister would do me the courtesy of listening to me this time - that have been bruited on the front pages of at least 2 newspapers that perhaps there should be a move to reduce the random breath testing limit from 0.08 to 0.05.

I simply say that we have to continue with the work the Northern Territory government is now doing with promotional campaigns, education campaigns and the continued use of the random breath testing procedure. We all know there is a lobby group in the community which wishes to abolish random breath tests. I do not think there is any support for that proposition in the Northern Territory government nor is there in the opposition. We have to continue to pursue that work and improve upon it if we can, but not necessarily get into knee-jerk reactions because they might look good in the press or appeal to some people in the community but in fact will have no real result. As the minister pointed out to this Assembly, in an argument which I supported, statistics clearly indicate that the majority of the serious road accidents in the Territory are caused by blood-alcohol readings well in excess of 0.08. That is also the experience in southern states. Therefore, it is difficult to sustain a case for reducing that level from 0.08 to 0.05.

I apologise to the Assembly, Mr Speaker, for the reiteration of this argument but it does appear to be necessary for the honourable minister. If he seriously wants to advance a case, as he has done some 4 times this morning already, that the question of the Territory's deaths and accidents caused by drink-driving is not a relevant or proper matter to be discussed in the context of a debate on the TIO, he should have a talk to the manager of the Territory Insurance Office and perhaps to the Treasurer of the Northern Territory in respect of their concern about the direct impact of drink-driving on the financial situation of the Territory Insurance Office. I really do have some trouble in comprehending the nonsensical argument he has put this morning.

If the honourable minister would now like to tell me that he does not want my support for not reducing the figure from 0.08 to 0.05, then let him stand up and say so. I will continue to advance the case on my own and not support him any longer. I am happy to do that if that is what he wants. Mr Speaker, the minister should not stand up in this Assembly and so grossly misinterpret my remarks by stating on the public record of this Assembly that I used the Territory's death and accident statistics to score a few political points in the TIO debate. Have a read of the speech, Mr Speaker. If any person, particularly any member of the public press, wishes to take up any of that nonsense the minister let loose this morning, I trust he will at least do me the courtesy - as the minister did not do - of reading what I actually said.

Debate adjourned.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
Senator A.W.R. Lewis

Mr SPEAKER: I draw honourable members' attention to the presence in the

gallery of Senator Austin Lewis from Canberra. On behalf of honourable members, I welcome the honourable Senator to the Northern Territory.

Members: Hear, hear!

TABLED PAPER History of Legislative Council

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, for the information of the Assembly, I lay on the Table a short history of the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory by Mr Fred Walker who was Clerk of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Honourable members, I recommend that this paper be printed.

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the paper be printed.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENT Quoting from Uncorrected Hansard

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, during the adjournment debate yesterday, a point of order was taken that an honourable member was quoting from an uncorrected edition of Hansard of an earlier day of this period of sittings in contravention of standing orders. The Deputy Speaker ruled that there was no point of order in that standing orders were silent on the matter and, despite the ruling of a former Speaker that such a practice was not in order, he would permit the honourable member concerned to quote from the uncorrected edition, provided that such quotation was relevant to the discussion in progress. I support this ruling.

Honourable members are aware that there is an embargo on the distribution of the uncorrected Hansard to persons other than members of the Legislative Assembly. It is not available to them until 1 pm to afford members the opportunity to have any urgent amendments made before distribution. The Hansard is distributed with the condition of distribution on the front cover: 'This is an uncorrected proof of the daily report. It is made available under the condition that it is recognised as such'. I am certain that any of the limited number of recipients of this uncorrected version appreciates that minor, obvious and sometimes humorous errors can occur in transcription and take this possibility into account in any use that they make of the publication.

It is my intention to permit members to quote from the uncorrected edition of Hansard on the same condition as stated by the Deputy Speaker yesterday. In addition, unless honourable members object, I intend to lift the previously mentioned embargo on the release of the daily Hansard.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mr Speaker, I simply want to say, perhaps for the benefit of some of the new members of the Assembly, how pleased I am that you have removed that ridiculous proscription. Honourable members who have been in this Assembly for some time will recall that we used to debate this matter with the former Speaker ad nauseam.

Mr Tuxworth: Every sitting.

Mr B. COLLINS: That is right.

Mr Speaker, I would simply like to point out how this became firmly established. In a previous debate, I got into some disagreement with the previous Speaker of the Assembly about whether I could quote from the daily Hansard, because I did not really see the point of printing it if you could not use it. I challenged the former Speaker of the Assembly to point out to me somewhere in standing orders where he could find that the use of the daily Hansard was proscribed. The former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly sat me down very effectively by saying that he was running the Chamber, not under the standing orders, but by the Katherine rules of debate. I have never forgotten that exchange and I sat down immediately.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Territory Insurance Office Annual Report 1983-84

Continued from 5 March 1985.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I will not be speaking for very long. In fact, I will probably last about as long as the Leader of the Opposition did on the subject.

Mr B. Collins: Are you talking about the land rights debate? In which case, I will send out for a cut lunch.

Mr PERRON: The unrevised Hansard records 5 pages of debate by the Leader of the Opposition in response to the report tabled by the Chief Minister. In those 5 pages, members will find 3 paragraphs, or barely half a page, that were relevant to the subject. The rest was rantings about former debates in the Assembly on 0.08. There was very little concerning his earlier allegations about incompetence and mismanagement in relation to the TIO's affairs.

Mr Speaker, the unfortunate losses made by the TIO this year are a result of 2 things: general insurance and the motor accidents compensation scheme. During 1983-84, the motor accidents compensation scheme operated at a time when limited common law liability still applied in the Northern Territory. When tabling a previous TIO annual report, I indicated that it was likely we would continue to have those types of losses because, until the end of 1983-84, we did not have the benefit to the TIO scheme of the abolition of common law claims. It was forecast that we would make a loss this year and indeed we have.

On the other question of general insurance, in the opening paragraph of his report, the chairman states: 'During 1983-84, the office's direct insurance business recorded an operating profit of \$2.4m, an excellent result representing a profit to premium income ratio of 22%. However, this was offset by an operating loss of \$3.4m on inwards reinsurance, giving a net general insurance loss of \$960 000 for the year. While nevertheless a loss, this is an improvement on last year's loss of \$2.2m'. I thought honourable members opposite understood when we mentioned that the insurance business, in particular the reinsurance business, has a characteristically long tail, as it is termed in the insurance industry. For the year of risk accepted by the TIO, it may receive claims against that period of risk for many years thereafter. Every year, the files of the TIO are reviewed and reassessed as to what the current position is in regard to every outstanding claim. It is my understanding that the losses in 1983-84 are primarily because of a review of risk period prior to that date rather than claims received during 1983-84. In other words,

irrespective of what action the TIO took to correct some bad insurance business that it accepted - and there has been no secret about that - irrespective of what action it took to cancel policies or to engage solicitors to ensure that the liability that it accepted was absolutely minimised, there was still a tail to come through the system which the TIO was bound to accept unless it took the action that some in the insurance business have taken: to put it into a company, strip the assets and then fold the company and let it record a loss. That does not seem to be a very ethical practice and, certainly, it is not one that a government insurance office would ever contemplate.

However, the facts before us today in this report indicate that the trading year 1983-84 for the TIO has been a good one. Carry-over claims from previous activity have tarnished that good result and turned it into a loss. Having regard to the TIO's assets, as indicated in its balance sheet, of somewhere near \$70m, it is quite a secure organisation as far as the premium payers are concerned. I am sure that their insurance risks are quite adequately covered. They have no reason for concern in that regard. The office is continuing to invest its funds throughout the Northern Territory in further capital developments and other investments. That is all to the benefit of the Territory and was one of the original reasons the Territory Insurance Office was set up. The government was dissatisfied with the levels of investment in the Territory by insurance companies compared with the premiums that were being taken out of the Northern Territory. In fact, the TIO is a successful organisation. It has carried some bad risks but there is not an insurance company in the world that has not carried some bad risks from time to time. A loss in a year or 2 years or even 3 years is not a reflection that the organisation is about to crumble. In fact, I think it is a good report for the TIO having regard to the circumstances.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Speaker, it is fairly difficult to agree with the minister that the trading year has been a good one, even within the context in which he made those remarks, when we had a loss of about \$8m in the motor accidents compensation area and a loss of \$960 000 in general insurance. If the TIO continues to make a similar loss in each of the next few financial years, the TIO will suffer considerably, and so will its policy holders.

Mr Speaker, we are not saying that the TIO is in grave financial trouble at this stage. We accept that there have been some particular incidents in the general reinsurance area that have contributed to that trouble and I want to make a more detailed comment about that later. However, I do not think you can brush it under the carpet, as the honourable minister tried to do, by saying that the trading year has been a good one. For any trading year to be a good one, you must end up in the black and not in the red. I accept that there are particular problems in relation to motor accidents compensation that make it very difficult for this TIO or any other insurance company to make a profit overall. However, again I make the point that it is strange logic to say that it has been a good trading year when we have had a loss.

Mr Speaker, we now have the 1983-84 annual report and, consistent with past practices of this government, it has come well after the end of the financial year. What is particularly illuminating in relation to both the last 2 reports is that, during the time in which they could have been tabled, there were elections. 1983 was their own election. It is clear that the government has seen the matters in the TIO reports as being sufficiently embarrassing to hold off the reports. That was most unfortunate. It is always interesting to consider the timing of the government's tabling of these documents.

During the 1983 election, the Labor Party advised the electorate that TIO would lose about \$5m. The then Chief Minister denied this during the campaign but, once the election was over, everybody knew that, in fact, we were spot on. The loss of \$5m was made up of \$2.2m in the general insurance fund and \$2.99m on the motor accidents compensation scheme. It was the same story this year. We indicated that, on information available to us, TIO would face a loss of \$14m in 1983-84. I quote the response in November last year by the then Treasurer. He said: 'I believe firstly that he is wrong'. Mr Speaker, it is quite clear now that the Leader of the Opposition was not wrong; he was spot on in his estimates of what the loss to TIO would be. That comment was made by the then Treasurer on 5 November 1984 when he was involved in the holding operation. Once again, we had a situation where convenient timing had allowed the government to ignore embarrassing information at the time of an election.

Mr Speaker, earlier this year, when the former Treasurer was questioned on the estimated \$14m loss following sharply on the \$5.2m loss in the previous financial year, his response was, and I quote from an ABC interview: 'Well, I could not say whether it is correct or not because I do not have any reports from the TIO to the extent of losses this year. When I get the annual report which has to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly, then I will know'. Those comments revealed that the minister played a very loose role indeed in terms of the oversighting provisions in the TIO act and his responsibility to ensure that TIO was functioning effectively. One could very easily read into that comment by the minister that he had not been demanding reports from the TIO board and that he had not been keeping himself informed on what was happening with TIO. That is quite staggering when one realises that, in the previous year, it had lost \$5.2m yet, according to the statement that I have just read out, he did not take the trouble to keep himself informed on what was happening in the year following. That loss has now increased to around \$16m all up.

Mr Speaker, before turning to the 2 major loss areas, I want to refer to the Auditor-General's report for 1983-84. He made 2 points about the current audit requirements for the TIO. He argued:

The appointment of the auditor of a government entity such as the TIO should not, in my view, be a decision made by the board of that body. Additionally, a situation in which an annual appointment is required runs contrary to my perception of independence of the auditor.

As well, he argued that the Northern Territory Auditor-General should be the auditor of the TIO. In my view, they are sensible points. Their sense is demonstrated by the fact that, in every state which has a government insurance office, that exact situation applies: the Auditor-General for that state is the auditor for the government insurance office. The Northern Territory is one out in this situation. Instead of addressing that issue in a sensible way, the Minister for Mines and Energy sought to denigrate that advice by painting the Auditor-General as simply being interested in empire building.

Mr Speaker, that is just not good enough. The person, whose responsibility it is to assess government records and accounts and provide full information to this Assembly that the government has been administering its departments properly and effectively, made a report to this Assembly that he believed a more appropriate way of auditing TIO reports would be for the job to be given to himself. He provided 2 specific reasons why that should be done and the only response we have had from the government to this day on that particular matter is that the Auditor-General is interested in empire building.

The interest of the Auditor-General in empire building was demonstrated by the fact that, a few months after he wrote the report, he left the Territory. The then Auditor-General was obviously not interested in building up an empire. He had a continuing interest in the proper audit of Northern Territory government functions. I think he deserves the respect of this government, which in fact appointed him, by giving him a decent answer. If the government is not going to accept his advice, it should give him and the opposition, which is very interested in this particular point and which accepts the points made, a decent answer as to why it will not accept that advice. It is common courtesy and it is also good government. I know we have not seen many examples of good government this sittings but it has an opportunity to provide us with an example of good government and to give us a serious response to the comments made by the Auditor-General in his report.

Mr Speaker, I now want to turn to the general insurance fund. I think it is fair to say that the situation in the general insurance fund is quite appalling. In 1982-83, the fund made a loss of \$2.24m. In 1983-84, this loss had become \$5.46m: 'The large part of this latter loss stems from the abnormal item...'. 'Abnormal item' is a strange term to find in relation to government accounts. '... the abnormal item relating to inwards reinsurance where \$4.5m has been set aside to meet the future costs of earlier mismanagement. This had led to an accumulated loss of \$7 689 997'. The situation is so bad that the TIO has been forced to transfer \$549 102 into the fund from its claims fluctuation reserve. Mr Speaker, the claims fluctuation reserve, in the words of TIO annual report, is a 'reserve established to maintain a solvency margin of assets over liabilities so as to enable the office to meet unforeseen, adverse fluctuations in claims experience'. The transfer of this \$549 102 is most inappropriate in that context. It has not been done for the particular reason that the claims fluctuation reserve has been set up but because of that very bad experience with general reinsurance.

Mr Speaker, as a side comment, in relation to general reinsurance, the government has been running 2 lines. In the annual report last year, it said basically that its general reinsurance losses resulted because it failed in turn to lay off the general reinsurance money it had taken with other insurers. It is saying, in its annual report this year, that it has had 2 or 3 bad claims on which it has had to pay out. I would like the minister to indicate whether we are talking about the same thing or if there have been 2 different problems in the general reinsurance area. Certainly, it is not clear from the comments of the minister whether it is 1 or 2 problems. My delving into the annual reports would tend to indicate that it is perhaps 2 problems. The problem last year, according to the annual report and the comments of the minister at the time, was that, in relation to the reinsurance that the TIO had accepted, the TIO had failed in turn to lay that off properly with other insurance companies. The problem this year, as stated in the report, is that there were 2 or 3 bad claims that the TIO had to meet. From my knowledge of the insurance situation I think they are different things and I would like a comment from the minister on that.

Mr Speaker, getting back to the claims fluctuation reserve, the need to take out that \$549 102 means that we now have no money in the claims fluctuation reserve. I would like the minister to say what we are going to do if we have a situation where we have to maintain the solvency margin of assets over liabilities if we do not have any money in the claims fluctuation reserve to enable us to do that. It is worrying that the cupboard is bare. It is equally worrying that we have no assurance that the losses attributed to this reinsurance problem have yet been covered. If you want evidence of that, all you have to do is go to the second paragraph of the chairman's report where he said: 'Moreover, some of the resulting risks are long-tailed and further claims

may be expected over a number of years'. It would be very useful indeed if the government came clean on this and gave us a full report on exactly what we may expect over a number of years in terms of potential losses in the general reinsurance area.

Mr Speaker, not only do we have the situation of losses in the general reinsurance area but we now have a situation where the government is pulling out of the general reinsurance area and that, in turn, is going to have an impact on the premium growth of the TIO. I want to quote again from the chairman's report:

This will cause a slowing in overall premium growth and may indeed result in an actual reduction in premium income for 1 or 2 years to the extent that the decline in reinsurance income is not offset by an increase in premiums from direct business. While the board is examining measures to minimise these effects, it should be noted that some effect on the office's hitherto rapid overall premium growth will be unavoidable.

Mr Speaker, this takes me to another comment on the question of reinsurance. The TIO began its operations and engaged in what is a perfectly acceptable practice of inwards reinsurance. The TIO, through incompetence and mismanagement, gravely mismanaged that area resulting in a loss. The response of the TIO board was to pull out of that area completely. The alternative was to improve the operation sufficiently to allow it to continue to work in that area on a profitable basis as do other insurance companies the world over. But that was too hard for the TIO; it pulled out of the area. The result in the short term will be a slowing down in the premium growth of the TIO which obviously will mean a reduction in profits and in the amount of money that will be available for investment in the Northern Territory.

We need a pretty good reason why TIO has pulled out of the general inwards reinsurance area rather than get its act together and operate in the general reinsurance area at a profit other insurance companies seem able to do. I think it is pretty staggering that the TIO is pulling out of the general inwards reinsurance area when you consider that the Northern Territory has had a greater need to call on the inwards reinsurance facilities offered by the insurance companies than most other places in Australia. That is because of the massive payouts that came after Cyclone Tracy. We only received our money as policy holders in the Northern Territory because the insurance companies that we dealt with had agreements with other insurance companies both here and overseas to lay off some of the risks. If they had not been able to lay off some of the risks, those insurance companies would not have been able to pay us. I would have thought it was a very serious step indeed for us to pull out of that arrangement after we had received so much benefit from it. I guess the only reason we can do it is because we are so small. Imagine the fuss that we would make if the big people said they would not lay off TIO risks in the Northern Territory because a cyclone might hit next year or there might be a bush fire in Alice Springs. That situation thankfully does not apply. But, I doubt the TIO has won any friends by continuing to want to lay off its risks and not being prepared to take its own inwards reinsurance. I would invite the honourable minister to respond.

Mr Speaker, in the time that I have left to me, I want to address the motor accidents compensation area. Obviously, that is in a different category completely from the general insurance area. We accept that the losses at this stage are probably unavoidable. We would hope that the government would pick up our suggestion that we need to look at accident patterns and accident rates. We

need to have a serious look at ways in which we can reduce those accident rates. Despite the comments of both the Ministers for Transport and Works and for Mines and Energy, the question of drink-driving and the question of 0.08 are, as the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, very closely connected with accident rates, with whether the TIO makes a profit or loss and with the level of premiums for motor vehicle drivers in the Northern Territory. In our view, it is time to look at it in a concerted fashion.

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

Mr TUXWORTH (Chief Minister): I thank honourable members for their contributions. I would just like to pick up a few points that were raised, particularly by the opposition. I will deal firstly with the motor vehicle part of the report on the activities of the TIO. There is no doubt that the level of accidents in the Northern Territory and the association that alcohol has with them is a major concern for the government, the TIO, the Northern Territory community, the Australian community and the insurance industry in this country. The damage that has been done to the country as a whole is outside the bounds of acceptability. I believe that, last year in New South Wales, they managed to kill 1200 people on the roads. Setting aside any other damage, that is not a bad number for one state for one year. With a population of 150 000 people, it does not give us a great deal of comfort to know that we managed to lose 50 Territorians in road accidents in one year.

Nevertheless, that side of the business and the loss that was sustained by the TIO have been - and that was reflected by the government's legislative moves - and still are very serious matters for concern. We will be continuing to address them as the days go by. I would say that the year when we have no road deaths is the year when we can probably slacken off on the measures available to us to clamp down on the causes and effects of accidents on the road. Alcohol is probably the main cause of them.

As far as the TIO is concerned, there is the determination on my part to see that it moves to a profitable footing in this area by a range of measures. I will not elaborate on those today because they are not just TIO measures; they involve a range of other things. But the determination will be there. I would go so far as to say to the honourable member that, while he is concerned - and so am I - about the state of the financial report, there will certainly be a different report next year. It will reflect a turnaround.

The honourable member suggested that we were sweeping things under the carpet. So far as sweeping things under the carpet is concerned, particularly in relation to financial matters, there would be no joy for us in doing that because there would always be a day of reckoning. Kidding yourself by shovelling things under the carpet and not addressing the issues, simply makes the day of reckoning that much worse.

Mr Ede: You know you won't be in government after the next election.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart suggests that we will not be here to do it. I would say to you, Mr Speaker, that one of the reasons why we will be here is because we will take the financial steps and the social steps that we believe are needed to rectify the situation. That is what the people in the community want. We will give it to them and they will be happy.

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition reflected on the reinsurance business of the TIO, and reasonably so because that is where all the damage to the state of the finances occurred. Let us be fair. The outwards

reinsurance of the TIO has no cloud over it at all. It is secure in the sense that any claims by policy holders will be honoured in the course of time. We suffered serious losses with the inwards reinsurance because of the poor business practice that was adopted with reinsurance and the levels of some of the claims that overtook us. They were unfortunate but, nevertheless, they occurred.

Mr Speaker, the TIO has withdrawn from the inwards reinsurance business because it believes it is not good business for it to be in. That is a reasonable position for an insurance company. Some insurance companies specialise in certain things and will not take workers' compensation, will not insure motor vehicles etc. They have their policies and that is understood. In this case, the TIO has made a deliberate decision not to have inwards reinsurance. The honourable member raised the query as to whether that was totally proper. It is my understanding that the New South Wales GIO is not and has never been involved in inwards reinsurance. In our case, the policy now is that the TIO is not involved in inwards reinsurance and it may hold that position for a year, 2 years or 10 years. It might change at the end of this year if circumstances prevail which will enable it to do that. That is really the sort of business decision that the managers and the board ought to be considering from time to time.

The honourable member also made the assumption that there is no money in the claims fluctuation fund. At the time the report was written, that may well have been the case. Today, the opposite might be the case. If the honourable member would like a briefing from the TIO on that issue, there is no problem with that. My understanding is that it would be pretty hard for the TIO to operate without it and that it is not in that position. The position today is totally different.

Mr Smith: If it did not take you so long to table the report, we would not have this problem.

Mr TUXWORTH: If the honourable member wants to pursue that, then let us have a look at it and find out exactly what the case is and how the system works. To say that there is no money in the fund today because the report of 30 June last year says there was none is really drawing a fairly long bow.

The other thing that I would like to take up with the honourable member so far as the declaration of the loss is concerned is that, on page 10, there is a provision for run off in claims of \$4.5m. My understanding is that that is a contingency provision. We may well find at the end of this year that that contingency of \$4.5m was not necessary or we might even require another \$500 000. It is exactly that.

Mr Smith: I did not say that.

Mr TUXWORTH: I may have misunderstood the honourable member on the issue but I thought he was trying to say that existing claims were tied into the \$4.5m provision.

Mr Speaker, it is the government's determination that the TIO operate in a profitable environment, profitable to itself and to the Northern Territory. One of the great investors in the Northern Territory is the TIO. If it is not doing well, we all suffer because we have a vested interest. I will have a particular interest to ensure that the TIO does move to a profitable footing as quickly as possible. I make this offer to the honourable members opposite. If they would like briefings from time to time on the activities of the TIO, I am prepared to

have them made available because I do not believe that the activities of the TIO are so secret that the opposition cannot have access to them if it so wishes from time to time. I would like to reinforce the view that it is the government's determination to see the TIO move to a profitable footing and that will be done as soon as possible and, hopefully, it will be this year.

Motion agreed to.

FILM CLASSIFICATION AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 62)

Continued from 6 March 1985.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, the Film Classification Amendment Bill is obviously one of the most controversial bills we have had before the Assembly in a long time. I think it is unfortunate that a number of members dodged the issue by choosing not to speak because it is one of those subjects that everyone has a view on but, quite clearly, not everyone wants to express it.

The bill contains 2 major overlapping issues: firstly, the classification of material and, secondly, deciding on what is visually harmful and should be prohibited by government. On the first issue, the Chief Minister said that, as a parent, he did not know what to expect from any existing classifications. I accept that many parents feel the same way and there exists a good case for an ongoing education program about what each classification represents. I propose to ensure that that program is undertaken in due course.

The member for Wanguri made the same point when he said that classifications need to be tight and understood. He also said that the PG classification was impractical unless the parents saw the film before deciding on its suitability for their children. To highlight the confusion over the PG classification, I understood that PG meant that it was advisable for a parent to see the film with the child in order to be able to discuss the film's content with the child to ensure that the story is kept in context. That shows that at least 2 of us have different views on what PG really means. Obviously, it needs to be clarified in the community.

The member for Victoria River was worried about videos which contained trailers which would rate at a higher classification than the main film. I understand that the practice is supposed to be that such videos would be classified at the higher rating. I cannot advise at the moment whether the censorship board would classify the video on the rating of the trailer's main film. In other words, if it was the trailer of an R film, would the whole video cassette be classified R or would the censor, as I suspect would be the case, consider the clips used in the trailer? If he found any of those rated in the R category, then he would declare the whole cassette to be classified R. That is obviously a matter we will have to look at a bit further. The action of classifying a video at its highest rating according to content will presumably encourage video producers to stick to the classification of the main feature. Otherwise, they might find that circulation is not as widespread as they had expected.

The second issue is far more contentious. It was interesting to hear most members say, when referring to X-rated videos or blue movies, that they really had not seen any or had only caught a glimpse by accident at someone else's place. I noted a degree of embarrassment for fear of sounding authoritative. Like the honourable member for Braitling, I will be a little braver and

acknowledge that I have seen a number of X-rated films. I am prepared to comment on them further. I recall being the only member of the Assembly to admit that I frequented pinball parlours once. If more members played the video games therein, they might understand the attractions they have for young people. I recommend that course to honourable members if they care to speak on a particular subject. Mr Speaker, I do not believe that my experience of X-rated films has made me any more likely to become a sadist or a rapist than was the case beforehand.

Honourable members are familiar with the possibility of a new classification called ER being adopted. Such a classification would primarily cover films containing explicit sex scenes by consenting adults. That is probably 95% of existing X-rated videos. I state my absolute conviction that many of the horrifying and astounding acts depicted in R films which are shown in theatres and drive-ins around Australia are far more likely to inflict psychological scars than the average blue movie. Famous and, in some cases, acclaimed shows such as 'Poltergeist', 'The Exorcist', 'The Omen', and 'The Thing', to name just a few, contain scenes and language which would make one's blood run cold. They are all R films. The extensive use of psychological techniques, space-age technology and special effects can produce scenes which could not possibly occur in real life, and with terror to match. In contrast, most sex films could best be described as light comedy, including sexual antics the likes of which are not uncommon in the community. I am sure they were not uncommon before blue movies were made. They are often described as boring by people who have seen several.

The commonly-held view that sex films are all degrading to the female actors is also incorrect. Modern society, whether we like it or not, has its share of sexually-aggressive females who do not share the attitudes of the past that it is up to the male to lead or to play the predominant role in sex or otherwise. There is also an argument, often scoffed at, that sex films and sex aids have a serious educational and therapeutic benefit for some people. There are, for example, many persons of both sexes in our community who, for various reasons, such as physical handicap, are destined to spend their entire lives without the physical companionship of a member of the opposite sex.

It was said that, if 5 states were proposing to ban X-rated videos, then they must be right so let us join them. I believe they are banning the sale and hire but not the ownership and possession of X-rated videos. South Australia is certainly following that course anyway. I would like to quote a couple of paragraphs from the Advertiser of 14 February:

The president of the SA Video Retailers Association, Mr Grant Peters, said at least 40 000 X-rated videos, comprising 900 to 1200 titles, were available for hire or sale in video and sex shops around SA. These would be 'sold off' in the 6 weeks grace period granted to retailers before the new law took effect. (Under the new law, possession of X-rated videos would not be an offence). 'And there is no doubt about it, they will be sold quite successfully', he said.

Mr Peters said these tapes, which would sell for between \$20 and \$70 each, would then end up in people's homes '365 days a year' instead of 1 or 2 days as usual under the hiring system.

The Liberals had claimed success for keeping these 'harmful' videos out of homes and away from children, but the accepted changes meant children would have access to them all year round.

Mr Peters also claimed people wanting to see sexually explicit movies would be forced to go to the black market where marketeers would offer them 'nasties', including child pornography and bestiality.

Mr Speaker, a new amendment schedule has been circulated with one more small amendment than the first amendment schedule. It is an amendment to bring R-rated movies into line with the X-rated movies as far as the display of video tapes is concerned. This action would place the Territory in a unique situation in Australia. Whilst it appears that several states are proposing to ban the hire and sale of X-rated videos altogether, no action is being taken to restrain access to R-rated material beyond the usual requirement that it should not be hired or sold to persons under the age of 18 years. I reiterate my view that some of the scenes depicted in R-rated movies are far more damaging than some of those in X-rated movies. We are proposing to try to take R-rated movies off the shelves where they are currently on display in front of all the members of the public, in particular in front of children.

Mr Speaker, as politicians, we try to reflect the views of our constituents as best we can. I believe that most adults in my electorate are capable of coping with the existence in our society of sexually explicit films and magazines. By 'coping', I mean capable of obtaining and viewing them if they want to or capable of identifying and avoiding them if that is their wish. Our role is to assist them with that identification.

I advise the Assembly that the latest information we have is that the federal government is unlikely to make its decision on X-rated movies for several months. We have reports that there is a good possibility of the Commonwealth banning the importation of X-rated movies altogether. There is even another report that it might extend that to R-rated movies but I am not quite sure what will happen. We will not know for several months which course the Commonwealth will take and that is why we felt that we should proceed with this legislation so that at least we can introduce interim controls whilst these films are still available.

The member for Victoria River suggested that the composition of the board be balanced between males and females and that the board members should be rotated regularly. His argument is that people on the censorship board who must persistently view offensive material quite clearly become desensitised. I accept that argument. However, under the terms of the bill as it is at present, it is up to the minister to appoint the board. Quite clearly, he can appoint a balance of males and females. They hold office at the minister's pleasure and, therefore, the membership can be rotated as regularly as it is felt is warranted. I point out, however, that almost all the work in regard to censorship for the Territory, as is the case in the states, will be undertaken by the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board.

His second point was that clause 4 of the bill exempted cinema films. The answer to this is that the 2 bills before the Assembly at present overlap. The clause is there because the other bill covers the subject.

The member for Victoria River also raised the point that, in clause 29, infants are described differently from descriptions of infants in other acts of the Northern Territory. That is the case. The explanation is that we have a number of laws wherein an infant is described by reference to different ages. The age of consent is different to the age at which persons may legally obtain and drink alcohol. A series of ages is set in a description of what is a child and what is an infant to suit the particular law that is being dealt with at the time. That is the case here.

Mr Speaker, I do not have anything further than that. It is proposed to process these bills through the committee so that we can bring them into force as soon as possible and institute the controls which the community is asking for. It is controversial and, no matter what we do today, quite a few members of the community will be disappointed that we have not gone further. I expect there will be some reaction too from those people who will be inconvenienced by our requirement that R-rated videos be displayed in a separate area in video shops along with X-rated material. I am sure we will not escape without flak on this subject. I believe that the legislation is a sensible course of action at this stage.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Mr CHAIRMAN: Honourable members, the committee has before it the Film Classification Amendment Bill 1984 and a schedule of an amendment which has been circulated by the Attorney-General. Is it the wish of the committee that the bill be taken as a whole? There being no objection, it is so ordered.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 23.1.

This will insert a new clause after clause 5. This provision provides for prescribed fees to be paid by certain persons for classifying films under the act. It also provides for a prescribed fee to be paid upon an application for review of the classification. This will enable costs involved in censoring of films and in the administration of the Australia-wide censorship system to be defrayed through the imposition of a fee on certain of the persons, generally the distributors, seeking classification. In practice, fees will be divided between the Commonwealth and the states, including the Territory. This and proposed section 12 will enable appropriate arrangements to be worked out.

Proposed section 12 provides for regulations to be made under the act. This would include prescribing fees. In addition, it specifically empowers regulations to be made prescribing requirements relating to publication and contents of advertising matter, particularly the dimensions of symbols and what constitutes visibility for the purposes of the act. The act specifically states that advertising matter must be in a position in which it is clearly visible. However, it is felt that it should be stated in the regulations how this is to be determined and what size the symbols should be.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I take the opportunity of speaking to this amendment and will say all I wish to say during the committee debate. I wish to indicate that the opposition supports the action the government is taking in this matter and supports the amendment before the Assembly. I would like also to take the opportunity to say that I agreed with absolutely everything that the minister said in his final speech.

Mr Speaker, some years ago, I recall going to the pictures at Croker Island, where they used to have a western night on a regular basis, and watching a movie called 'Play Misty for Me' starring Clint Eastwood. It is a great movie. Even though it is an old movie which did not use any of the special effects that are available these days, it is one of the most terrifying movies I have ever seen in my life. It was classified as an M movie. Everyone rolled along to see it with toddlers and little kids thinking it was a western because Clint Eastwood was in it. The very first scene, which involved a lady leaping out of a cupboard with a knife, caused an absolute panic in the room. Screaming children ran from the room followed by mothers and everyone else. In the space

of about half a minute, the room was empty except for a few bemused people looking at each other and wondering what they had got into. It is certainly not a movie that I would want my 5-year-old son to view at this stage in his young life.

Mr Speaker, I agree with the honourable minister completely. I have seen quite a number of X-rated movies. The maximum feeling that the straight blue movies engender in me in the majority of cases is one of absolute boredom. I am just not interested in watching; they do not have a plot and they do not have dialogue. I would not want my son to watch blue movies but I honestly would rather have him watch 10 hours of ordinary run-of-the-mill blue movies than watch something like 'Play Misty for Me' or other films with that kind of explicit violence. I am absolutely sincere about that.

There is a lot of confusion about ratings. I was interested in what the Chief Minister had to say. I think very few people are aware of the criteria for the ratings. An M rating is the beginning of the restricted ratings. It goes on to an R rating and an X rating. I always thought M was pretty far down the line and there would not be much in that to worry too many people. I would like to read out for the benefit of honourable members the current criteria for the classification of M movies. There are proposals before the state and Commonwealth Attorneys-General to amend these criteria. The amendments are contained in the schedule. I welcome the amendments. Let us have a look at the current criteria for M movies. They are suitable for persons 15 years and over. Listen and tell me honestly if you would like your 15-year-old son or daughter to watch a movie containing the following. Under 'language', it says: 'no word or phrase is proscribed'. Anything goes in an M movie. It then lists some of the words or phrases which, according to the classification, are quite suitable for 15 year olds. I cannot use them in this Assembly. It says that a high degree of assaultiveness or of verbal sexual explicitness is not acceptable. Under 'sex', it says: 'Implied sexual activity but no full length depictions of intercourse. Fellatio, cunnilingus, masturbation etc may be depicted if visually discreet'. Under 'violence', it says: 'May be strong, realistic, bloody but not exploitive, relished, very cruel or very explicit. For example, dismemberment or beheading is limited to flashes only'. It is all right if you get your head cut off as long as it is off in a flash. This is the one I like: 'Sexual violence - for example, rape - only if very discreet'. I am not quite sure what a discreet rape is. Drug abuse depictions are okay too provided they are not advocacy. That is an M-rated movie. I do not think it is okay for a 15-year-old girl or boy.

I come to the current restrictions on R, which is suitable for 18 year olds and over. Language may be sexually explicit and assaultive. Sex may be implied, obscure or simulated. Explicit depictions of violence with gratuitous and exploitive non-sexual violence, decapitations, dismemberment and disembowelment is allowed only if shown briefly. Depictions of the use of drugs which might be construed as mildly advocacy are okay. It is okay to advocate the use of drugs in R-rated movies.

I must agree with the minister that there is a preoccupation with blue movies. The material available in M-rated and R-rated movies is not what I would like my children to see. I can say with total honesty that I cannot abide watching them myself. I have seen things on that horrible piece of tripe called the 'A-Team' - which everyone seems to love so much - that have caused me to turn off the TV. I don't want my kids to watch the violence depicted on the 'A-Team'.

Mr Speaker, the opposition fully supports the actions the government is taking and fully supports the proposed amendments in respect of both the X and R

classifications. Although the honourable minister is correct in saying that there will be flak over this, I do not think that either the government or the opposition in this Legislative Assembly need to be the slightest bit worried about being counted on this particular issue.

New clause agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Bill read a third time.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLICATIONS BILL
(Serial 72)

Continued from 30 August 1984.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

In committee:

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 26.1.

This amends the definition of 'appeal censor' to clarify it. It refers to an agreement under clause 24. This is essentially a drafting correction.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 26.2.

This amendment inserts in clause 3 of the bill a definition of 'infant'. A definition is already provided in the Interpretation Act. However, it was felt that its inclusion in this bill would be of assistance to persons reading its provisions.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 20 agreed to.

New clause 20A:

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 26.3.

This will insert a new clause after clause 20. The new clause provides for public notification of classifications. It will allow, as previously under the existing Classification of Publications Act, for an officer delegated by the Attorney-General to certify a classification list of publications in a special C Gazette, following notification of the person applying for the classification. It is essentially procedural.

New clause 20A agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 23 agreed to.

Clause 24:

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 26.4.

Clause 24 enables arrangements to be made by the minister with the Commonwealth minister for the exercise and discharge of censorship functions, including appeal functions, by Commonwealth officers. Notice of the making of the arrangement shall be contained in the Gazette. Implied in this power to make an arrangement is the power to terminate it. This amendment merely amends subclause (2) to provide that the minister rather than the Administrator can terminate the arrangement at any time. This is in accordance with the rest of clause 24.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 25 to 29 agreed to.

Clause 30:

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 26.5.

Clause 30 specifies the procedure to be followed when the censor has censored a film. This clause clarifies that the minister can publish notification in the Gazette. In practice, this would be done through a delegated officer, as previously occurred with written publications under the current act, and it provides that classification takes effect on the date the relevant notice appears in the Gazette.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 30, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 31 to 34 agreed to.

Clause 35:

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I move amendment 26.6.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 26.7.

This amendment provides that the same strict requirements relating to X-rated videos apply also to R-rated videos; that is, they must be exhibited for sale or hire in a restricted publication area, the conditions relating to which are prescribed. They must not be sold or delivered to a person under 18 other than by a parent or guardian. The packets must contain the prescribed markings and they must be supplied only at the direct request of the customer and then in an opaque container. If we are likely to get into trouble from one side of the fence, this is the clause that will do it. However, I believe that it is worth taking this course of action to demonstrate to people in the Territory that the Assembly is taking the matter of violence very seriously. I guess it is hard, in some cases, to separate the sex from the violence and we could debate all day which is the most harmful. I certainly come down on the side of the violence.

Mr EDE: Mr Chairman, I first mention a minor drafting error. The amendment does not scan. From the old clause, we have deleted an X-rated film 'shall not be' and we have inserted 'shall not'. In fact, the insertion should be 'shall not be'.

I was rather disappointed that prescribed markings were not defined in the bill. I would like to have had defined how the markings were affixed, their size and the colour etc because one of the essential points of the bill is to ensure that people know what they are getting. I am prepared to accept that this does not allow a way out for people who put a prescribed marking on it which is ridiculous. The regulations say: 'Prescribed matters required or permitted by this act to be prescribed'. Without a definition in there, it does not describe the manner in which they would be prescribed. I would prefer the definition to say, for example, that there would be a colour coding, an indication of whether it was R, PG, G etc and that a stamp not smaller than 1.5 cm in diameter would be affixed. I recall taking home a film called 'The Little Drummer Boy'. It seemed to be quite an interesting foreign film. It had won various awards. It went along quite well until suddenly there was full frontal nudity. I took my children out of the room and examined it. I found a tiny mark 'M'. That is ridiculous considering that M-rated material will still be on the racks along with other types of material. I think that it is essential that the industry be required to place marks on the films which indicate very clearly to the purchaser just what it is that he is getting. I hope that this will be taken up by the minister in the regulations.

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, the honourable member's concerns will be covered in the regulations. Dimensions and, if necessary, colours will be covered. One of my concerns has been the local newspaper. If you pick up the daily newspaper, you find that probably 3 out of the 4 films advertised have no rating at all. In some cases, it is not because it is not there. The posters have been reduced to fit into the newspaper and the ratings have disappeared altogether. That is unacceptable; it is the sort of thing that we want to have corrected. If any honourable members have ideas that they believe should definitely be taken into consideration in the preparation of regulations for labelling different classifications, I will be happy to receive a letter on the subject. Members can be sure we will be very careful that the ratings will be visible.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 35, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 36 to 48 agreed to.

Clause 49:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 26.8.

In a restricted publications area, there will be a notice indicating that minors may not be admitted to the area and the notice will have to be clearly displayed. R and X films must not be in the area except through a slot machine. This amendment enables films to be shown in this area, as well as on a screen of a certain prescribed size or smaller. Because the regulations will be able to prescribe the size of the screen the videos can be shown on, they can prescribe only small, TV-sized screen and so prevent this section being used to allow X-rated movie nights.

Mr Chairman, I understand there is one shop in Darwin at the moment that does screen X-rated films on a TV set, obviously in front of a very small

audience. We are trying to ensure we get a system to prevent X-rated films being shown in theatres on quite large screens. It is becoming a bit of a racket. We believe that, in this way, we can keep fairly tight control of the situation. Indeed, if it were necessary, we could prescribe the screen to be so small that it would only be suitable for a slot machine.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 49, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 50 to 61 agreed to.

Clause 62:

Mr PERRON: Mr Chairman, I invite defeat of clause 62.

Clause 62 negatived.

New clauses 62 and 62A:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 26.9.

New clause 62 is evidentiary. It enables the prosecution of a manager or governing officer of an organisation who commits an offence to be prosecuted as well as a body corporate itself. At the same time, it offers protection for an innocent person.

This amendment also inserts a new clause 62A which enables publication in the Gazette to be prima facie evidence of the matter stated. A certificate of the censor stating that the item has not been classified is prima facie evidence that it was not classified.

New clauses 62 and 62A agreed to.

Clause 63 agreed to.

Clause 64:

Mr PERRON: I move amendment 26.10.

This empowers the making of regulations. The amendment provides a power to allow arrangements to be made with the Commonwealth in relation to fee collection and apportionment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 64, as amended, agreed to.

Remainder of the bill taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill reported; report adopted.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a couple of comments. I am not particularly satisfied with the results of this debate. I am not satisfied that the results are in the best interests of the Territory community. The Attorney-General mentioned the need for therapeutic and educational uses of such material. In principle, I have no particular objection to the availability of such material. However, I do not see that the availability of such material

for therapeutic and educational reasons should be lumped in with recreational uses of such material.

My second point is to congratulate the minister on the decision to segregate both R-rated and X-rated material. I believe that is a step in the right direction. I mentioned that in public debate on this issue prior to its coming up in this Assembly and I mentioned it in the second-reading debate. I welcome the government's action in that regard. However, I believe the government has a bit to answer for in the way that this matter has been processed through this Assembly.

In moving the second reading of this bill on 30 August 1984, the now Deputy Chief Minister said when speaking on behalf of the then Attorney-General:

I note the issue of video censorship and, in particular, the question of 'video nasties' is of concern to many people. It is of great concern to me. In question time last week, I indicated that we would probably have a bill ready for the October sittings. In view of what we see as the urgency of this issue, the government has brought this bill on for introduction immediately. As well as enabling earlier consideration by this Assembly of the issues involved that could occur with its introduction in October, it will also enable public comment on the bill. I stress that the government would welcome comment on this most sensitive matter from concerned groups, individuals and persons affected, such as video dealers, before the bill is debated in October. If necessary, changes can be made to the bill in the committee stage.

I believe that needs to be placed on the record in the third reading of this bill. In one of our glorious Sunday papers on 24 February, we had the current Attorney-General saying that the current X-rated class of video may be modified to a new class ER, extra restricted. That did not happen. Who was flying a kite? What was happening? Mr Speaker, I am intimately involved with this issue. What do the poor buggers in the Northern Territory community out there expect of this?

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I rise very briefly to say that I believe that this bill is probably as good as we can get at this time. I myself am not in favour of the X-rated classification on one level. I think that the material itself is inherently disgusting and does nothing to enhance the dignity of humankind. However, there was a problem that I came up with when I started to think in terms of cutting out the X classification. I have coined a name for it, Mr Speaker; I call it 'prurient creep'. It is a thing that has been occurring for the last 40 years in our society. When I was young, I remember a G classification was something you could show your kids. Some of the films in the G classification now would have been in the R classification 20 years ago. What worries me about the idea of removing the X classification is that this prurient creep will happen and the R classification will take over what was originally put into the X classification. The M will move its boundaries up into the R.

I ended up thinking that what we ought to do is what we have just done: classify the material as X rated and then make it very difficult for young people to get their hands on it or for people to be exposed to it accidentally. The R-rated material is also dealt with in a similar way and I agree with that. I have spoken already about the need for highly visible classifications and I am satisfied with the minister's explanation of how that will be handled.

Mr PERRON (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, the member for MacDonnell indicated that, if we had been more serious about this, we would have passed an ER classification with this legislation. Personally, I am in favour of an ER classification replacing X. Unfortunately, it would be quite impractical for the Northern Territory to introduce its own ER classification and being the only government in Australia to do so. We would almost have to set up border posts to try to enforce it. We would certainly have to set up quite a substantial bureaucracy to view the films that are available today and exclude those that do not fit the classification. That would involve every film that was proposed to be imported into the Northern Territory for sale or hire. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your own point of view, we are tied to an extent to what the Commonwealth proposes to do. Perhaps he could make representations to the federal government.

The member for Stuart talked about 'prurient creep'. Some time ago, it was considered rather brave for ladies to show ankles and nowadays there is not much that they do not show. I am not knocking it; I am just saying that that is the case. The debate should really involve whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. I believe that these things tend to move in cycles. Perhaps society will later reject some of the things it accepts today. We might go back, as we have seen happening in the states, to looking at banning X-rated material. I have indicated that one rumour is that the Commonwealth might ban X and R which would really be reversing the creep. Goodness knows where we might be in 5 or 10 years.

One aspect that has not been addressed in the debate is the tone in which sex and violence are depicted. It was interjected during the debate that the Road Runner cartoon or indeed many of the cartoons which depict characters brutalising other characters should rate an X classification. But it is all taken as light fun; we all seem to think it is great fun for the kids. It is taken in the spirit within which it is presented. In M, R and X films, you can have rapes, murders, dismemberments and disfigurements but there are lines drawn that distinguish between those classifications. They are fine lines which are drawn on the basis of how the event is depicted in the whole context of the film. I am sure honourable members would see as educational some of the horrifying films one sees on television about the horrors of World War II. If you wanted to put classifications on them to push them off the screens, you could certainly do that and they would rate some of the worst classifications. They would even be beyond X because they are not simulated. Of course, they are educational and most people in the community see a value in their being shown from time to time.

The debate has largely skipped across the surface. We have decided on a course of action but it certainly has not been an in-depth debate on the question of censorship and the mores of society today.

Bill read a third time.

CROWN LANDS AMENDMENT BILL (Serial 105)

Continued from 5 March 1985.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Speaker, the opposition has no hesitation in supporting the government on this bill for which it has sought urgent passage through the Assembly at this sittings. I appreciate the spirit in which the honourable minister made available a briefing and his notes with respect to the bill. I will not take up a great deal of the Assembly's time this afternoon

except to point out that the reason for urgency is that the bill will save considerable man hours for solicitors. They made representation to the government because they are arranging transfers of parts of leases from one head lease to the other under different sections of the Crown Lands Act and technical difficulties have been encountered. This bill will save considerable time. In one particular case, to which the minister referred, some 5 working days were involved for one solicitor in what otherwise would have been a relatively minor conveyancing matter.

Mr Speaker, I think it is worth making a point in the context of this debate that only occurred to me after 4 years in this Assembly. The introduction of bills into this Assembly is inevitably done by ministers reading speeches word for word. I would suggest that, as this was the first bill to be introduced by the Minister for Lands, consideration be given by the government to a minister mastering the principles involved so that he can express those in his second-reading speech. That would encourage debate within this Assembly. The mere reading of a page or, in some cases, pages and pages of material for digestion by members afterwards from the Parliamentary Record is not adequate. We are here to debate issues viva voce so that people have to listen and be attentive to the way arguments are put. I believe that ministers have some responsibility to express the arguments that they are putting forward in such a way as to convince all honourable members that they fully understand the principles they are promoting and the justification for a bill. I mention that in passing.

There was one point that was not picked up in the second-reading speech that I sought clarification on, and that was the use of the phrase in proposed subsection (7A) of section 10B and (9A) of section 59A, 'which consent is not to be unreasonably withheld'. I understand that, in order for the bill to come through to us in these terms, it was necessary to insert that particular phrase because there were some doubts about the relative rights of the mortgagor and mortgagee. At first, I found that a somewhat remarkable phrase because within the context of the bill there was no way of judging what would determine consent being unreasonably withheld. The explanations I have been able to obtain through the briefing kindly provided for me by the minister have clarified that point. I have now no hesitation in saying that the opposition supports this bill.

Mr PALMER (Leanyer): Mr Speaker, I think it is worth while looking at the history of the sections of the Crown Lands Act in question, and the intent and functions of those sections. Historically, section 10B of the Crown Lands Act and the equivalent sections of its predecessor were used to incorporate within pastoral leases additional areas of land which, by themselves, did not constitute viable living areas. Such parcels of land included stockroutes and stock reserves that were no longer required by travelling stock. They also included areas of vacant Crown land that had been set aside for various uses but for which the use had never eventuated or for which use they were no longer required.

Mr Speaker, the inclusion of the provisions of section 59A in the former Crown Lands Ordinance, now the Crown Lands Act, is the result of the increasing pressures on our land resources brought about by closer settlement of the Territory. It was normal in determining the boundaries for pastoral leases not to resort to expensive on-ground surveys. Title was issued on the strength of what was known as a compiled plan. The lack of on-ground surveys, combined with the share areas of the pastoral leases involved, led to situations where certain areas of land were included in pastoral leases which, because of geographic barriers or other problems, could not be exploited by the lessees to which they belonged.

Mr Speaker, as I have stated previously, with the closer settlement of the Northern Territory and the ongoing process of subdividing pastoral leases into small areas, there is considerable and increasing pressure on pastoralists to bring more of their land into productive use. The exchange of pockets of land between pastoralists which cannot be used productively by the lessee to whom they originally belonged is a necessary part of the ongoing process of boundary rationalisation leading to increased economic viability of what, in terms of area, are becoming smaller and smaller concerns.

Mr Speaker, the intention of this bill is to reduce unnecessary costs to pastoralists seeking to rationalise their boundaries and to encourage further boundary rationalisation by easing the legal constraints placed on pastoralists wishing to do so. Mr Speaker, I support the bill.

Mr MCCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, the proposed amendments to the Crown Lands Act can only be supported. At times when new legislation is debated and supported or even when existing legislation is amended, it is possible and even likely that the debate will not pick up every effect or shortcoming of the proposed legislation.

The amendments to the Crown Lands Act now before us are the outcome of this sort of unforeseen effect of the act. Undue delays in land transfers due directly to this problem have caused concern to landholders in my electorate. I can foresee a continuing and escalating problem if the amendments are not made quickly. Because of the inadequacy of the act, it is quite possible that, following the transfer of non-viable land and its attachment to an adjoining encumbered block, the attached land will again be separated on possible winding up of the landowner's affairs.

I can foresee some quite serious problems associated with the likely contrary action of an increased number of excisions from existing properties which are encumbered by mortgage. If land excised for community living areas or for any other purpose retains responsibility for a portion of an encumbrance which is held by a person over the original lease, then the headaches to be encountered in the administration of the act would be unbearable. Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the bill.

Mr HATTON (Lands): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am certain the member for Nhulunbuy will be thrilled that I am here to oversee the passage of this bill through the Assembly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is pleasing that the opposition supports this legislation. As I outlined in my second-reading speech, these amendments are necessary to remove unforeseen technical problems that have arisen as a consequence of amendments made in 1982 to the Crown Lands Act and they will improve significantly the activities of the Department of Lands in the processes that are under way in the realigning of boundaries on many pastoral properties into a more realistic format.

I should comment on the statement of the member for MacDonnell regarding my second-reading speech. It might be advantageous to take the opportunity to have a look at convention and parliamentary practice and the role of the second-reading speech in the presentation of a bill. It has a particular and unique function in the Assembly. It is a convention that that speech be read in the parliamentary system. It is the statement of intent of the government, so far as a piece of legislation is concerned, and it has an entirely different role to that of other forms of debate in the Assembly. I urge the honourable member to check his parliamentary practices in respect of that.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr HATTON (Lands)(by leave): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

CONTROL OF WATERS AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 58)
PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT BILL
(Serial 59)

Continued from 22 August 1984.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, once again, I rise to inform the government that the opposition is happy to support this legislation which is in response to particular problems that have been experienced in the Darwin rural area. I notice, for example, a press release issued by the former Minister for Lands in relation to drainage problems in Darwin's rural area. Unfortunately, difficulties have been experienced with the separation of water from bores and household waste, including sewage. Whilst the rural pioneers, whom the honourable member for Koolpinyah represents so handsomely in this Assembly, may regret burgeoning government control over their keen desire for an almost romantic freedom, this bill represents an action on the part of government hammering, dare I say, further nails into the coffin of the laissez faire ideals pursued by the same honourable member. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, the opposition has no hesitation in supporting such government action if it will contribute to the public health of the Northern Territory community and, specifically, to that of residents of Darwin's rural area. I will be most surprised if the honourable member for Koolpinyah seeks to take me apart over this. I will not rehash the second-reading speech, Mr Deputy Speaker. The opposition is most happy to support the bills.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Deputy Speaker, the aim of this legislation is to ensure compliance with new standards for safe water and effluent disposal. A problem has arisen in rural Darwin. Because of the nature of the soil, there is a health risk with the possibility of water in bores and wells being contaminated by effluent material, particularly in the wet season.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I remember from many years ago one of the lecturers of the 13 Flight Adelaide University Squadron on health matters said that it was generally considered in normal circumstances that water 40 feet away from toilets on sandy soil was safe to drink. I do not know how it would go down with the Minister for Mines and Energy and the water standards that have been set for Ranger. That was the army standard and it was felt that that water was safe to drink. In a nutshell, this legislation is aiming to prevent people getting their own back.

I was pleased to learn from the second-reading speech that the government is assisting people by checking their bores and giving advice on remedial steps that can be taken where they are needed. Safe drinking water is needed not only by the residents in the area but by anyone who may visit. It is an important matter. This positive action is very welcome. The legislation will apply to specific areas that are declared. There will be different rules on water control for different areas. The big problem at the moment is definitely in the Top End but there are other water control zones. There is one around Ti Tree. The regulations which will be made will be different for each area and give rules which will take into account the different problems. I am glad to see

this flexibility. I have a personal interest at Ti Tree. One of these days, when I can afford it, I am going to give away the shovel, the roll of paper and the walk over to the mulga trees and set myself up in a right royal manner and, of course, I will be interested to know what the rules are. I shall accept them as good advice on how to ensure that my toilet facilities do not contaminate the bore which will provide drinking water.

Mr Setter: Next thing you know you will be able to put an electric light in.

Mr D.W. COLLINS: Yes, if I can afford to switch it on. I hope that that will come.

I have one concern and that is the fact that the regulations are not ready for us to have a look at. I do not know if they have been drafted. Obviously, someone must have some ideas on them. Much of the important work is done through regulations and it would be nice to see what is actually in them before we pass the governing legislation. However, I trust that the powers given to the Chief Medical Officer will be used with wisdom and common sense. The Chief Medical Officer is required to examine plans of where toilets and bores are to be sited. He has to see them before he gives his approval and that is fair enough. He has the power to declare an area for effluent disposal and only approved septic systems will be allowed.

The Controller of Waters has the power to declare the effluent disposal areas. Sometimes it is not enough just to encourage people to do the right and sensible thing by themselves. There will always be a few who, for one reason or another, will not undertake to rectify matters. Now the power will be there for rectification to be made in that extreme case and the costs are to be charged to the owner. I dare say that is the hard line of this particular bill but I am sure that all honourable members will see the point of it and support it.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, the proposed amendments are of urgent importance to people in the more closely-settled rural residential areas. I well recall, many years ago, the problems created in new beachside residential areas in New South Wales. These new areas were without any public services of any kind and householders were obliged to provide their own water supply and septic system. On house blocks of approximately one-eighth of a hectare in area, it is likely that both a well and a septic tank system would have been provided. The results do not bear thinking about. Of course, a rainwater tank was used for household purposes and the liquid fertiliser in the wells produced some magnificent vegetable gardens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I suspect that an area in which this proposed amendment will have a direct effect is that area on the western side of the harbour in my electorate where a number of subdivisions have been approved and land made available in blocks of about 0.4 ha. Water and sewerage services do not exist in the area. Water must be provided from tanks, in most cases, but there are bores there as well. Septic tanks are the means of sewage disposal in the area. There would be similar problems in the Berrimah and Koolpinyah electorates and some others.

Some problems may arise if landowners are forced to move existing facilities because a septic tank is affecting or is likely to affect a bore or well on an adjoining property. However, I see no problem in making the proposed regulations mandatory. No one should have the right to do anything on his land that will adversely affect his neighbour. Quite obviously, this must extend to natural waters, above or below ground. If a septic tank or other pollutant is

affecting an aquifer which is, obviously, no respecter of above-ground boundaries, then the tank must be made safe or removed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is necessary to apply stricter controls on the provision of water and on sewage disposal in closely-settled areas. The provision of stiff penalties for failure to heed these requirements is essential. The proposed amendments to the Control of Waters Act and the Public Health Act provide both of the above requirements and I support the amendments.

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will be very brief. Obviously, this is uncontentious legislation. Quite simply, the problem, as it is reported, originated in the Darwin rural area but it is one that has been around for quite some time and apparently it has been overlooked by the population in remote areas generally. There are many areas throughout Australia that rely on groundwater and, in these modern times, use septic systems as opposed to the old country dunny. The country dunny had considerable merit because it was a contained system which was disposed of in a very controlled and efficient manner. The only unfortunate byproducts were odours and their attraction for flies.

The problem manifested itself during the course of hydro-geological work undertaken by the Water Division in order to provide a more comprehensive and technically-based service to the ever-increasing number of dwellers in the Darwin rural area. It became obvious that there was some potential pollution of bore water systems and residents requested some tests be taken. They became concerned when there was evidence of some form of pollution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is important for us to bear in mind the complexities of these matters. Without going into a long technical description of the testing of waters, it is enough to say that biological testing is not a simple matter. In fact, there is a great deal of contention about methods, methodology, the statistical analysis and, in some cases, the validity of using certain testing procedures and biological counts. As I understand it, the accepted method is to use a coliform count, on occasions combined with an E. coliform count. I will not attempt to pronounce the Latin term. Those biological components are a basic indicator of the possible presence of faecal waste.

The department undertook to conduct a very comprehensive study of the rural water system. That was completed in late 1981. During that period, there was a moratorium on development of the rural area through further subdivisions and this led to a cessation of the development of rural blocks other than where reticulated water was available. In simple terms, the objective of the study was to identify sources of pollution, the extent of pollution, the possible causes of pollution and, more importantly, to determine development constraints to be applied to water provision and waste disposal. In addition, one of the objectives was to determine water management requirements for the rural area generally.

The basic factors that were investigated were: bore construction, including wells; septic tanks, both their construction and operation; and, just as importantly, land management, including holding of stock, management of crops and other associated surface activities which have a direct or indirect bearing on potential contamination of a water supply. It was found that a great majority of the bores in themselves were deficient in their construction in that they did not comply with the health regulations, in particular regulation 58, as I understand it. The major fault was lack of fencing around the bores. Fencing is critical to prevent animals entering the immediate zone of a bore hole itself.

The examination of septic tanks which, in itself, was probably an interesting exercise, indicated that not only were many septic tanks constructed incorrectly but their management and operation were not up to scratch. To anyone who has been familiar with septic tank operations, it is quite obvious that the tanks need to be cleaned out regularly. There is a need to observe the tanks and control possible problems arising from absorption, trench clogging and other associated occurrences.

Mr Deputy Speaker, from reading the report, I understand that the major part of the observed pollution of systems could be traced almost always to stem contamination as opposed to indirect percolation of the underground strata. As I understand it, the majority of these problems could be treated by such methods as chlorination of the stem and better management of the bore surrounds. Obviously, the department is addressing itself to that subject and it will be dealt with in the regulations. It is pleasing to see that the department has already published and distributed to rural dwellers guidelines on bore and septic tank construction and so on. A problem that will arise is that, when a property changes hands, the new resident may not understand the full maintenance requirements of the septic system and the bore, and pollution may occur again. The act, therefore, requires people to correct situations as they occur, not only at the time of construction but as time goes on. That is a most important feature.

Mr Deputy Speaker, clearly there is a need for us to undertake further studies into groundwater percolation and into assessing the real properties of the various aquifers throughout the Northern Territory. I see that as a major program and I have spoken before about the federal government supporting further national programs of groundwater assessment and management. We should all lobby hard for more funds for that purpose. In addition, I am sure that we need alternative or better designs for septic systems or other types of waste disposal methods. We should keep the public well aware of the operational requirements involved as well as land management requirements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is quite obvious that all the work is not done but the department has taken a very sensible attitude in promoting this valuable piece of legislation. I am quite certain that the good work that it will do in the future will lead to more reliable water systems for rural residents themselves. Whilst those residents may have developed some resistance to slight water pollution themselves, this legislation may help casual visitors to return home feeling rather more comfortable after short-term visits to the farm.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, an honourable member said a little while ago that this was noncontentious legislation. I cannot agree with that assessment and, in view of an unparliamentary word that a certain member opposite used, I would say this legislation is arse about face. Mr Deputy Speaker, if you consider that unparliamentary, I will withdraw it.

In clause 4 of the Control of Waters Amendment Bill, the heading is 'certain things not to be done in a water control district without permission'. It mentions sinking, constructing or using a well or water bore and it continues to talk about 'a well or water bore'. In clause 5, it talks about drains or water channels and embankments. The legislation to amend the Public Health Act talks about the Chief Medical Officer. If he is of the opinion that a certain offence has been committed or is continuing regarding public health in this matter, he can demand that certain things be done. Those certain things relate to the legislation proposed in the Control of Waters Amendment Bill relating to wells or water bores. This is why I say that it is arse about face because the emphasis is on wells or water bores. It is neither the wells nor the water

boreholes that cause the trouble; it is the proximity of the septic tanks to the wells or water boreholes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think that honourable members who have spoken before me have been carried away by the euphoria of squeaky clean public health. They have not addressed the actual question. In fact, I do not think that they would know the particularities of the situation in the Darwin rural area or in other areas in the Northern Territory where this problem has arisen and could do so again. It appears that the sacred cows of squeaky clean public health and our constituents' well-being have to be considered at all costs. However, it is time a little common sense was brought into this matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, for this legislation to be sensible and workable for some years, we should consider how it will be applied. Some years ago, there were not many people who lived in the rural area and there was a lot of land, a lot of space between the blocks. People moved on to their blocks and sank boreholes and installed septic tanks. As settlement increased and became more concentrated, it became apparent that there could be problems - and I will admit there were problems - with the proximity of septic tanks to boreholes on adjoining blocks. But we come to the \$64 question, Mr Deputy Speaker: which takes precedence, neighbour A's borehole or neighbour B's septic tank? Which one was in first? Which one cost the most to build? Which one is the most important to public health?

I think these 2 pieces of legislation have in no way addressed the question properly. The legislation talks about water boreholes and wells. There are not too many wells in the rural area, I might add. It should be addressing itself more to the subject of septic tanks rather than boreholes and wells. The Chief Medical Officer can demand that action be taken to close a borehole or to close a well if he considers public health is at risk. It is pretty glib to tell someone to just close it, block it off or fill it up. To put down one of these boreholes and equip it costs about \$7000. \$7000 does not come very easily to most people, certainly not to people in my electorate. If we talk about closing down a borehole, what do the people do then? There is no water. They cannot use their borehole. It is impracticable to use neighbours' boreholes. Certain government departments have made certain over the years that public watering points have been closed down one by one. That leaves the people without any water literally like a shag on a rock. What do they do? Do they sell up and leave? How are they going to sell their block if they do not have water on it?

Before the Chief Medical Officer even thinks of closing a borehole or closing a well, somebody in the Department of Transport and Works has to come up with a plan for water reticulation in the rural area. I have spoken of this repeatedly in this Assembly and in other places. Some honourable members have said that I want water on every block. To say some of them are as thick as 2 short planks is giving them credit for intelligence they do not have. I am not asking for water on every block in the rural area. All I want is for the Water Division to come up with some plan for water reticulation. If it does not have a plan and states that water will never be reticulated into the rural area, then at least we know where we stand.

I am not aware of any plan in the immediate or distant future that Water Division may have for putting water into the rural areas. It cannot be too much trouble. If NTEC can do it, surely the Water Division can do it. NTEC has a plan for electricity reticulation. It might not have all the difficulties ironed out of it yet. All I ask is for the Water Division to start planning for the provision of water services in the rural area, particularly if some people think there is this great health risk in the rural area because of the proximity of boreholes to septic tanks.

As I said, it costs about \$7000 to put down and equip a bore. It costs about \$2000 to put down a septic tank. I do not know what it costs to fill one up. I am not certain of the costs of new plumbing fittings for a new septic tank. If somebody, in all good faith, has put down a perfectly good septic tank, bore or well, and the Chief Medical Officer demands that he fill it in because there is some question of risk to public health, then there must be compensation paid to the owner. I do not think that the person who owns it should bear all the cost of installing a new septic tank, bore or well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot help thinking that there is some deep, dark reason for this legislation. I really think it is a knee-jerk reaction to certain unhygienic bore practices in the rural area which can be remedied without the need for this massive legislation. I would be the first to admit that there are unhygienic bore practices. Mr Deputy Speaker, you mentioned some of them. You mentioned the lack of fencing around the bore head to keep animals off and stop faecal contamination of the bore. I have also observed and been told about tops of bores being either flush with the level of the soil or a little lower than the level of the soil, which also promotes contamination. While we are on the subject of contamination, everybody goes great guns about faecal contamination in bores and the high content of *E. coli* in water, but nobody talks about the contamination by non-biodegradable poisons. Now it is pretty easy to get rid of contamination by *E. coli* in water. You just chuck a couple of chlorine tablets either down your bore or in your holding tank and you get rid of it. But there is no known way that you can get rid of some of the ordinary garden poisons once they contaminate your water supply. I will not name them now. These non-biodegradable poisons are with us for all time in our water systems and in our aquifers. We drink them and we become desensitised to these poisons in our water. Faulty bore practices and unhygienic bore practices can be remedied.

I must give credit where it is due. The Water Division conducted a public relations exercise in the rural area about 18 months ago. It had officers in a caravan at the corner of Howard Springs Road and the Stuart Highway for some weeks. Many people called in and were advised on how to remedy faulty bore construction. They were advised on how and where to sink bores. It was a good public relations exercise.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you raised the matter of possible faecal contamination in water being a public health risk. We all know bores tap into aquifers. The deeper the bore, the lower the aquifer it taps into. If people are discharging faecal matter into the ground, it is in the ground, whether it is on top of the ground or whether it is down in the bore. You cannot get away from this. It is there. If the Chief Medical Officer demands that a bore be closed or cut off, the person who owns that bore can wave goodbye to about \$7000. I think a bit of consideration must be given to this because I consider it to be most unfair and unjust.

What concerns me about these 2 pieces of legislation is that, as I understand it, another piece of legislation will be introduced to supersede them. I believe that a new water act is being drafted and these 2 amendments will be put in place until such time as that comes into being. My concern is that there are no provisions for appeal in these 2 pieces of legislation. If somebody has been told that his bore has to be closed under this legislation, he has no means to appeal. I understand that, under the new water act, appeal provisions will be inserted. In the meantime, if the Chief Medical Officer decides for some reason that the bores must be closed, the people will be in this limbo of not knowing what will happen. It appears to me, unless the minister can tell me otherwise, that they have no right of appeal against the decision of the Chief Medical Officer.

I agree with the member for Braitling that possible faulty bore construction in the rural area could result in contamination. I agree also that there could be faulty land management - for example, lack of fencing so that animals discharge faecal matter too near to an uncovered bore. I have told people in the rural area - it is expensive but it is in their interests - that they should always have a holding tank for the water pumped from the bore. The water should not go straight into the household. It should go into a holding tank. If the block owner considers that there could be some contamination of the water that he is about to drink or use, he can take steps to correct it. Many bores in the rural area have a lot of iron in them. This can be corrected by aeration of the water before drinking it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you also said that there was a lack of research into the aquifers in the rural area. I would agree with you. I think this whole legislation is pointed mainly at the McMinns bore field. While some knowledge has been obtained over the years, the Water Division has never examined the McMinns bore field in detail to know exactly where the aquifers run and their configuration so that it could pinpoint particular contaminations and take remedial action. When a study was done a couple of years ago by the Department of Transport and Works, there was talk of encouraging people not to put down septic tanks for the disposal of effluent but to use a Danish heat ash system. I do not know what this is called but it is an above ground system which disposes of faecal matter and other matter by heat and burning. To my knowledge, none of these have been installed in the rural area. I think they proved to be rather expensive.

The fact that the McMinns bore field contributes to the Darwin water supply is another main reason why these 2 pieces of legislation have been introduced. Whilst I agree that the health of the community en masse has to be protected, particular situations in particular areas must also be considered. One of them is a sensible, down-to-earth approach which I have spoken about before. The people in the rural area have pretty good health. My information comes not only from personal observation but from the community health centres in the rural area. No serious sicknesses are brought back to Darwin by people who visit their friends in the rural area.

I still cannot help feeling that this legislation is a knee-jerk reaction to what may happen some time to our water supply. I know our water supply is one of the most touchy subjects to dwell on. It is one of the easiest public services to contaminate. It is one of the most precious services that we have and we must look after it. Nevertheless, it must be treated with common sense. Whilst supporting this legislation, I decry most loudly the absence of provisions for appeal against decisions of the Chief Medical Officer who, I hope, will be a sensible chap and not take any unreasonable, drastic decisions. He should be guided by people in the Water Division. I hope that the new water act has provisions for appeal. I hope that any decisions that are made under this legislation are made with common sense and not to the serious detriment of public health and especially not to the detriment of my constituents in the rural area.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy): Mr Speaker, I do not have a great deal to say in reply. I note the concerns of the honourable member for Koolpinyah. I appreciate her concerns on behalf of her constituents who are all people who have worked very hard to get what they have, as have many other people of course. But we feel the situation requires the government to be able to act in cases where it is clearly necessary. Following the major report into groundwater pollution in rural Darwin, it became clear that we needed additional powers to act in certain circumstances. I thank honourable members for their comments.

Motion agreed to; bills read a second time.

Mr PERRON (Mines and Energy)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I move that the bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bills read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr HANRAHAN (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): Mr Speaker, I wish to touch on a number of issues this afternoon. One might seem a minor matter but it is a matter that has annoyed a number of Territorians and I think they are justified. They are those Territorians who served in the armed services or assisted in some civilian capacity in the Northern Territory during World War II. I refer to a proposal by the government, for which advertisements were placed in the press some time ago, to erect a monument to General Douglas MacArthur at Batchelor airstrip.

Mr Speaker, I think the proposal to erect a monument at the Batchelor airstrip is a very good one and I do not oppose that. However, there is some considerable question about the erection of the memorial for the sole purpose of honouring General Douglas MacArthur considering the use to which that airstrip was put during the war. General Douglas MacArthur's visit to Batchelor airstrip was a very fleeting one indeed. He only went there because of a Japanese fighter attack on the city of Darwin. The story is contained in quite graphic detail in what is a very fascinating book about the many-sided character of this particular gentleman. The book is entitled 'American Caesar'.

General MacArthur, accompanied by his wife and small son, who was extremely ill at the time and being fed intravenously, flew from the Philippines intending to land at the Darwin airport. Darwin was under attack and the plane was diverted to Batchelor. They had had such a rough flight because they had been dodging enemy aircraft on the way across Timor, which was in Japanese hands and being used as a fighter base, that General MacArthur's wife did not want to get back on board the aircraft. In fact, she demanded that a motorcade be provided to take the party by road to Alice Springs where she could then get on the train. General MacArthur was in the process of reorganising this to happen when his medical adviser told him that, if they undertook that prolonged journey, it was quite likely that his son would die. As a result, they decided to embark in 2 DC3s especially flown up by the Australian government to transport him south.

What then happened was that the Mitsubishi fighters, which had been attacking Darwin, had obviously received intelligence that these aircraft were on the ground at Batchelor. They came down to Batchelor and the entire party barely escaped with their lives. In fact, it is recounted in the book. MacArthur demonstrated some fairly typical personal traits. I will quote from 'American Caesar' as to what happened when they finally did get off the ground.

Their son had been ill ever since leaving the Rock. Moorhouse was now feeding him intravenously. He said: 'We cannot guarantee little Arthur would make so long a drive over the desert without shelter or food'. The general stopped pacing. He said: 'Doc, do you mean that?' 'Every word', the doctor replied. The general ordered embarkation on the DC3. As they moved towards the runway, Jean's face grew grim. Sutherland drew Hough aside. 'Mitsubishis are on their way here from

Darwin', he said in a low voice. He wanted the women and the child aboard at once. Without disclosing this, Hough briskly led them up the ramp.

As the door closed, Major Richardson H. Carmichael in the cockpit heard the first scream of the air raid sirens. He shoved the throttle in and released the brakes throwing his passengers off their feet. The general roared: 'Syd, get that pilot's name'. Once they were all up, Hough explained the reason for the urgency and MacArthur, mollified, nodded silently. Later, looking down at the bleak landscape, he put an arm around Moorhouse's shoulder and said: 'We would not have made it. Thank you'.

The entire time the general spent at the Batchelor airstrip was about 2 hours. However, there were thousands of allied servicemen who served from that airstrip in 2-engined bombers during World War II. I think a monument is an appropriate thing. I have bushwalked in the area and I know that much of it is covered with traces of the old camps and airstrips. Thousands of allied servicemen served from that airstrip and some lost their lives there. There was an enormous contribution made also by civilian Territorians who served in the area. That is another interesting part of the Territory's history.

I want to give a notable example of the contribution that was made by a Northern Territory civilian at the Batchelor airstrip. I refer to a Territory woman called Winnie Bright who was the daughter of Harry Sargent. The Sargents, as members would be aware, operated Stapleton Station which supplied the army with beef during the whole duration of the war. Winnie Bright and her father used to guide and direct units on manoeuvres through the country that they knew so well. Because of this, they were granted official free passes to travel anywhere between Katherine and Darwin. This was extremely significant because civilians were not allowed north of Larrimah.

Mr Speaker, I would like to quote briefly from an article which appeared in the former Darwin Star in which excerpts from the late Winnie Bright's written record of the period were published. She died only recently. Referring to one of the many air battles that she and her father witnessed at Stapleton Station, Batchelor, Winnie wrote:

I witnessed the most brilliant bit of fighting I could ever expect to see. One of our Spitfires got above a big Jap bomber. It was a peewee attacking a hawk. The Jap twisted and turned, then up and down they roared until they were just specks in the sky. Then down they flew again, the Jap bomber howling and roaring, the Spitfire just above him. Then we could hear the rat-tat-tat of machine-gun fire as they swept down to treetop level and they sailed right over the top of our camp still fighting fiercely. The Jap bomber turned sharply to the left and crashed. It fell a few chains behind our yard in the paperbark swamp among the logs and the rice grass. The Spitfire sailed on.

Dad caught a saddle horse for himself, called a boy to accompany him and, armed with a rifle each, they rode off to find the Japanese bomber. They could not get right up to the plane on horseback so they tied the horses to a tree and waded in to where the bomber lay in the swamp. Dad counted 9 dead Japanese in the plane, the pilot having been shot through the heart as well as having other wounds. Dad gathered up all of the papers, books, maps etc that he could find and spread them out on a tarpaulin to dry. There were maps,

log books and papers galore. In fact, he filled 2 sugar bags with all he was able to collect from the plane. The air force sent us thanks afterwards for the way we helped them out. Some of the air force officers said it was the information they were able to gather from the papers which had really turned the tide of the battle and shortened the war.

Mr Speaker, as we now know - it is a fact recorded in the official war history - the Japanese bomber that Harry Sargent found in the swamp was carrying very senior Japanese officers. The papers turned out to be of enormous strategic importance and did lead to a shortening of the war in the Pacific. That is the kind of contribution that civilian Territorians made at Batchelor during the war.

Mr Speaker, I think this illustrates clearly that the efforts of Territorians and of the thousands of allied servicemen stationed there during the war were enormous and deserve to be recognised. We are all aware of the hundreds of lives that were sacrificed when Darwin was bombed and the casualties suffered by servicemen and women who were stationed at Batchelor. The Australian writer, Patsy Adam Smith, has devoted an entire chapter of her latest book, 'Australian Women at War', to the contribution made by Territory women before, during and after the war. Surely, the Territory government should make its own contribution. I urge the government to change its mind and erect a monument not just to General MacArthur, whose name and war role everyone knows, but to ensure that the ordinary men and women who served the Territory so well and indeed gave their lives for it are honoured.

Mr Speaker, this leads me to another matter. As honourable members may be aware, tomorrow is International Women's Day which dates back to 1908 when garment workers in the United States protested against the abhorrent working conditions they had to endure. They demanded union representation, equal pay for equal work, an 8-hour day and improved conditions in general. The result was one of street riots and arrest. From then until now, 8 March has become International Women's Day to commemorate the struggle of women to achieve better social and economic conditions. The day was first officially celebrated in Australia in 1934 when world peace was one of the major issues of concern, an issue still of great concern to men and women alike. By 1938, the day had become a much more publicised event with marches, meetings and public functions organised to raise the level of community awareness about difficulties affecting women. I understand that there are many such functions organised by Territory women which will be occurring tomorrow. I wish them well in all the events which have been organised.

Mr Speaker, about 2½ years ago, the former Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Pam O'Neil, gave an address in this Assembly paying tribute to the often unsung but vital role women have played in the social and economic development of the Northern Territory. I would like to reaffirm that tribute and say that I look forward to the day when they are given not only equal recognition to men for their contribution but also when they actually receive a place in all structures of society, both in employment and in education. It is only when men and women have the same choices in these areas that we can achieve the egalitarian society that I am sure we all desire.

To conclude, could I remind all honourable members that next Sunday is the grand final day of the Australian rules football carnival at Bathurst Island. All honourable members are more than welcome, as indeed all Territorians are, to come over to Bathurst Island for the day to watch how Australian rules football should be played. I do not hesitate to say that. As all honourable

members who have attended the football carnival would know, some of the best Australian rules football played in this country is played on that day at Bathurst Island. One of the few things that keep some of the players in the league out of the main competition is simply their size because they are just so light. In terms of style and speed, 2 attributes which I lack completely, you cannot do better than to go to Bathurst Island on Sunday and watch what I know will be without doubt one of the classiest Australian rules football games that you are ever likely to see. It will be clean, fast and very stylish. I am sure all honourable members would be most welcome if they turned up at Bathurst Island on Sunday.

Mr D.W. COLLINS (Sadadeen): Mr Speaker, I would like to address this afternoon a subject which is dear to my heart. It is a problem which I perceive in Alice Springs. Our town is built upon a floodplain. Over the last 1000 years or so, I am sure the river would have varied very much. The concern that I have for our town is that of flooding. It is of real concern to me and I am sure to the other members of this Assembly who represent electorates down there: the member for Braitling, the member for Flynn and the Minister for Health.

Human activity and the expansion of the town have increased the use of water and the watertable. Now that we no longer pump water out of the town aquifer for personal use, the watertable has increased in height to a considerable level. As well as that, other activities, such as the building of roads and the increased run-off from roofs of houses, all add to the water in the Todd. Also, a number of drains are being constructed, such as Chinaman's Creek, the railway drain and the Sadadeen drain. They all flow into that river and increase the chances of flood.

My major concern, and I have mentioned it before, is the silting up of the bed of the Todd River. Some people who have been in the town for much longer than I, such as Mrs Duffy, Senator Bernie Kilgariff, and Mr Herman Weber, recall that, in earlier days, the Todd was far deeper than it is today. I have been there only 15 years and I remember it as being considerably deeper when I first arrived. Many of the people new to the town who have become experts on the river have not been aware of these changes because they have happened gradually. They do not appreciate just how much difference there is from the old days.

The problem is that we no longer have a deep channel which will quickly get the water through the town. We have a channel which fills very quickly and flows onto the streets. I note that people building on the golf course estate near Barrett Drive have taken the wise precaution of building a wall in front of their estate and filling the area behind with dirt. This wall would be 2'6" to 3' high.

In the past, I proposed the use of the very good herbicide, Roundup.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Is it biodegradable?

Mr D.W. COLLINS: It is indeed biodegradable. Once it hits the ground, it denatures. It does not poison the ground; it poisons the grasses which it is sprayed on and it does a very good job. The idea was simply to poison the grass so that the root system would rot away. Subsequent flows of the river would get the sand moving and, by that means, lower the river bed.

I am now convinced that we are too far gone for that to happen. I do not believe that this method would be sufficient. It would be somewhat haphazard.

I believe we must take some positive action. I propose that we should mine sand in the Todd River bed. We should start in the middle, remove the couch and then keep an ongoing management control program. We should spray the couch if necessary and continue mining sand where it is considered necessary to keep that channel open. The sand could be used around the town in many ways. It is always needed for fill. One area that comes to mind is the YMCA oval which tends to be flooded badly after rain and erosion occurs. The fill would be most useful. I believe that some could be used at the dump to cover the rubbish. Once the bed was clean, and you had a flow or 2 through the river, instead of the sand being mixed with dust and dirt as it is now, it would be clean enough to be used in the building industry.

Three or 4 months ago, the former Minister for Transport and Works undertook to clear an area around the casino bridge which did prove to be useful. It was not long afterwards that it rained and we did not have the problem that we normally had around that particular bridge: the end washing. It was a useful result on a small scale, but we need to do much more.

I am the first to suggest that the sand should be mined. Support has come from the Alice Springs Town Council. I understand that it is unanimous in its belief that mining should be undertaken there. It has aired its proposal somewhat. There has been opposition from 2 sources. One was a young fellow fresh out of university. He said that you could not possibly interfere with the river because that is how it has always been. I mentioned that it has changed considerably over the last 20 years or so. The other initial objection came from the Conservation Commission which was very busy stabilising the banks and encouraging my beloved couch grass even towards the centre of the river in places. If you look downstream from the Todd bridge, you will see how far it has reached. It is mowed and looks very pretty. I would much rather have a deep channel than pretty grass which helps slow the river and increase flooding. The thing which pleases me is that, on consideration, the Conservation Commission has withdrawn its objection to the proposed mining. I hope that other objections - and there may be some if a plan to go ahead is announced - can be satisfied. The Sacred Sites Authority was consulted when the casino bridge area was cleaned up. I would like to think that similar cooperation would be forthcoming.

There are some problems with the idea. The concern of many people is that possibly some of the trees would be undermined. That indeed may be true and is to be regretted. But many of those trees were there 20 years, 30 years and maybe 40 years or more ago. Their root systems are probably very substantial. I think many of them would have good anchorage. The other point is that most of those trees are fairly old and the river red gum does have a limited life. If some of them did end up being undermined, I believe that is just one of the sacrifices we would have had to make.

On the other hand, the advantages would be many. The removal of the couch would remove the fire potential. Each year, when that couch grass dries in the winter time, fire destroys many new river red gums. There are literally hundreds of them. The grass dries off around them, invariably a match is dropped and somehow the grass is alight. The little river red gums cannot survive even the smallest of fires. They are not at all fire tolerant. If we can get rid of that couch by mining, I believe that we will have many replacement trees which will not be in danger of being burnt. The river red gum grows quickly and, in a very short time, the river would be far more attractive than it is today. The vital advantage, of course, is that by making the channel wider we could reduce the potential for flooding in the town. It is a case of preventative medicine. Often we do not like meeting the expense of

preventative medicine. It is only after we have caught the disease and feel terrible that we say: 'I wish I had done such and such'. I hope that the government will be able to support the town council in having this problem sorted out. If nothing is done about it, I believe that, if we have a flood, the loss of property and of life will prove much more costly than the amount of money needed to apply this preventative medicine. I would urge that action be taken now, and not in a couple of years' time.

I appreciate the interest of the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Water Division. That is a very useful combination for this particular problem because sand mining and water management all come within that portfolio. I thank the minister for his comments in the Assembly on the water management report and his reference to flood-warning devices. But I am sure that the people of Alice Springs would be much happier to have a channel which the water could get through quickly and safely rather than a warning device which, if we have a reasonable-sized flood, would mean that we were in danger. I hope that he will take this on board. Certainly, I will do all I can to help the town council, the Sacred Sites Authority and the people who always take action provided someone else pays - that is, the Department of Transport and Works - and do something positive for Alice Springs in this regard.

Mr McCARTHY (Victoria River): Mr Deputy Speaker, I was pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition mention Winnie Bright. I have extensive notes about her here so I can speak about her this evening. I was most interested in the things that the Leader of the Opposition had to say. Much of what he said related to material in these articles. As the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, Winnie Bright passed away recently in Katherine. I did not know her but I have heard a lot about her because some of her relatives are still living in the Batchelor area. I see them fairly regularly. Winnie was born in Canada on 6 May 1908 to Harry and Alma Sargent. She had 10 brothers and sisters. Seven, including Winnie, were born in Canada. The other 4 were born in Queensland. The family moved to the Dawson Valley in Queensland in about 1913. Winnie married cattleman Bill Bright in 1922 and the family moved to the Northern Territory and took up and developed Stapleton Station. The station was later divided between the family, Winnie and Bill Bright retaining the original homestead and the land through to the coast on the south side of the Finnis River. They later sold this land to the Townsend family but retained the original homestead area.

About 14 years ago, Winnie left Stapleton Station, now known as Darenvale, to move to Queensland. This was her first parting from the property to which she came as a young woman. Winnie came back to the property each year to stay with daughter, Anne, and son-in-law, John Cortez. She became very ill in 1984 and stayed on with the Cortez family until late December last year when she was admitted to the Katherine Red Cross Home where she died on 8 February this year. Her husband, Bill, pre-deceased her and Winnie is survived by her daughter, Anne, son-in-law, John Cortez, and their 7 children. Two other family members are still living in the area: her sister, Esther Meaney, and Esther's husband, Jack. Jack was a union man from the Territory and a great old bloke. I enjoy many conversations with Jack and Esther. Both are very concerned citizens of the Territory and are still taking an active interest in what is going on around them. They are a couple for whom I have a great deal of time. Winnie's brother, Max, whose wife Ada died a couple of years ago, recently left Batchelor to live on his land on the Finnis River. I am not aware of other family members in the area. As far as I know, they are the only ones.

A couple of things really took my fancy from some articles published about 30 years ago. I quoted from one in the debate on the ADMA amendment. It

referred to what was grown on a station 100 km from Darwin. In fact, it was Stapleton Station. All those wonderful things were grown by Winnie and her father at that particular time. They had quite a magnificent garden in the area. I will read some of it. She had left the original station and had gone to live on the Finnis River:

Mrs Bright, who has operated Stapleton Station alone since her father died in 1970, spends hundreds of pounds on tyres alone. She had been bogged for days in the wet season on the necessary trips to Darwin for supplies. The track to the station from the 36-mile turn-off via Tumbling Waters covers about 170 miles. There is an alternative route from Batchelor cutting the mileage to about 100. But this track cannot be used in the wet season. Usually, up to about August, it is impassable because it is too wet and too dangerous. The track from Batchelor could be made an all-weather road because there is plenty of high country passing the swollen rivers which prevent its use in the wet. Mrs Bright has tried unsuccessfully for over 5 years to persuade the Administration to at least form a road and build 3 or 4 culverts to divert water.

That would be tremendous. It would save me time getting home from here of an evening. It is not a very great distance. If you fly over and look from the Rum Jungle mine to Berry Springs, it is only a hop, step and jump. There is a track through there but it is only passable in the dry.

A couple of other things took my interest. This particular article was in the Western Mail. It was written by Hal Richardson and is dated 1953:

She packed 2 loaded guns and used them, raced her night horse to wheel cattle maddened by the flaming trail of Japanese bombers that crashed and exploded close by in the pandanus swamp. She kept an iron grip on a team of half-civilised blacks as they mustered cattle in the paperbark country few whites have ever seen. Winnie Sargent of Stapleton cattle station in the Northern Territory. I met Winnie and her pioneer father, Harry Sargent, in the dining room of their homestead. A sideboard littered with specimens of gold, tantalite, antimony, silver, copper, magnesite with a flush of colour, all from the station, stood across the room.

It goes on to describe her work in that area and the assistance the Brights gave to the army and to people who were escaping from Darwin at that particular time. I would like to place on the record that I fully support the observation that the honourable Leader of the Opposition made that, when considering a memorial in Batchelor, we should establish a memorial to people like Winnie Bright and others who did tremendous work at that time for the Australian services. I would like to extend my sympathy to Winnie Bright's family. I know she was very close to her grandchildren and her great grandchildren. I offer them my sympathy.

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to comment on a couple of matters in the adjournment debate. The most important matter concerns a great Australian who passed away in Alice Springs since the last sittings. Frequently, we mention people with whom we were acquainted who had contributed to Territory affairs in various ways, frequently very important ways. It is relatively unusual for us to refer in this Assembly to the passing on of a great Australian in the Territory. Of course, I refer to Xavier Herbert who passed away in Alice Springs on 10 November last year.

I am sure I do not have to talk too much about Xavier Herbert's achievements as a writer. He is without a doubt one of Australia's greatest authors. He was born near Geraldton in Western Australia in 1901. He qualified as a pharmacist and had a very rich and varied life. At different times, he worked as a deep sea diver, a stockman, a miner, a timber cutter, a sailor and a union organiser, as well as being a first-rate author. His first and very well-known book, 'Capricornia', was written in 1932 in London. He met his wife, Sadie, when travelling across to England. Xavier's marriage to Sadie until she passed away in 1979 was a very close marriage indeed for a tempestuous character like Xavier Herbert.

I regard myself as very fortunate to have enjoyed Xavier Herbert's company and to have travelled round parts of my electorate with him. I was interested to see places and to share experiences with him. He was a very old man when I met him. As I said, he was born in 1901 and died at the age of 83 years in Alice Springs. I think I can say that I have been enriched personally by his writings. I would be surprised if some other honourable members had not been similarly enriched. He was living in my electorate at Ross River shortly before he died. He was working on an autobiography entitled 'Me and My Shadow'. I understand it was about his relationship with his wife Sadie. He was also considering putting together another novel to be entitled, 'Billy Goat Hill'. The new novel would have examined the social and political climate of central Australia. I am not sure that my contribution or any other member's contribution would necessarily be highly regarded by Xavier because he was indeed a man of radical and idealistic bent. I am quite sure that the way he points up the directions and concerns of northern Australian society in his books is something that all of us have come to terms with. I am sure that he would have been frustrated with politicians who failed to meet those ends.

It is a matter of public record that he won several literary awards. In 1940, he won the gold medal of the Australian Literary Society for his novel, 'Capricornia'. In 1975, he won the Miles Franklin Award for Literature for undoubtedly his best-known book, 'Poor Fellow My Country'. He received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Newcastle and Queensland. As I said, he was a radical, an idealist and a staunch republican. I would be interested to know why he turned down an Order of Australia which was awarded to him last June.

He was buried in Alice Springs at a private ceremony with the ashes of his wife. I was unable to attend the ceremony myself because, on 10 November, a federal election campaign was in progress. I am deeply sorry that I was not able to attend that funeral. I do not think the deliberations of this Assembly would be complete without recording the passing on of Xavier Herbert, a great Australian and somebody who has contributed much in the world of letters and of ideas, specifically to our directions in our northern Australia.

I wish to mention 2 other matters. Firstly, several years ago, I mentioned the cemetery in the vicinity of Gardens Hill in Darwin. At that time, the then member for Fannie Bay, Pam O'Neil, said that some members of her husband's family were interred there and the cemetery at that stage was in a serious state of neglect. I am very pleased to be able to indicate on the public record that, as a result of my representations in the Assembly, no doubt, considerable improvement has been effected in that area. I wanted to place on the public record that that area is one of the most attractive areas in Darwin. I think I can say that without a doubt. Mr Deputy Speaker, you and I are blessed with the hills, mighty rivers and red gums of central Australia. Unfortunately, the inhabitants of Darwin are not similarly blessed. One area that they do have by way of some form of mild compensation is Gardens Hill.

To come to the point, I think that the area could be improved significantly. It may be very difficult but I merely float the idea. The only detractor from that area now are the ghastly pylons that bestride it. Viewed from any direction, those pylons significantly detract from the visual aspect. The TV tower is relatively unobtrusive. It is next door to one of our premier hotels and I will not go into that now. In fact, it is an area of considerable beauty. I think that, if it is not prohibitively expensive, some other means of reticulating power would significantly increase the aesthetic appeal of that particular place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to comment generally on the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory Branch) Report that was tabled during this sittings. This is a theme I have addressed before in the Assembly. I make these comments as a member of the National Trust, not a particularly active one, I regret to say. If time permitted, I would like to be more active than I am. However, I take a great interest in the activities of the National Trust. I have spoken previously on the issue of heritage protection and heritage generally. I have referred to Aboriginal heritage as well as to European heritage and the contribution that has been made in terms of European-style buildings and their preservation.

The point I wish to make tonight is that I think that the work done already by the National Trust in that regard has been significant in terms of providing a facility and an interest for visitors. You will be aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, of places like Adelaide House in Alice Springs that attracts many visitors. I will not go into that. Equally, there are areas that have been accorded monuments of various sorts such as the Ngulye Rocks near the old railway. Few people will know of those. I do not know if you are aware of them, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I think that while, on the one hand, there should be no pressure put on Aboriginal people to discuss and reveal their heritage in areas that are sacred or secret, on the other hand, I believe that there are areas that tell stories at levels that are able to be explained to the general public. I would like to see organisations such as the National Trust working hand-in-hand with the Sacred Sites Protection Authority and the Tourist Commission, for example, in making those sorts of attachments and understandings of the Territory available to visitors and, indeed, to interested residents in whatever form may be regarded as reasonable by all Territorians.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH (Koolpinyah): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon, I would like to speak on the answers that 2 ministers gave me this morning to questions that I asked relating to people, activities and places in my electorate. I was not satisfied with the answers, and I will elaborate on that.

I asked a question of the Minister for Community Development regarding the recreation and rehabilitation policy of the government, as administered by the Department of Community Development, in relation to prisoners in institutions in the Northern Territory, particularly Gunn Point Prison Farm. This is tied up with a number of matters. I was interested not only in the actual rehabilitation and recreational activities of the prisoners but also in their personal learning processes in prison and the expense of entertaining them again if they make further visits to the prison institutions - the recidivism that the honourable minister was talking about.

It is quite apparent, from the records or from talking with prison warders who worked in the Fannie Bay Gaol and who now work at Gunn Point Prison Farm and Berrimah Prison, that in those days there was far less recidivism than there is now. The prisoners went into jail and when they got out they did not want to go there again. I do not want to be hard and unforgiving to prisoners. They go

to jail and pay their debt to society and everything should be forgiven and forgotten. I do not think it is right and just that a prison sentence should be held over people once they have paid their debt to society. But when you consider the reality of the situation - and the minister says it costs \$90 a day to look after 1 prisoner in a prison in the Northern Territory - then I think a little common sense should apply.

Of course security and civil liberties have to be considered but it is well known, in the world of people who inhabit prisons, that the prisons in the Northern Territory, especially the Berrimah Prison and Gunn Point, are the Sheraton or, if you come from Western Australia, the Parmelia, of prisons. Those people who do not mind being in prison and relinquishing their liberties at certain times make a point of going around Australia and trying out all the prisons, including those in the Northern Territory. This may seem a very cynical view of the situation but I think it is probably pretty true. It is not something that you will see in reports from the Department of Community Development on the conduct of prisons but, nevertheless, I believe it to be true.

This leads me to ask what we are doing with the people who are in prison. I have only been to Berrimah Prison a couple of times but I have been to Gunn Point Prison Farm more often. A couple of years ago, I spoke in this Assembly about the food that was offered to the prisoners at Berrimah Prison. At that time, we had 2 daughters at a very good boarding school in Perth. On a comparison of the quality and quantity of food that the girls were given at this boarding school in Perth with that given to the prisoners at Berrimah Prison, the prisoners came out on top. They were not living too badly. In fact, from the food point of view, you could say they were living off the fat of the land. I have seen the conditions there and there is nothing wanting. Recreational facilities are available to the prisoners and rehabilitation courses are offered to them. I think any reasonable request for either of these facilities does not fall on deaf ears.

The Leader of the Opposition has spoken about some of his constituents who have frequented Gunn Point Prison Farm. I think they were from Groote Eylandt. It is a well-known fact that quite a few of the inmates of Gunn Point and Berrimah Prison are from Groote Eylandt. I have heard from people who have been inmates there, and from what the Leader of the Opposition has also said, that many of these chaps regard prison as a bit of a home away from home. There is something wrong with our system if people regard prison as a bit of a holiday camp and a sentence as a bit of a holiday. That loses sight of the reason for the establishment of prisons. I do not think we should return to Victorian times, but let us bring a little common sense into the whole system.

On the subject of Gunn Point Prison Farm, I do not think the minister really answered my question. I was concerned with the recreational activities of the prisoners as they relate to the delineation of the boundaries of the prison farm, having regard to the fact that there is a public recreation area next to the farm. About 3 weekends ago, some of my constituents noticed that certain prisoners, who were identified quite easily as prisoners, were not in the prison farm. They were in the public recreation area in daylight hours. I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, what is the good of having prisons if they do not keep the prisoners in? I know Gunn Point Prison Farm is a minimum security prison. It is not a bad place to be. Unfortunately, if I were to be imprisoned, because I am a female, probably I would not be sent there, but it is not a bad place to be if you like the rural life. The minister is going to present a report to this Assembly at some future date and I hope that it will address the question of whether the Gunn Point Prison Farm is to continue its

operations at that location or whether it will be removed to another place. I have no strong views either way on that question. However, it is a prison farm after all.

There was a very unfortunate happening when some prisoners attacked the warders who were moving them from Gunn Point Prison Farm to Berrimah Prison about 18 months ago. It was very unfortunate for the warders at the time. They were viciously attacked. This was of concern to me, Mr Deputy Speaker, because it occurred in my electorate not very far from where my constituents live. I received many phone calls and people came to see me because they were a bit worried about what could have happened to them and what might happen to them in the future. Perhaps the screening of the prisoners who went to Gunn Point Prison Farm at that time might not have been very thorough and I believe those screening practices have been changed.

Gunn Point Prison Farm is situated near a public recreation area which is very well used. It is very close to, if not immediately adjoining, an area which will be opened for close subdivision in the future. Also it is in close proximity to conservation areas on its other side, and that particular area holds great possibilities for horticultural farms. In view of those facts, I think security of the prison has to be looked at carefully, bearing in mind that, even though it is a minimum security prison, it is a prison just the same. Whilst I have great respect for the men who work at the Gunn Point Prison Farm, I know the work they do and the agricultural practices they are engaged in. I think these agricultural practices should be reviewed from time to time. This may have been addressed in the report, I have no cognisance of its contents at the moment. Probably, the time is more than past when these practices should have been reviewed. Should the prison farm continue growing the same things, doing the same things that it has done in the same way for some time? Should it embark on new courses? Does it fit into the general overall picture of research establishments conducted by the Department of Primary Production? Does it see itself in that role at all? Has any cost benefit study been done on the production of these farm products, namely the hay, eggs, pork and beef? All of those questions have to be addressed.

I know that the prison warders who work there are a most enthusiastic group. Probably some are not but the ones that I have known personally for some time generally have the rehabilitative interests of the prisoners at heart. I have seen projects that different prisoners have put forward. They have been agreed to by the person in charge and the prisoners have been allowed to go ahead with projects like a hydroponic venture, the breeding of small native tropical fish and a greenhouse venture. Some, if not all, of these projects are continuing with minimal interest at the moment. However, they were put forward by the prisoners and adopted enthusiastically by the prison warders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have not touched on the answer to the question that the Minister for Transport and Works gave me regarding the \$100 000 limit on a house-land package which means that, if somebody applies to the Housing Commission for a loan, the total value of the house-land package must not be more than \$100 000. Whilst it is quite obvious that we do not want abuse of the loans offered to the general public which occurred in previous years, where certain people who applied for a loan could well have afforded to go to private sources for the money, there are people, both in my electorate and in farming areas a bit further south, who deserve and would like the opportunity to apply for this loan. Even with a very modest house or a demountable house, valued at \$50 000 or \$60 000, with the present price of the land and the necessary improvements like fencing and bores, the Valuer-General would value the house-land package at over \$100 000.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like the honourable minister to give his urgent attention to this matter because I can see...

Mr Manzie: Why didn't you do it while you were minister?

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: I tried while I was Minister for Housing, but it takes a bit more time than I had available to me.

I would like to see that these people are not disadvantaged, especially the people in the farming area who have put their money where their mouth is. They have settled in the Territory and I think it behoves the government to give them every opportunity to stay here.

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to raise a number of issues in relation to electricity pricing. The first relates to the recent rise in the rates of electricity charges. The Minister for Mines and Energy has announced that, by 1 January 1986, the price paid per unit of electricity will have increased by 19.06% over the price charged in January 1985. While that increase may seem extraordinary, I also note that that will mean that, from the beginning of the 1983-84 financial year through to January 1986, the price per unit of electricity will have increased by 37.87%.

I would like to deal first with the period between 1 July 1983 and 30 June 1985 - that is, the financial year just completed and the current financial year. In this period, the price per unit of electricity will have increased by 29.92%. That is an extraordinarily large increase over a 2-year period, especially when you consider that the consumer price index movement over that period will probably end up being less than 12%. This means that, in those 2 years in question, the price per unit of electricity will have risen by almost 2.5 times the increase in the consumer price index. Mr Deputy Speaker, I have restricted my comments deliberately to the cost per unit of electricity because some government statements relating to the question of a proposed increase during 1985-86 have been worded deliberately to confuse people by talking about increases in total costs rather than increases in unit costs. The cost per unit is the important question here.

Total costs rise for 2 reasons: firstly, because of the increased cost per unit produced and, secondly, because the number of units produced and consumed increases. Obviously, then, what we have to look at is the cost per unit which is measured by the increase in the cost of resources that are used to produce those results. There is an agreed formula for measuring these increases and that is contained in a document which is known as 'Commonwealth Assistance to the Northern Territory for Public Electricity Supply'. This document sets out an agreement between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory for the provision of a subsidy for electricity generation. By the way, that is the subsidy which is referred to at the bottom of your electricity bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, only the reference there is to the 'government' rather than the 'Commonwealth government' which, in fact, actually pays the bill. At one stage, I had intended to table this document but I am rather doubtful whether I should do so now because, for some strange reason, this document has not been tabled by the government. It may be that the government has particular reasons why it has failed to do that. However, if the government, as it has in the past, starts disclaiming our figures and saying that they are without base and that our method of calculation etc is wrong, I will table it and I will ask the government to point out just where we are wrong and where our methodology is wrong. The agreed methodology is set out in that document. I will put it very clearly to the government. My figures are correct and if it wishes to reject them or to put up another set of figures, I would like it to come up with some

basis for its arguments for what it says the figures are because so far there has been a lot of empty noise.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that an increase of 6% represents the weighted average increase in all the indices used in the subsidy agreement to measure cost increases. Between 1 July 1983 and 30 June 1984, the actual cost of producing a unit of electricity rose by 6% yet NTEC increased its rates by 15.8%. I can see that the demoted Treasurer and current Minister for Mines and Energy will be licking his lips at that statement because he will want to tell us about the 6.3% tariff increase that the government was forced to introduce in January 1984 as a result of increases in the levy on fuel oil. Let me tell the minister that, on the information provided in this documentation, the figures still do not hold up. We have worked out that the changes in the fuel oil levy would not have added more than 2% to the total fuel costs in 1983-84. That means that the total unit costs would have risen only by 6% measured by the indices and a further 2% because of the fuel oil levy. That is only 8%. Even if we concede that I might be a little bit out and make it 9%, it still indicates a very large gap between that cost rise and the 15.8% price rise.

Secondly, there has been very little evidence offered by the government to explain how much the change in the fuel oil levy has affected the cost per unit as opposed to the total cost of electricity. I am tempted to argue that it is less than 6.3%. The particular problem the fuel oil levy presented to the Northern Territory government was another example of the ineptness of the former Treasurer. The federal government's fuel oil levy caught the Northern Territory cold. It entered into an agreement which failed to protect Territorians against changes in taxes in Australia. That is particularly inept.

Mr Perron: I hope you are going to be taking as close an interest in the memorandum.

Mr EDE: Just like the \$140m that you lost on the memorandum. You have lost money here and yet you are turning around and knocking other people. You have to come up with the goods and start showing you have some ability to negotiate. We will return to that at another time.

We know that, during 1984-85, prices will increase by 12.2%. That is the 10% increase on 1 February 1985 plus the indexed 2% increase on 1 April 1985. What can we say about the likely level of cost increases during 1984-85? Now that we are halfway through that period, we can get some indications. Since the start of the financial year, the consumer price index has increased by 2.7%. I think that we could reasonably expect that the overall increase during the year will not be more than 6% to 6.5%. Similarly, every indication is that the average weekly earnings will not rise by more than about 8%. There is nothing in those figures which justifies the increase of 12.2% which the government has implemented.

Much has been made of the total additional payments for fuel oil. Undoubtedly, this is a complex question. In the last month, the Australian dollar has declined by some 10% or so and that would be expected to add a similar amount to the fuel costs for NTEC in that month. The whole question of fuel oil costs and their rise and fall in the last 12 months has been fairly complex. As I said, the decline in the Australian dollar would lead to increased costs to NTEC. However, despite the drama of the last month or so in regard to the Australian dollar, it does not reflect the majority of experience in the first 6 months of 1984-85. In fact, during the first 4 months of this financial year, the dollar value increased by 3.5% to 4%. That would have implied that there would have been a reduction in fuel oil prices for NTEC over that period.

The calculation of the effect of movements of the Australian dollar is very complex but we should not become mesmerised by what has happened in the last month because it is further complicated by the movements in the price of oil products recently. My calculations to date are not sufficiently strong for me to argue an exact figure on what the net effect between those 2 things would be. However, I would take a pretty strong punt that, given the 4% movement in one direction that we had during the first 4 months of the year, the 10% drop in the last month, the spot prices for fuel oil etc, probably the net effect on the Territory's fuel oil bill would have been minimal. However, I would be happy for the Minister for Mines and Energy to reveal that he has some better information. Indeed, I believe that, after announcing an increase of 19.06% in less than 12 months, it is incumbent on him to provide that information. The point of the argument is that no information is available publicly which justifies the proposed increases during 1984-85 of 12.2%.

There is an issue which worries us here. We have seen the large tariff increases in the recent past and those that are planned for the future and many people have asked me what is going on. I must admit that many people had the feeling that maybe there was something going wrong with the gas pipeline project. People have had the idea that maybe these increases were put in so that we could set up a tariff regime which would be able to be maintained under gas-generated power. There is a feeling that there is something wrong somewhere when the increases in the prices of electricity are rising so much faster than the increases in the costs. They feel that the earlier hopes we had of reducing and then maintaining tariff levels on some parity with the states may have been lost through this government's ineptness. As recent months have indicated, this government has been backed into some pretty messy corners in quite a number of negotiations. Some of these have cost Territory taxpayers millions of dollars.

The second issue I wish to raise is that of the introduction of industrial rates for electricity. This is a matter that was touched on by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We have had a number of businessmen who are large users of electricity who have argued that they would be able to bear the cost of operating at night if they could obtain electricity at an appropriate rate. I appreciate that there is an element of truism in that statement but the question is: what is an appropriate rate? I am conscious of the need for NTEC to recover costs but it has been argued that there are periods during the year in which night-time demand on NTEC is so low that the authority actually incurs extra costs in running its machinery and equipment and, if it were able to provide more, its unit costs over that period of the night would be lower. If that is true, there seems to be the possibility of special industrial rates being offered to those small number of potential all-night users. Not only would it offer a benefit to those fledgling industries but it would aid NTEC.

I wonder myself whether this entered the mind of the former Executive Director of the Confederation of Industry because he was the person who signed the authorisation for the 19.2% increase in electricity prices. I am glad he is back because he was looking rather bewildered there for a moment but I think he has recollected it now. I do not want another one of these frontbenchers who sign things without knowing what they sign. I wonder if he gave any thought to what the effects would be on industry by raising prices without any justification, some twice the level that was justified, and then walking away from it. We can see nothing tabled here during this sittings that demonstrates any justification for those levels. We have many unanswered questions regarding this whole matter of electricity prices. I am hoping that we might be able to get some answers because, unfortunately, due to various issues that have come up during this sittings, we have had very little time for questions. I managed to ask only 4.

The last point I wish to raise is the question of the rates for electricity paid by people in caravan parks. People in caravan parks are charged at the commercial rate as opposed to the domestic rate. For a person using 500 units, that means a difference of about 57% between \$98.61 to \$61.87. I believe that that cost difference is very significant. It is borne by people who are new to the Territory. They generally do not enjoy the benefit of government assistance and I believe that they should be encouraged to stay in the Territory. One of the not insignificant ways that this could be done would be if this government would modify the electricity tariff arrangements for caravan parks.

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

Mr FINCH (Wagaman): Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Stuart is intent on telling us about our fiscal controls. Mr Deputy Speaker, pie-in-the-sky dollars is what he is talking about. What I would like to talk about in tonight's adjournment debate is real dollars. Yesterday, I raised a question regarding what I understood to be a slowing down in the project at Darwin Airport. I had fairly well documented information that, for quite some time, the Department of Aviation, through the Department of Housing and Construction, had been contemplating cutting back the Darwin Airport project from \$38.5m to \$18m. Whilst that question was being asked, honourable members of the opposition interjected with: 'You bring it on yourselves'. What they were implying is that the Northern Territory public, in realising the true potential of a CLP candidate and in voting for Paul Everingham at the last election, may have been done a nasty. Mr Deputy Speaker, I put it to you that, if the federal government makes its decisions on the basis of which party particular regions or areas vote for, then so much for logical and rational decision-making.

It is quite clear that the federal department had been instructed, I would put it, in pre-December to cut back from \$38.5m to \$18m. There is no doubt in my mind that it has nothing to do with who the local member is. It is a deliberate reduction of a pre-election commitment to a project that ought to proceed. It is well documented that this project, during 1985-86, will be cut back from \$38.5m to \$18m. However, as I understand it from quite reliable information, consideration is now being given to cutting back to a figure of somewhere around \$10m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in January, approximately 10 major contractors tendered in good faith on a \$27m airport terminal building. A lot of work, time and dollars go into preparing such a submission. It is not often that projects of such size come in on budget. On this occasion, it came in almost spot on. But, within another 20 days, the option of taking up that competitive price will have been lost because, despite the fact it has had 5 weeks, the Department of Housing and Construction has not proceeded formally to let that contract. The implications of delaying that contract are quite significant in terms of dollars. If it was to put it off until June, and if it was to ask the contractor to reduce his program to meet a reduced 1985-86 budget, the cost implications of that alone probably would be \$1m or \$2m.

Another more subtle yet realistic waste of money will result from requirements to move imported fill at commercial rates as opposed to taking it from other on-site parallel works - another \$0.5m to \$1m. Technical problems, delays and the slowed down program will cost a substantial amount, possibly in the order of \$5m. It would be far better for the federal government to be realistic about its obligations and proceed in the most expeditious fashion that it can possibly afford. It is implied that this is the responsibility of Territorians who put their faith in Paul Everingham, the now member in the House of Representatives. Look at the previous member's track record. I recall

raising in this Assembly last year the question of the performance of the federal Department of Housing and Construction in its Darwin office. Following considerable toing and froing, the then federal member, John Reeves, made a positive commitment that \$1.5m would be spent in local Darwin consultants' offices. I dare say that hardly a small fraction of that has been spent to date. It is very likely that not much more will be spent from now until June. The reason is that the federal Department of Housing and Construction's local office is under pressure because it has surplus staff from a project that is winding down, not to 50% but to 25% of its next year's budget.

Some of my constituents and other people in the Darwin area, both professional and technical, will have their employment contracts terminated. These people are self-employed and are working on the Housing and Construction airport project. I understand that their employment will be terminated by Easter. Some of these people have been brought up here on 3-year contracts. After 3 months, these people are being thrown out on the streets. Hopefully, some will pick up jobs locally because there is no doubt in my mind that, in the engineering field, the Territory is the place to be. Those half a dozen jobs are something in themselves. However, because \$20m will be taken off next year's capital works program on the airport alone, in the order of 400 jobs will be lost. Where are we, Mr Deputy Speaker? I tell you where we are. We are still stuck with these broken promises and the feeble attempts of the federal and local ALP politicians to put the blame on Paul Everingham just will not go down.

I have not had access to the so-called Bosch Report that was mentioned in today's NT News so I am in no position to interpret the implications. It seems that my fears of yesterday are borne out by this so-called Bosch Report. I am anxious to have a look at it when the federal government sees fit to release it. Quite obviously, its implications of cost recoveries on the aviation industry will have a profound effect not just on Darwin, not just on the Northern Territory but on the whole of Australia because upgrading of this airport will have major national tourist implications.

Mr Deputy Speaker, by raising this issue now, I do not want to be destructive. I want to bring to the attention of honourable members what is happening behind the scenes, despite the assurances given to certain media people on site yesterday that works were not being wound down. They are and it really behoves us all to apply pressure from both sides of the Assembly on the federal government to take a realistic look at what it intends to do with this major national project.

Mr HATTON (Lands): Mr Deputy Speaker, this afternoon I wish to speak on a number of matters that have arisen. In reading yesterday's and Tuesday's Hansard, I noticed particular reference to me. Explanations have been offered that, because of some urgent commitments that I had on behalf of the Northern Territory government, I was unable to attend on those 2 days. The honourable member for Nhulunbuy decided to take a few cheap shots about the fact that I was not here. He said how terrible it was and how disappointing it was that I was not here to put through the first bill of which I had carriage. He felt that that should take precedence. I hope the honourable member for Nhulunbuy takes the time to contact the federal Treasurer and the federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations because I was attending an advisory council meeting on prices and income which is an integral part of the wages and prices accord of the federal government. I attended because of specific requests by the federal government that a minister of this government attend that meeting. It would have been highly inappropriate for the Chief Minister or the Deputy Chief Minister to attend that conference and be absent from the Assembly. For

those reasons, I attended that conference. If the honourable member for Nhulunbuy wants to take shots at a new minister - and I suppose that is fair game - I would appreciate it if he did it face to face and not wait till I am out of the Chamber.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there were a number of issues raised in the adjournment by members of the opposition and some comments from our side of the Assembly. I might deal with a couple of those. Unfortunately, those honourable members have decided it is not that important because they have not waited around to find out the answers. Some of the issues are rather complex. Given that there is a limited amount of time, I might deal with them by way of correspondence, especially since the opposition obviously is not interested in hearing the answers directly in this Assembly. However, there are a couple of things.

On Tuesday evening, there was an incredible debate concerning the proposals for early table grape production at Pine Hill and some allegations by the member for MacDonnell. He made certain insinuations concerning yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker. For the purposes of clarification, I should put it on the record that the difficulties in the finalisation of the arrangements for the Pine Hill grape development have been to do with the determination of the price and the nature of the lease in negotiations with the Department of Lands. Certainly, since my involvement in this, and from the records prior to that, there has never been any instance of any involvement or any interference from you, Sir, in respect of any negotiations on that. On all the evidence that I have available to me, I refute such insinuations.

Let me say that, even if there had been interference, it would not have worked anyway. This is a project that the Northern Territory government is keen on. We had been concerned to ensure that the matter was finalised. An offer, which I believe is acceptable to the producers, has been forwarded to them. It was signed by me last week. It should enable planting to proceed on the pilot project of 50 ha which will involve the expenditure of \$2.14m between now and 1987 to determine whether or not the project is viable. The further development of a potential 300 ha will depend on a number of factors, not the least of which is the proving up of a suitable water supply in that region to support cropping of that size. That work is proceeding in conjunction with the Water Division of the Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Stuart made some comments about the one week I acted as Minister for Mines and Energy when I signed the order for the increase in the electricity charges. He asked: 'Did I think about it?' Yes, I thought about it. That increase was not only justified but essential. I am amazed at the mental dexterity of the member for Stuart who talks during adjournment debates, along with other members opposite, about the high level of Commonwealth contribution to the Northern Territory budget. He said we were living off the Commonwealth and not really doing anything to raise funds for ourselves. He said that we knew that there was \$50m or \$60m worth of subsidy going into electricity charges. The honourable member for Stuart obviously has a penchant for chasing figures. Instead of looking at the rate of increase in the Northern Territory, he should check electricity charges in other states of Australia. If he does that, he will find that, prior to those increases, the Northern Territory was in the position of having the second lowest electricity charges in Australia.

Given that we were subsidised by the Commonwealth, I would have thought that the honourable member would have insisted that we could demonstrate to the Commonwealth government that we were making a reasonable effort to cover the costs of our electricity generation in the Northern Territory. But no, he

preferred to take some cheap shot at our rate of increase. That is not the way to handle negotiations with the Commonwealth, particularly this year when it has a desperate job to try to wind back a monumental deficit. We must be seen to be making a reasonable revenue-raising effort.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Koolpinyah made some comments following my answer to a question of hers. Whilst I appreciate her comments, I hope the honourable member will not be trying to promote too much recreational use of the Melacca Swamp area because that area is a prime breeding ground for crocodiles. I note that the honourable member, when she was the Minister for Conservation, was promoting living with crocodiles. I do not think any of us would like to live quite that close to the nests. I understand the area is being fenced off. I personally think that Melacca Swamp would not be a really desirable place to promote recreational activities. The area is being fenced off with agreement with the pastoralist and is under the control of the Conservation Commission now. It is being fenced because it is probably the most significant crocodile breeding ground in Australia and one of the most extensive known for that particular species of crocodile. That is why it is being protected as a conservation reserve and I urge the honourable member not to encourage her constituents to take too many picnics in the area unless she is seeking to reduce the numbers in her constituency.

In respect of Black Jungle or Black's Jungle - and I appreciate the honourable member's comments; I had been calling it Black Jungle until I was advised by those who claimed to know that it is Black's Jungle - there has been agreement for it to come under the protection of the Conservation Commission. We are discussing price, whether it should be cash or a land swap and a range of technical details; but the area is under protection. The actual boundaries of that area have not yet been finalised and that is why no specific action is occurring at the moment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for MacDonnell made some comments about Palm Valley and Ellery Creek and the oil drilling in that area by the Mereenie company. I am pleased to see that he is concerned that there needs to be better control over oil drilling in those areas. On the basis of his comments, as recorded in Hansard, I am expecting the member for MacDonnell to jump to his feet and support the moves by the Northern Territory government when we introduce legislation in respect of mining in national parks later this year. Many of the problems that he was referring to resulted from the existing legislation, and circumstances that will be corrected by this proposed legislation that has been the subject of some public debate even though it has not yet been introduced into this Assembly. That particular park is an area that cannot be declared a national park under section 12 of the act because current exploration licences exist over the area. Under the new legislation, there will be an opportunity for it to be brought under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act as a park. At the moment, while an area is subject to mining or exploration and there are licences over it, we are not able to declare that area as a park or a reserve. The new legislation will provide us with an opportunity to bring significant areas under the management of the Parks and Wildlife Unit.

He asked a series of specific questions relating to that area, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let me say that it is an example of the level of cooperation and coordination that is developing between the Northern Territory Conservation Commission and the Department of Mines and Energy. In fact, all the environmental controls in that area were determined by the Environmental Assessment Unit of the Conservation Commission and recommended to the Department of Mines and Energy. The Department of Mines and Energy, without any variation

to those conditions, inserted them into the exploration permits for that particular location. That provides the sort of protection that is being advocated by environmental and conservation organisations. That area is under good protection and the provisions for rehabilitation of the area at the end of exploration are already incorporated in the permits.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we cannot ignore the fact that there will be times when we will seek to take advantage of the subterranean resources of the Territory in areas which may have a form of declaration of a park over them. I have alluded earlier to the fact that our definitions of parks in the Northern Territory are, in terms of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, not properly described as national parks. In fact, many of those parks are better described as recreation parks or come under some other definition. That is a matter that the Conservation Commission is reviewing right now so that we can properly define them and people can understand more clearly the exact nature of the parks that we currently call national parks but which are probably inappropriately named because they are not national parks in the international understanding of that terminology. Mr Deputy Speaker, therein lies much of the conflict over issues such as mining in national parks. Areas of significance will find themselves being protected by way of mining reserves over those areas. The Minister for Mines and Energy and myself are already working to ensure that areas of environmental sensitivity and particular significance will receive that protection. I am sure that we will be able to satisfy the legitimate claims of those arguing in respect of issues such as the Mereenie oilwells in central Australia.

Mr SMITH (Millner): Mr Deputy Speaker, the Minister for Lands might consider extending some courtesies to the opposition if he wants courtesies in return. The opposition was not aware until he had left that he was in fact going and had not known, until he spoke in the last few minutes, why he went. I hope that, if he is placed in that position again, he will extend to us the courtesy of informing us of these matters. In return, we will extend the normal courtesies that follow in that sort of circumstance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to repeat my invitation to the Chief Minister this morning to answer the serious questions that the Auditor-General raised in his annual report on TIO. I believe that they deserve a response from the Chief Minister. I am disappointed that he has not taken the opportunity so far to respond to them and I hope he will do so very shortly.

Last night, I attended a school meeting in my electorate at which there was some discussion on juvenile crime which everybody seems to be talking about at present. One of the suggestions that the people there had was that police patrols should be stepped up and made more regular around schools, particularly around schools that are experiencing a spate of vandalism at present. The point was made, and I think it is very relevant, that it is not much use having police patrols around a school if the police do not get out of their cars. I would pass that on to the honourable minister who has the responsibility for the police. There are certain schools that are particular targets at present. I hope that he will ask the Police Commissioner to ensure that police, who are on patrol around these places, actually get out of their cars and have a look at what is happening...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: The cars will be knocked off.

Mr SMITH: ... after having locked their cars so that they will not be knocked off.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have 2 major matters that I want to speak about tonight. First, I want to take up the comments made by the Chief Minister twice in question time this morning. He had 2 attempts at answering the same question. He indicated that the \$2.5m gift to the purchasers of the casino had been made under the provisions of the Territory Development Act and that it was given under NTDC's function to assist in the development of industry.

Mr Perron: Who is the gift to? You have never answered that question.

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that it is within the powers given to the NTDC to give away \$2.5m of taxpayers' money. I am sure that such a gift was not contemplated when the legislation was introduced.

The Territory Development Act has detailed provisions on the powers of the NTDC and there is no doubt that those powers are quite wide. However, when it comes to lending money, guaranteeing loans or supplying property, the provisions in the act are quite specific. There is no mention of giving away money or even property. The provision permitting property to be supplied as assistance specifically states that it must be supplied on the basis that it constitutes a loan only. I am not a lawyer but I have some familiarity with the rules of construction. Given the current provision in the Territory Development Act, there is no doubt in my mind that there is no provision therein which would authorise a gift of any money, let alone a gift of \$2.5m.

Mr Dondas: It is not a gift.

Mr SMITH: Are you going to get it back?

Mr Dondas: Yes.

Mr SMITH: When?

Mr Dondas: In due course.

Mr SMITH: That is not my understanding of the \$2.5m and you have not made that point in the debate. It is not true, and you know it.

Mr Dondas: I did last Wednesday.

Mr SMITH: It is clear from the provisions in the act that reference to assistance for the development of industry does not extend to gifts. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask the Chief Minister to have a third crack at the answer.

As one more piece of assistance, the Northern Territory Development Corporation Annual Report quite specifically says on page 3: '2.2. Incentives to Industry: Financial assistance in the form of loans and guarantees was available from the corporation and was provided in a variety of ways'. No one can tell me that that \$2.5m was either a loan or a guarantee, which the annual report says was the only way it has given assistance to small business or any other sort of business in the past. It is the only way that it has been doing that because it is the only way that the legislation allows. I would not be surprised to see in the next sittings of this Assembly that we have a further piece of validating legislation for the \$2.5m gift.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the other thing I want to talk about is the attitude of ministers in this Assembly to questions on notice. In raising the issue, I would like to preface my remarks by pointing out that I am quite aware that there is no formal requirement on ministers to respond to questions on notice.

However, under the Westminster system, it is a convention that these questions are answered and usually with some expediency. Refusal to answer is rare. The obligation is a moral one and one that is acknowledged through compliance in other parliaments. Yet, the ministers of this government choose to exempt themselves from such moral responsibilities. Considering that they fail to comply even with the legal obligations of their own legislation, it is not surprising that they can fail also to comply with their moral obligations. Nevertheless, it should be a matter of concern and certainly something that should be raised in this Assembly.

In the period between 20 September and 8 October last year, I placed several questions on notice which have remained unanswered. On 20 September, I submitted a question to the Minister for Housing relating to the cost of advertisements placed by the Housing Commission. On 24 September, I submitted a question to the Deputy Chief Minister relating to the costs of his overseas trip. On 24 September, I submitted to the Minister for Lands questions relating to the development of Gardens Hill. On the following day, I submitted a further question to the Minister for Lands relating to the acquisition of certain property at Myilly Point. Also on that day, I submitted a question to the Minister for Community Development relating to the inquiry into freight and related costs. Lastly, on 8 October, I submitted 2 sets of questions to the Chief Minister, the first relating to trips by non-office-holding members of this Assembly and the second relating to the recruitment of public servants. In addition to the questions I have submitted, there was a list of questions also submitted by the honourable member for Stuart in May and June of last year which also have not been answered.

I will concentrate on my own questions for the moment. These questions sat on the question paper for 5 months until the slate was conveniently wiped clean on the prorogation of the Assembly. I must now ask myself whether it is of any use to have the questions restored to the question paper. In any other parliament, this would not be an issue. It should be a matter of moral disgrace to this government that the matter has had to be raised here. Furthermore, the government's failure to address these questions must suggest that it has things to hide in all of the areas on which questions were asked. For instance, one might ask why the government is not prepared to be completely upfront about the cost of the Deputy Chief Minister's overseas trip. From the rumours I have been hearing, there is a good reason why one might ask what happened on that overseas trip. The only way to put those rumours to rest is to answer the question. I am very surprised that he has not done that already.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what about the question of the inquiry into freight? Does the lack of response confirm my suspicions that no further action has been taken on that report? Again, I think I am fairly close to the mark. It is very surprising indeed that neither the present minister nor the past minister has made a very clear statement on what actions have been taken as a result of that inquiry. I admit that the inquiry was a bit of a whitewash anyhow but there were some recommendations that could have been acted on. It is disappointing in the extreme that no answer has been given to my specific question on that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, given the evidence of mismanagement by this government which has been raised in this sittings, I think I am safe in concluding that the unanswered questions provide avenues to further areas of concern. All I can say to this government is that, if it is so keen to show how upfront and clean it is, let it be put on the record that Territorians be given clear evidence that no questions need be asked. Let the government, in other words, put up or shut up. If there is no mismanagement or if there is no embarrassment on these particular matters, if it has nothing to hide, then let it do what any other

government would do: let it give the evidence which will dispel the doubts raised by its failure to provide answers to the questions asked.

Mr HARRIS (Education): Mr Deputy Speaker, in the adjournment debate today, I would just like to touch on 2 issues. The first one is an answer to a question from the member for Nhulunbuy. The information that I have is that tenders closed for that particular contract and those tenders are being assessed. The actual construction period is some 40 weeks. We estimate that the library will be opened for the first semester of 1986.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Stuart in the adjournment debate the other night spoke about TAFE education, particularly in the Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory. Some of his remarks were a little off course. I would like to start by saying that he said initially, and I will quote from the uncorrected Hansard of Tuesday 5 March: 'In one locality, there has been a major loss of resources since 1984. The vehicle which was available to the adult educator in 1984 is now no longer exclusively available'. I might say that it was never the intention that that vehicle be allocated for the sole use of the adult educator. There are many uses for vehicles in the Territory and we have to spread them around. We use them for driver education and, in adult education, for transportation from one venue to another.

In this particular case, the vehicle that was allocated to Yuendumu, whilst under the control of the adult educator, was for driver education. It was discovered early in the piece that the vehicle was being abused - this was late in 1983 - it was being used by not only the adult educator for this purpose but also by the community for other purposes. The adult educator was required to keep closer control of the vehicle and he was warned that, if that did not happen, it would be removed. At the beginning of 1985, the vehicle was found to be virtually unusable because of the abuse to which it had been subjected. The cost of repairs to the vehicle was in excess of \$3000. In a period of 6 or 7 months, just about every panel on that vehicle had been dented and had to be panel-beaten. The vehicle was shared with Papunya and 1 other community. The reason the vehicle had to be shared was because there was no full-time need for driver education. Our fleet is not big enough to give every adult educator a vehicle full time. They are rostered between communities to fit in with the driver education programs that we have in the Northern Territory. At present, that particular vehicle is based at Finke because of the adult driver education program that is in operation there. The vehicle is returned to Yuendumu on a roster system when there is a program for adult driver education. I emphasise once again that the adult educator is not entitled to that vehicle full time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Stuart also raised the issue of part-time instructor funding. The adult educator concerned was given a budget for the financial year and, like everyone else, he was required to budget for his programs. That is something that I believe all communities and everyone who deals with taxpayers' money, or any other money, must do. They must program and stay within their budget guidelines. In semester 2 of 1984, it was found that his budget was being exceeded and he was informed that he was heading for overcommittal. Apparently, he did not take corrective action and has run out of program funds. It is not our fault that this has happened. Because regional funds were fully committed for the remainder of this financial year, assistance was sought from the central fund. A large allocation was made, which means that some other community in the Northern Territory will go without funds. In this case, we were looking for some \$14 000 that had to be made available. This allocation was made on 2 March and this would have enabled the programs that were listed to commence. The adult educator was informed of this additional allocation on 5 March.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Stuart also raised the issue of part-time instructor hours and their rates of pay. He referred to the fact that the amounts had been reduced considerably and that the part-time instructors were to receive less as a result. Part-time instructors engaged on adult education programs were receiving some \$18.59 per hour. That was irrespective of the course involved, whether they were involved with basic hobby courses, with advanced hobby courses, advanced trade courses or whatever. Following a departmental review, anomalies in this pay arrangement were found and changes were recommended to the tier structure which would cover the various levels of the courses. The Public Service Commissioner recommended the following pay structure for both adult education and schools. We had level 1, \$9.30 per hour; level 2, \$13.20 per hour; level 3, \$17.90 per hour; and, level 4, \$24.20 per hour. Mr Deputy Speaker, the new pay structure has been introduced for adult education instructors. It is expected that a large proportion of part-time instructors will be paid at \$13.20 which admittedly is a decrease of some \$5.39 per hour. The level 4 rate, which relates to teaching diploma courses, will not be paid very often. Most part-time instructors will receive a reduction in their rate. Nevertheless, the rates are considered commensurate with the work involved. I would say that, at level 1, we are talking about basic hobby courses and recreation courses such as macrame, swimming etc. I believe that to receive \$18.59 an hour for that instruction is ridiculous considering that relief teachers only get \$15.75, motor mechanics get something like \$9.65 per hour and music instructors \$10.15. These are the basic sort of break-ups. The level 2 part-time instructors would relate to advanced hobby courses and basic trade and commercial courses. I believe that the changes are reasonable. It is not reasonable to expect someone teaching basic hobby work to receive \$18.59 an hour. I think that the member for Stuart would also agree that there needs to be some relationship between the work and the amount of pay received. I think that the changes that the government has made are reasonable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the honourable member also mentioned problems in relation to the bureaucracy with the part-time instructor system. My only comment is that there are not 8 stages but 6 stages to be gone through. We are required to use that system in order to provide better statistics for the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission in order to receive funds. We have to make sure that we make an effort and I believe that the 6 stages that are required to be gone through are reasonable.

As his final point, the honourable member raised the issue of the NARU report which was not very supportive of government actions in relation to TAFE activities in the past. What has to be realised is that, as a government, we have made a commitment to TAFE in Aboriginal communities. It was not all that long ago that the government made provision that there be an Assistant Secretary of TAFE to be responsible for all TAFE activities throughout the Northern Territory. In the past, we have had a mishmash of TAFE bodies in various communities. There was no coordination. It was important that it be brought under one umbrella and we moved in that direction by appointing an assistant secretary who would be responsible for bringing TAFE generally together. The department now has control of TAFE and is responsible for TAFE courses and activities. It is only reasonable that that be the case because the Department of Education is involved in all Territory communities that have schools.

Action has been taken over the past 12 months in respect of the NARU report. The Regional Aboriginal Employment and Training Advisory Committees' meetings have commenced in the 5 regions in which they have been established and a working party has concluded its report with specific recommendations to implement NARU's research findings. Action has been taken in relation to the report and I believe that the honourable member for Stuart should be pleased

with the way in which the government is going in relation to TAFE activities in the many communities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I emphasise once more for the honourable member that the Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory vary considerably as to what they see education providing for their children. They vary considerably in relation to how they see education being provided in their communities. I can assure the honourable member that I will take up any issue that any honourable member raises with me in relation to Aboriginal education. I repeat to the member for Stuart, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for MacDonnell, who have Aboriginal communities in their electorates, if they have concerns about Aboriginal education, please let me know and I will do something about it. I cannot do anything about problems that they have not contacted me about.

Motion agreed to; the Assembly adjourned.

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